

BOARD NOTES
February 25, 2013

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, February 25, 2013 with all Board members present. Jim Dermody was also present.

LET'S TALK SESSION

- The School Board received a request from a parent to address the School Board regarding the current drug testing policy at New Prairie High School. The parent would like the Board to consider some exceptions to the policy. The parents also questioned the drug testing process. Bill Kaminski, attorney for the NPUSC, indicated that the Supreme Court does not permit every student to be drug tested. New Prairie does test any student who drives to school or participates in extra-curricular or co-curricular activities.

Rich Shail said the School Board has periodically reviewed the drug policy. Bernie Baltus said it was the community which asked the Board to institute a drug policy several years ago. Rich indicated that the purpose of the drug testing policy is to serve as a deterrent. Rich said since 2008, 971 students have been tested and 40 have tested positive. This amounts to 4% of the tested population. The testing process is random and names are drawn through a database by an independent drug testing agency. The administration is revisiting the current policy and also communicating with surrounding schools to review their policies.

The Let's Talk session ended at 6:27 p.m.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The Board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Jim Holifield and students from the New Prairie Middle School presented their drug-free program – “Keep the Promise”. Mr. Holifield indicated that the county “Lead and Seed” drug-free program has been very beneficial. NPMS has received a grant in the amount of \$9,000 to sponsor guest speakers and train adults and students in the program. Students outlined some of the projects they have incorporated at NPMS to reach the entire student body:
 - Hung door hangers on all classrooms
 - Students signed pledge cards making their own promise
 - Made banners
 - Had poster contest
 - Announcements over their radio station

- Drug/Alcohol Bags in the restrooms
 - Pasted messages on pizza boxes at local restaurants
 - Message Hearts in random lockers encouraging students to “pay it forward”.
 - Give-Back Night at McDonalds in LaPorte
- New Prairie All Star Band Recognition

The Board recognized NPHS students who received All Star Band recognition. Tiffany Galus said over 300 students from the State of Indiana are involved in the All Star Band at Indiana State University. Six students from New Prairie were selected which is the largest number of students we have experienced. Three of the six students also competed in state ensemble competition.
 - New Prairie Academic Decathlon Recognition

The Board recognized the Academic Decathlon team which recently competed in state championship rounds. This is the first time a New Prairie team has gone to state. The team placed 6th out of 10 small school competition and 11th overall out of 20 schools.

CONSENT ITEMS

- The Board approved the Consent Items as follows:
 - Minutes – January 28, 2013
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
 1. Gail Schroeder (Hartman) – 3rd Grade Teacher – Olive Elementary School – Retirement effective at the end of the 2012-2013 school year.
- Employment
 1. Shannon Wilkins – Assistant for Bobcat Club at Prairie View Elementary School - two days per week for three hours. (Funded through the Unity Grant)

2. Gary Trost – Substitute Guidance Counselor – NPHS – Beginning February 20, 2013 and continuing through the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

- Employment – Extra-Curricular

1. Julie Cinal – Science Fair Coordinator – NPMS

NON-CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements

1. Brandin Danielson – Health Assistant – Rolling Prairie Elementary School – Resignation effective March 1, 2013.

- Employment

2. John Cosman – Single HS/MS Bus Route #45 – Effective immediately.

3. Kathleen Mowiser – Food Service – 3 hr. cook at NPMS – Effective February 4, 2013.

4. Crystal Snyder – Health Assistant – Rolling Prairie Elementary School - Effective February 28, 2013

- Employment – Extra-Curricular

1. Ryan Balanow – Co-Assistant Wrestling – NPMS

2. Brian Schroll – Co-Assistant Wrestling – NPMS

3. Cathleen Lower – Co-Letterman Club Sponsor - NPHS

Mr. Dermody wanted to recognize Jack Haverstock, a bus driver who retired effective December 21, 2012. Jack had been a bus driver with the corporation since 1975 and drove the regular routes, Indianapolis route and served as a Volunteer Firefighter during his years with the corporation.

Mr. Dermody also recognized Gail Schroeder (Hartman), 3rd grade teacher at Olive Elementary School, who will be retiring at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. During her tenure, Gail has served as Spelling Bee Representative, Book Adoption Committee, Creative Writing Committee, Literature Committee, Summer School – Fantastic Flight & Logical Thinking, Mentor, Soccer Coach, Co-writer of Indiana 2000 application, Hoosier Spell Bowl, Young Astronauts, selected by the Center for Assessment, Research & Information Technology in Benchmark Item Mapping Study by the IDOE, Candidate for the White House Fellowship by the IDOE, earned National Board Certification in 2000, Building

Coordinator for G/T Program and North Central School Improvement Chair. It will be very difficult to fill Gail's shoes.

Jim wishes the very best to Gail and Jack Haverstock.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- The NPUSC achieved annual measurable AMAO Benchmarks for Assessment for ESL students. Mr. Dermody recognized Denise Kenfield at Olive, Lauren Smith and Wendy Hemphill at Prairie View and Gloria Wiesemann, Stacy Weiss and Christy Piertrzak at Rolling Prairie/HS/MS for their efforts.
- March 1, 2013 is Read Across America. Carrie Cannon has organized the activities for all schools. Everyone in the corporation will stop and read for 15 minutes to support reading throughout our corporation.
- The United Way is going to partner with the NPUSC to offer a Kindergarten Boot Camp to in-coming kindergarten students for three weeks prior to the start of school to meet the needs of our students entering kindergarten.
- Mr. Dermody recognized the boys' basketball team for earning the Conference Championship. This is the first time in 11 years the team has achieved this honor.
- Mr. Dermody would like to invite the Board to attend a workshop on "Hollowing Out the Middle" presented by Patrick Carr.
- ISTEP+/IREAD preparation is proceeding.
- New Prairie students placed second in the 7/8th Division, two students placed in the 5/6th Division and an alternate in the 3/4th Division at the LaPorte County Spelling Bee. Julia Jones – 5th grade student at Olive is the County Champion.
- The Middle School Math Team recently competed in Regionals. There were 7 teams of approximately 70 students and New Prairie placed 2nd – qualifying for State.
- Jerry Baltes, former NP graduate and coach at Grand Valley State College, was recently named Division II Coach of the Year by the U.S. Track & Field Association. Jerry was further honored by the Association by having the National Division II trophy named the "Jerry Baltes Award".
- The Outside Transfer Request process will open on March 1st.

ACTION ITEMS

- The Board approved the overnight field trip request for the NPHS Robotics Team to Cleveland, Ohio for regional competition on March 27-30, 2013.
- The Board approved the resolution appointing Kelley Kitchen as the MASE Trust Representative for NPUSC.
- The Board approved the resolution establishing the escrow agreement for the energy savings project financing.
- The Board approved the resolution establishing the installment payment contract for the energy savings project financing.

- The Board approved the resolution establishing performance guaranteed by the energy savings provider.
- The Board accepted the donation from Mr. & Mrs. David Davis in the amount of \$750.00 for the Rolling Prairie Manners Class. Bernie Baltes said this is the result of Angie Hambling taking time during a Rolling Prairie Class Reunion party where alumni were able to tour the building and talk to the principal. Mr. Dermody said Becky Bartlett has continued that contact with Mr. & Mrs. Davis.
- The Board approved the recommendation to reconfigure the Technology Department. The Technology Department will take on more responsibility and receive a salary adjustment. There was some room for restructuring for multi-tasking and multi-learning. Expectations will be high for performance.
- The Board approved the Driver's Education Program and Fees for 2013. Student fees will be set at \$385 for a minimum of 100 students and \$400 for less than 100. The teacher salary will be increased from \$26.00 to \$26.50 per hour.
- The Board approved the advertisement for the disposal of real/surplus property for the purpose of selling the water chiller, condenser water pump and cooling tower from NPHS.
- The Board approved the Guaranteed Energy Savings contract transaction documents.
- The Board approved the 2013-2014 school calendar as presented.

DISCUSSION

- Qualified Zone Academy Bond Program

Mr. Dermody said the corporation will be working to establish private partnerships with community businesses and patrons for contributing funds to purchase technology, provide related professional development and equip our students with career skills and opportunities.

- Student Instructional Technology Devices

Mr. Dermody said because of the excellent performance of our elementary schools in 2012 and the pending reading adoption, qualifying schools with a 90% performance could receive a free full year on-line subscription through a book company. The Board has an opportunity to acquire instructional technology opportunities for students.

We will have serious technology testing needs by 2014 and will be required to administer additional and eventual full on-line testing. Therefore, the NPUSC needs to obtain more technology testing devices.

The Board needs to make a decision if we are going to continue with hard back books. Companies may not sell hard back books in the near future. There were three school districts in Indiana three years ago which used individual school devices. The number of schools that currently employ devices has grown greatly and there will be many more. The NPUSC has been very successful in many areas of achievement. However, if we just continue as we have been, we will not remain competitive. We need to continue to innovate. There are financial advantages for us as a corporation to consider making this move at this time and support the upgraded resources we need to establish.

There are many challenges:

- There will be a paradigm shift for teachers, parents and students.
- We have a very constricted timeframe. We would like to bring a proposal to the Board at the May meeting.
- How do we bring the community stakeholders into this discussion?
- We must determine that the devices we recommend are test functional and possess multiple uses for each piece of equipment.

Logistical Details:

- Cost
- Student Access – Do we have students take them home?
- Do we charge insurance?
- Implementation may not be a “comfortable” change – teachers/students

Jim stated this will not be an enhancement, it will be a transformation.

Tentative Plan:

- Initial small team visits – teachers, administrators and Board members (if interested)
- Reviewing the use of laptops or iPads
- 2-3 site visits where technology devices are in use
- May break into elementary and secondary teams
- Have to finalize with the Board a scope of deployment
- Elementary or High School? It will be a progressive process.
- Need to come to the Board with a financial plan.
- Need to contact current implementers to discuss challenges and problems they encountered during deployment.
- Establish a Professional Development Plan
- Schedule worksessions with the public and Board to help us glean through this process. Would like to contact the Board within the next 2 – 2 ½ weeks to establish a worksession.

Bernie asked how this will affect the workload of the Technology Dept. Jim said this was considered into the configuration because we knew this would be introduced a year from now.

Dale asked about the infrastructure. Jim said an audit to review this concern was completed recently. This will be a vision for the entire corporation in the future. This is a step to keep us competitive and provide our students with a comprehensive educational experience.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Bernie read an article about career preparation in the South Bend Schools. He feels this is something worthwhile. Jim said he met recently with local trades union personnel and they want to continue to work with our school corporation.