

Board Notes

April 28, 2025

The regular meeting of the School Board was held at 6:00 p.m., Monday, April 28, 2025, at New Prairie Middle School in the LGI Room with Mr. Phil King, Mr. Jason DeMeyer, Mrs. Jill Smith, Mr. Rich Gadacz and Mr. Rich Shail present. Dr. Paul White, NPUSC Superintendent, 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 tabling Action Item (K) until the May 19, 2025 Regular Board Meeting. Mr. DeMeyer seconded the motion and the Amended Agenda was approved 5-0.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

New Prairie Middle School Principal, Mr. Justin Holmquest introduced NPMS Social Studies Department Team of teachers who gave a presentation on what they have achieved with students this current school year through the PLC process and their Goals for the 2025-2026 school year. Mrs. West, NPMS Asst. Principal then concluded with a couple of points about collaboration teams and where they are headed for the next school year. She also ended by stating that the Guidance Team was awarded a gold star from the state for initiatives they are taking on to help students be successful.

CONSENT ITEMS

The Board approved Consent Items as follows:

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

CERTIFIED

▪ Leaves/Resignations/Retirements

1. Barb Papai – ECA Resignation as Olive Twp. Elementary Leadership Team Member effective 5/27/2025
2. Ashley Hernandez – FMLA Leave as 3rd Grade Teacher at Rolling Prairie Elementary beginning 4/14/2025 through 5/23/2025
3. Aislin Zwierzynski – FMLA Leave as 4th Grade Teacher at Olive Twp. Elementary beginning 5/19/2025 through 6/28/2025
4. Mark Stone – ECA Resignation as Assistant Track and Field Coach effective 4/23/2025

▪ Employment

1. Gabriel Alfaro – NPHS Social Studies Teacher beginning 7/1/2025 pending criminal background search results

▪ Employment – Co. & Extra-Curricular, Ancillary and Summer 2025

1. Sarah Sass – Prairie View Elementary School Cross Country Coach beginning 2024-2025 school year
2. Charles Halberstadt – Summer 2025 IREAD Remediation Teacher May 29, 2025 through June 18, 2025
3. Taylor Emmons – Olive Twp. Elementary Leadership Team Member beginning 2025-2026 school year.
4. Scott Soos – NPMS Head Football Coach beginning 2025-2026 school year

▪ Adjustments

CLASSIFIED

▪ Leaves/Resignations/Retirement

1. Kaylee Weisenberger – Resignation as NPUSC Custodian at Olive Twp. Elementary School effective 3/26/2025
2. Crystal Lewis - Termination as NPUSC Nutritional Services Worker at NPHS effective 4/8/2025
3. Derek Benson – Resignation as NPUSC Custodian at New Prairie High School effective 4/25/2025

- **Employment**

1. Robert Brittain – NPUSC Custodian at Olive Twp. Elementary School beginning 4/10/2025
2. Shannon Robinson – NPHS Athletics & Activities Secretary beginning 4/29/2025

- **Employment – Co. & Extra-Curricular, and Summer 2025**

1. Gabriel Boggs – Olive Twp. Elementary School Cross Country Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
2. Angela Reffo - Olive Twp. Elementary School Cross Country Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
3. Brianna Patrizi – Rolling Prairie Elementary School Cross Country Coach for the 2024- 2025 school year
4. Alex Csenar – NPHS Girls Varsity Head Soccer Coach for the 2025-2026 school year
5. Jamie Black – 2025 Summer Career Camps Nurse Assistant
6. Tara Dome – NPHS Co-Dance Team Head Coach for the 2025-2026 school year
7. Cydney Palmer - NPHS Co-Dance Team Head Coach for the 2025-2026 school year
8. Catelyn Naragon – NPHS Girls JV Soccer Coach for the 2025-2026 school year pending criminal background check results
9. Tersandro Santos – NPHS Assistant Girls Soccer Coach for the 2025-2026 school year
10. Drew Lutz – NPHS Boys Head Varsity Basketball Coach for the 2025-2026 school year pending criminal background check results
11. Ashlyn Masters – NPMS Dance Coach for the 2025-2026 school year pending criminal background check results

- **Adjustments**

1. Avery Morris, Olive Twp. Elementary School Custodian to transfer to New Prairie High School as Custodian beginning 4/7/2025.
2. Kelly Goufas, NPHS Custodian to transfer to Olive Twp. Elementary School as Custodian beginning 4/7/2025.
3. Kristina Emerick, current Instructional Assistant at Prairie View Elementary School to transfer positions to Library Assistant at Prairie View Elementary School effective 4/28/2025
4. Ashley Williamson, NPHS Lead Custodian, to receive a wage increase of .75 per hour for substantial increased duties effective 4/28/2025
5. Christy Michiaels, Olive Twp. Elementary Lead Custodian, to receive a wage increase of .75 per hour for substantial increased duties effective 4/28/2025

REPORTS

(A) Mr. King, Board President, Legislative Report

- For our final legislative update for the year below are some highlights:
- Lawmakers have opted to keep funding for virtual students at 85% of the amount that brick-and-mortar students receive in current law. This is a compromise between the House — which proposed giving these students equal funding (100%) — and the Senate, which wanted to reduce the funding to 70% over ongoing concerns about virtual schools' performance and transparency.
- The distribution for summer school has been reduced from \$18.3 million per year to \$17.4 million per year Statewide
- Lawmakers did not restore funding for the dual immersion pilot program, Dolly Parton Imagination Library, or the internet connectivity fund
- The final budget restores the \$52.6 million in the Charter and Innovation Network School Grant program, which offers those schools \$1,400 per student. But it removes funding for the Charter School Capital Grant, a \$25 million-line item allotted for facility needs
- SB 146 passed both chambers and will be signed by Governor Braun - this bill raises minimum teacher pay from \$40K to \$45K (it should be noted NP Schools is currently above the State minimum)
- Partisan School Boards - at the beginning of the legislative session both the House and Senate each had their own version of Partisan School board language. The House Bill was voted down by an overwhelming majority early on. The Senate Bill (SB 287) barely made it through as 2 Senators who had committed to vote against the bill changed their vote at the last hour which gave it the 26 votes

needed to pass the Senate and move to the House. Thank you to both Senator Bohacek and Teshka for voting against this bill on the initial vote. SB 287 went to the House and they did a complete overhaul of the bill to look like the original bill that proposed keeping only one part of the Senate version - this passed the House after failing twice with a vote of 54 to 40. Thank you, Representative Pressel, for voting against this bill once again. It then went back to the Senate where the author of the bill pulled it from consideration initially as he did not like the changes the House made. It then went to committee and when it was all said and done SB 287 passed and was signed into law by Governor Braun - once again thank you to Senator Bohacek for voting against the revised SB 287. This means that governing school boards, including this one, can now be partisan. SB 287 gives the candidate the option to claim they are Republican, Democrat, Independent or they can continue to be non-partisan and not claim any party affiliation. We are now in the age of politics in public school boards in Indiana - and since I no longer have to keep politics out of the boardroom, I will no longer have to hold back with my opinions on our fine legislators and the wonderful decisions they make here in the State of Indiana or abroad - as everyone here knows I always have. SB 287 does continue to hold School Board elections during only the General Election and does not recognize Straight Party voting so those folks will still have to vote separately for school board members as they do now.

- HB1500 passed both chambers and now has done away the Teacher Appreciation Grant as we know it it will be replaced with a competitive style grant process following yet to be seen guidelines by the IDOE
- HB1515 - This bill is a collection of many items that would not pass on their own so were included with a bill that would be passed. One part of the bill has to do with AEDs in schools - it requires that only certain individuals and certain schools are to ensure that an AED is operational and present at certain events, and that individuals present at certain events are aware of the location of the AED and emergency plans regarding the use of the AED. Adds a requirement regarding certain school emergency action plans for sudden cardiac arrest. Removes certain sudden cardiac arrest training and certificate of completion requirements. One part of the bill that was able to be removed during the last hour was the elimination of teacher bargaining. Bargaining is vital for teacher working conditions, fair wages and to have a voice that impacts both educators and their students - here at New Prairie we are lucky to have a good standing relationship with the teacher's association and respect the work of all of our educators and look forward to continuing that relationship going forward
- SB1 - Property Tax Reform and the effect it will have on our Operations Fund and HB 1001 - State Tuition Support and the effect it will have on our Education Fund. I will now hand it over to Mr. Scott to give us the doom and gloom these two wonderful bills will have on us. It should be noted that although in both years of the budget we will see a 2% increase, in total, education funding has been cut by 4% in the overall budget (with the exception of the passing of Universal Vouchers costing taxpayers

(B) Superintendent's Report

- Dr. White referenced the presentation tonight first thanking Mr. Holmquest and Miss. West, NPMS Asst. Principal, and the Social Studies Teachers for their excellent presentation tonight. Dr. White explained that the presentation was a perfect example of the deep professional work the teachers have been doing using the PLC process. NP is working on getting ourselves as organized as possible to give your students the best education possible.
- Dr. White then introduced the new Head Boys Basketball Coach at New Prairie High School for the 2025-2026 school year. Dr. White read a Press Release for Coach Lutz expounding on his great success in his young years. Dr. White congratulated Coach Lutz and exclaimed his great excitement for the coming year.

ACTION ITEMS

(A) The Board accepted donations as Listed:

- Rolling Prairie Elementary School received a \$300 Grant from Youth 2 Youth (Y2Y), Leadership LaPorte County
- Prairie View Elementary school received the following donations:
 - 10 pairs of girls' Sweatpants and 8 pairs of boys' sweatpants from American Legion Auxiliary Unit 297
 - A child's wheelchair from Michael & Christine Wilhelm
 - \$27.55 from Hudson Lake Mennonite Church to use as needed for student needs
 - \$350 from an anonymous donor for a 3rd grade field trip

- NPUSC Nutritional Services received a donation of \$1,030 to the Angel Fund from New Carlisle United Methodist Church and an anonymous donation of \$250 was received
 - NPHS received the following Donations for the SAT Improvement Incentive Program from:
 - \$350 from Larson-Danielson Construction
 - \$200 from Mark and Linda Danielson
 - \$350 from D.A. Dodd
 - New Prairie High School Athletics Dept. received the following donations:
 - \$50 in Memory of James Williamson from Jeffery & Darlene Trent
 - A \$500 gift card from Turf Tank
 - \$100 in memory of Rich Witkowski from Linda Behm
- (B) The Board approved Handbooks for the 2025-2026 school year:
- General Elementary Handbook
 - NPMS Student/Parent & Athletic Handbooks
 - NPHS Student/Parent Handbook
 - NPHS Athletic Policy Handbook
- (C) The Board approved Overnight Field Trip Requests
- (D) The Board approved the Recommendations for Snow Removal beginning 2025-2026 school year
- (E) The Board approved the Trash Removal 3-Year Service Agreement Quote for NPUSC with LAP Waste, LLC
- (F) The Board approved the Renewal with FORTRA for 2025-2026 school year
- (G) The Board approved the Renewal with AHEAD for 2025-2026 school year System for NPMS 2025-2026 school year
- (H) The Board approved the Renewal with Level Data for 2025-2026 School Year
- (I) The Board approved the Operation Agreement with LaPorte County Career & Technical Education Area Vocational District #6
- (J) The Board approved the CDL Physical Reimbursement Increased Amount
- (K) **The Board tabled the request to approve the Closure of Grade 12 at NPHS to Transfer Students for 2025-2026 until the May 19, 2025 Board Meeting**
- (L) The Board approved the Renewal of the Follett Destiny Library Management and Services Software
- (M) The Board approved the Indiana Online Academy Contract with New Prairie Middle School and New Prairie High School

DISCUSSION ITEMS

BOARD COMMENTS

- Mrs. Smith thanked the Administrators and teachers for their great presentation tonight. She congratulated Coach Lutz welcoming him to New Prairie.
- Mr. Shail commented that the school year is winding down and wished everyone good luck and to have a great finish.
- Mr. Gadacz stated that the Middle School did a great presentation and congratulated Coach Lutz.
- Mr. King said that the cast and crew of "Radium Girls" who had their spring play this past weekend really did a great job.
- Mr. King then reminded that Board that Thursday evening, May 1st, is the Top Ten Dinner being held at Heston Hills Event Center starting at 5:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. King asked if the Board had any further business. The Board had no further business to discuss. The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.