

Board Notes

May 19, 2025

The regular meeting of the School Board was held at 6:00 p.m., Monday, May 19, 2025, at New Prairie United School Corporation Central Office in the Board 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.

Mr. King then addressed the Board and the public with the following message:

Good Evening - Welcome to our regular monthly board meeting.
Before we get started...

On behalf of our entire school and athletic community, the New Prairie United School Corporation Board of School Trustees would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the local communities and those beyond for continued support following the recent tragic accident. Your kindness, prayers, and outreach have brought comfort during an incredibly difficult time.

We want to express our profound gratitude to the first responders and emergency personnel who acted with courage, professionalism, and compassion. We are especially grateful to the following agencies for their swift response and tireless efforts in helping navigate the scene:

- LaPorte County Sheriff's Office
- Michigan City Police Department
- LaPorte City Police Department
- Westville Police Department
- Indiana State Police
- LaPorte County EMS
- LaPorte County E-911
- Kankakee Volunteer Fire Department
- Springfield Volunteer Fire Department
- Lutheran Health Network (Lutheran Air)
- Clover Leaf Towing Agency

Our thoughts remain with all of our student-athletes, coaches and their families as they navigate this period of healing. We also continue to hold close in our hearts the family and the student-athlete who is courageously continuing on his road to recovery. Your strength is an inspiration to us all.

At this time, we will take a moment of silence...

There was a motion by Mr. DeMeyer, seconded by Mrs. Smith to approve the Agenda and approved 5-0.

CONSENT ITEMS

The Board approved Consent Items as follows:

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

CERTIFIED

▪ **Leaves/Resignations/Retirement**

1. Ben Bachmann – Resignation as NPHS Athletic Director effective 5/13/2025
2. Caryn Spence – Resignation as Rolling Prairie Elementary School 5th Grade Teacher effective 6/30/2025
3. Mark Schellinger – ECA Resignation as NPHS Social Studies Co-Department Chair effective 6/30/2025
4. Mark Schellinger – ECA Resignation as NPHS Leadership Team Member effective 6/30/2025

5. Angela Medors – ECA Resignation as NPHS Leadership Team Member effective 6/30/2025
6. Angela Medors - ECA Resignation as NPHS Key Club Sponsor effective 6/30/2025
7. Melissa Kuczanski – ECA Resignation as Rolling Prairie Elementary School Leadership Team Member effective 6/30/2025
8. Juan Alvarez Gomez – ECA Resignation as NPHS Robotics Club Sponsor effective 6/30/2025
9. Kortney Brennan – ECA Resignation as NPHS English Dept. Chair Effective 5/23/2025
10. Madison Paholski – Medical Leave as Rolling Prairie Elementary 4th Grade Teacher beginning 8/5/2025 through 10/13/2025
11. Mark Stone – Medical Leave as NPHS Agricultural Sciences Teacher through 5/27/2025
12. Samantha Eldridge – FMLA Leave as Rolling Prairie Elementary 3rd Grade Teacher beginning 8/5/2025 through 10/28/2025

▪ **Employment**

1. Charles Halberstadt – Rolling Prairie Elementary School 5th Grade Teacher beginning 7/1/2025
2. Kalie Archuleta – Prairie View Elementary School 4th Grade Teacher beginning 7/1/2025 pending criminal background check results
3. Halle Seaburg - Prairie View Elementary School 5th Grade Teacher beginning 7/1/2025 pending criminal background check results

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

1. Kortney Brennan – NPHS National Honor Society Sponsor beginning 2025-2026 school year
2. Megan Horvath – Summer 2025 IREAD Remediation Teacher
3. Halle Seaburg – NPHS Assistant Volleyball Coach beginning 2025-2026 school year pending criminal background check results

▪ **Adjustments**

1. Sarah Binder, Prairie View Elementary 5th Grade Teacher, to voluntarily transfer to Olive Twp. Elementary as an Interventionist Teacher beginning 7/1/2025
2. Catherine Saylor to receive a \$2,500 stipend from the High Ability Grant for her role as the High Ability Coordinator for the 2nd semester of the 2024-2025 school year.
3. The following will receive STEM Integration Grant Stipends for their work during the 2024-2025 school year:
 - Neil Hackett-HS STEM Coordinator \$750
 - Maria Sobecki-MS STEM Coordinator \$750
 - Lisa Smiertelny-RP STEM Coordinator \$750
 - Sandra Ernst-PV STEM Coordinator \$750
 - Aislin Zwierzynski-Olive STEM Coordinator split duties \$375
 - Lizzy Schmidt-Olive STEM Coordinator split duties \$375
4. Mark McBride, Current NPHS Assistant Athletic Director, to voluntarily transfer position to NPHS Athletic Director beginning 5/20/2025
5. Casey Gumm, Summer School HFL Camp Week #1 Staff Member to voluntarily transfer to IREAD Remediation Summer Teacher

CLASSIFIED

▪ **Leaves/Resignations/Retirement**

1. Donna Mills – Intermittent FMLA Leave as Prairie View Elementary Lead Custodian beginning 3/31/2025 through 3/31/2026
2. Lisa Deutscher – Intermittent FMLA Leave as Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent beginning 4/22/2025 through 4/22/2026
3. Mavis Atkinson – Retirement as NPUSC Bus Driver effective 5/31/2025

4. Kelly Hawkins – Resignation as NPUSC Nutritional Services Food Service Worker at Prairie View Elementary effective 5/1/20205

- **Employment**

1. Makayla Collins – NPUSC Full-Time Custodian beginning 5/19/2025

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

1. Candice Dickinson – NPHS Head Cheer Coach for the 2025-2026 school year
2. William Chalik Jr. – NPHS JV Boys Soccer Coach for the 2025-2026 school year
3. Shannon Rypma – Summer 2025 Kindergarten Jumpstart Instructional Assistant at Olive Twp. Elementary
4. Sarah Mitchell - Summer 2025 Kindergarten Jumpstart Instructional Assistant at Rolling Prairie Elementary

- **Adjustments**

1. Alicia Deutscher – Voluntary position change from Multi-Site Kitchen Manager for New Prairie Middle School and High School to Nutritional Services Technical Specialist with a \$3.00 increase per hour effective 6/1/2025.
2. Lynsey Daley - Voluntary position change from Multi-Site Kitchen Manager for Rolling Prairie/Prairie View and Olive Twp. Elementary Schools to Nutritional Services Support Specialist with a \$3.00 increase per hour effective 6/1/2025.
3. The following bus drivers will be receiving a stipend from the College and Career Grant for transportation for qualifying trips taken on afternoons & weekends for the 2024-2025 school year:
 - Tricia Toth \$600
 - Kristin Jasinski \$600
 - Dana VanLue \$600
 - Angela Keehn \$600
 - Candice Scott \$600
 - Danielle Blint \$600
 - Deborah Vascil \$600
 - Lisa Jesswein \$600
 - Paul Friedrich \$400
 - Donald McClure \$200

REPORTS

- Dr. White stated that every spring the Board enjoys recognizing the HOSA students from the High School and Middle School. Mrs. Tonya Aerts and Ms. Jenn Smith were present to explain about how the season has gone this school year. Mrs. Aerts stated that this year 50 students attended state competition with 13 of those students advancing to International competition held in June in Nashville, TN. Madelyn Long and Joseph Smith were present from the High School Team to explain what they will be competing in. Mrs. Smith from the Middle School introduced Lydia Humes, who explained what she will be competing in the International Competition. The Board presented certificates to the coaches to hand out to the students. Dr. White and the Board thanked the students and coaches for being present.
- Dr. White congratulated the new teachers just hired: Chuck Halberstadt, Rolling Prairie Elementary 5th Grade Teacher, Kalie Archuletta, Prairie View Elementary 4th Grade Teacher and Halle Seaburg, Prairie View Elementary 5th Grade Teacher. Dr. White additionally congratulated Mr. Mark McBride who was just promoted from NPHS Assistant Athletic Director to NPHS Athletic Director now working in place of Ben Bachmann whom Dr. White thanked for his contributions to the NPHS Athletic Department. Mr. Bachmann is now Athletic Director for Michigan City High School.

ACTION ITEMS

- (A) The Board accepted the following donations
 - Heston Hills Event Center, Tim & Jackie Ohlund, donated the room charge and a percentage toward the food for the NPHS Top Ten Dinner valued at \$2,000
 - New Prairie High School Athletics received the following donations in honor of Rich Witkowski:

- \$300 from the Menendez Family; \$20 from Al & Sue Ammerman; \$20 from Laura Fritschka; \$50 from Rick Fritschka; \$20 from the Jasinaki's; \$25 from Dr.'s H & K Wiesjahn; \$200 from Michael Housand; \$40 from AME Group; \$120 from Deb Adnson, Kathy Belsaas, Linda Cichos, Melanie Eshman, Renee Meyers, Debbie and Debbie VanWanzale; \$25 from Janice Goossens; \$50 from Douglas & Jill Wileman
 - Olive Twp. Elementary received a donation \$2,000 in honor of Anne James
 - New Prairie High School Baseball Team received a donation of \$650 from St. Joe Valley MCA
- (B) The Board approved the AP-TIP Indiana Affiliate Agreement for 2025-2026
- (C) The Board approved the Northern Indiana Educational Services Center Shared Dietitian Consortium Service Contract
- (D) The Board approved the NIESC Food Service Director Consultant Agreement
- (E) The Board approved the Renewal of the following PowerSchool software for the 2025-2026 School Year:
 - SchoolMessenger Communicate
 - SIS Maintenance and Support
 - Naviance
 - Schoology
 - Perform
- (F) The Board approved the Closure of Grade 12 at NPHS to Transfer Students for 2025-2026
- (G) The Board approved the Updated Job Descriptions:
 - Nutritional Services Technical Specialist
 - Nutritional Services Support Specialist
- (H) The Board approved the Monday, June 23, 2025, 6:00 p.m. Regular School Board Meeting change to Wednesday, June 25, 2025 beginning at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Nancy Shail read a heart felt comment for Mr. Shail to the public as follows:

I would like to say a few things about the tragic bus accident that happened on May 8th that has not only changed my life but the lives of the entire New Prairie baseball program and the NP community as a whole.

First and foremost, to the first responders on the scene, thank you. The words sound so shallow in comparison to what each of you do on a daily basis. There were 29 vehicles as I was told and 1 helicopter. I don't remember much but what I do remember it was organized chaos. The men and women on the scene did an excellent job of getting where we all needed to be.

To the St. Joe County Police and LaPorte County Sheriff departments who reacted and tried to do what could be done and stop this maniac. I respect your professionalism and disagree with the criticism under fire your departments have had to deal with for not preventing this unbelievable scene.

Above and beyond the first responders are the other hero's that need to be mentioned. Sophomore baseball player Andrew Enders instead of leaving the bus worked his way to the front of the bus to release coach Bradshaw from his seat belt as he was hanging above the floor and was having difficulty breathing. Andrew showed true courage in an extremely stressful situation. Coach Ryan Curless maintained his coolness and made sure that the less injured players got to a safe place together and made sure they were ok. Jen Sass arrived on the scene very quickly to help coach Curless with the boys and to get them to their parents on the scene or back to the school which was the chosen rally point. Paul Adams our SRO was on the scene as well and I asked for him to contact my wife to give her the news and let her know where to meet me. I didn't want her to find out any other way like social media or from a news channel. I would be remiss if I did not mention all of the people in the NP United School Corporation who are working silently behind the scenes to provide anything

possible in support of meeting the needs to all involved, thank you Dr. White for leading this effort.

And finally, the NP baseball family. Mark and Heidi Schellinger have spent countless hours at the hospital with the Bradshaw family and mine and I am deeply touched with their presence and always seemed to know when to show up especially when I was having a hard time. This is what true leadership and compassion looks like. So many thanks to my JV boys and their families who made many visits simply to just check in and bring a smile, I want you to know you were the best medicine I had during my hospital stay.

I want to thank the entire New Prairie community and all others, who have shown love and support to all of us involved in this tragedy. your prayers for us are being answered and I am sitting here today because of the strength I have gained from you, let's keep it rolling for the Bradshaw family. Brad, Kelly, Kaleb and most importantly Lucas need our help and support.

In conclusion we will all fight back from this only to be better, we may not all recover 100% but we are all here to live another day.

To all the Cougar Nation, RISE AND ROAR!

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.