

NEW PRAIRIE UNITED SCHOOL CORPORATION
Office of the Superintendent
New Carlisle, IN 46552

WORK SESSION NOTES
October 23, 2017

A Work Session was held on Monday, October 23, 2017 at 6:15 p.m. at the New Prairie United School Corporation Board Room with Rich Shail, Al Williamson, Dale Groves, Phil King and Bill Romstadt present. Dr. Paul White was also present.

Dr. White began the Work Session with his PowerPoint of a Draft Proposal of the NPUSC Vision & Mission Guiding Document going forward for the district. This draft is a culmination of conversations from the Board retreat in July, with administration and with teacher leaders at an all-day meeting in August. He recalled for the Board that he took a group of administrators to the conference/training in Lincolnshire, IL, in early August on how to simplify a vision and mission for the school district.

At the conference/training it was taught that a "Mission" is "why we do what we do". The mission idea that really spoke to the group at the conference is "helping ALL students succeed at high levels". This means students succeeding at high levels on Grade Level Critical Standards. It is our collective mission and purpose right now to ensure high levels of learning for ALL students to ensure career and/or college success. The focus is on what we must do to help ALL students succeed. We must be best practiced and researched as possible.

Dale Groves stated he likes this explanation. He asked if there was any discussion on learning that occurs outside of standards such as life-skills or enrichment. Dr. White responded "no" but consideration can be given to instilling life lessons/values in the Vision statements. Dale Groves does feel this is a solid start.

The Vision piece looks at what we want to become as a school system. Dr. White suggested we strive to become a "High-Reliability School System" that provides consistency for every student and family we serve. We have to put more contingencies in place to make sure to help all students learn. To become the "High Reliability School System" we would spend the next few years working on the following:

1. A safe and collaborative learning environment
 - Dr. White wants to send out surveys to staff, parents and community to collect data on this statement. Dr. White stated that if students and staff don't feel safe or a part of the process, learning can't happen. Rich Shail stated that this is a great start.
2. Excellent student learning environment based on teaching best practices & high levels of student learning in every classroom
 - This is about effective teaching in the classroom. Providing the best student environment possible.
3. A guaranteed curriculum in every school, ensuring no matter where a student is attending in NPUSC, all students develop the skills they need for academic success
 - Discussions with Teachers regarding teaching to the curriculum critical standards must be consistent for all students. It is understood that personalities are always going to be different but if all our teachers are teaching the same key standards curriculum all students will be developing the skills they need for academic success.
 - Dale Groves asked if the PLC Groups ever talked about Grade Level Learning Centers based on level. Al Williamson stated that it had been discussed many years ago. Dale

Groves stated he read research that it is better academically for students and makes it easier for teachers to communicate. Dr. White responded that it has positives but has many logistical concerns. Transportation costs, time zone issues, service to family issues would be difficult.

- Dr. White shared the future, advanced ideas to explore for “High Reliability Schools” with the Board. The Board members agreed to the work needed on these first 3 vision points for the next 2 to 3 years and to revisit at a later time the additional Vision points which includes Standards Based Grading.

Dr. White went on to discuss a Draft of NPUSC Values and Collective Commitments – which is how we will behave to achieve our Mission and Vision:

1. We are student-centered; all decisions and actions will be based on what students need to achieve our Mission. We need to focus on remembering why we are here.
2. Relationships matter in NPUSC-student to teacher, employee to employee, employee to administration; striving for continuous growth and improvement for the betterment of our students, even if this introduces short-term tension. Relationships matter in NPUSC, and continuous growth for student success matters even more.
 - Dr. White feels that right now relationships can get in the way of putting the students in the best position. We need to work on not letting difficult conversations get in the way of what is best for students.
3. We pursue growth and improvement opportunities for our professionals and classified staff to constantly strive to be the best we can be for students. We believe striving to learn and implement the latest research in best practice for learning and for organizational function/management is in the best interest of the students we serve.
 - Continuous improvement of best practices. Technology integration matters to us. We need to integrate literacy development into our technology.
4. We strive to be a model school system focused and known for literacy development to engage students in 21st Century learning experiences.
5. We strive to be a model school system focused on technology integration to engage students in 21st Century learning experiences.
6. We will pursue continuous improvement through the “Professional Learning Community” process. This process, known as PLC, has the following at its foundation:
 - Two Core Beliefs of PLC Process:
 1. A belief that ALL students are capable of learning at HIGH levels
 2. We have collective capacity & shared responsibility to work together to ensure ALL students learn at high levels
 - Three Big Ideas of PLC Process
 1. Student learning is the Fundamental Purpose of our schools
 2. We will build a collaborative culture that focuses on Student Learning for ALL through high performing teams
 3. We are RESULTS oriented-we focus our effectiveness based on results/data, not intentions or individuals or emotions. We seek relevant information and data to promote continuous improvement
 - Four Critical Questions of PLC Process
 1. What do we want student to know – The following criteria will be used to determine essential learning outcomes for students.
 2. How do we know if they know it? Timely assessments will be developed/used to assess student learning and instructional practice. Results will drive interventions and our collective identification of the most effective practices

3. What do we do if they don't know it? We will engage in collaborative data analysis-by student, by standard, asking questions
4. What will we do if they do know it? How will we respond to provide timely and targeted extension/acceleration when students have mastered the essential learning?

Dr. White stated that we have to engage all our teachers on these four questions. Focus is on keeping kids motivated and interested. This is not a focus on the adults but on student learning. We are results motivated.

Dr. White described the last part of this plan the NPUSC SMART (Strategic/Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, and Time-Bound) Goals – 10 Goal areas Dr. White came up with that are important to us to develop with input. He acknowledges that there are likely too many areas.

1. Community Relations & Communications sets a goal of a specific number of communications and surveys per year to inform NPUSC direction based on family feed back
 - Dr. White believes this is a collective commitment
2. Academic Performance K-5, emphasis on math performance
 - Bill Romstadt really prefers this because it encompasses all of NPUSC because it is a progression between all schools.
3. Academic Performance Gr 6-8, emphasis on math performance
4. Academic Performance Gr. 9-12, emphasis on HS ISTEP performance
5. Develop a College Prep and/or Career Pathway Goal for every student Grades 9-10
6. Evaluate Current standing & Implement components of a “Highly Reliability School System” starting with Safe & Collaborative
7. Implement Technology Integration Strategies to support student literacy development
8. NPUSC Board of Trustees pursues “Excellence in Education” status from Indiana School Board Association through commitment to responsibilities and school district engagement
9. Manage NPUSC Fiscal & Facility Resources to provide the best learning experience for students
10. Develop NPUSC into a “Professional Learning Community” for all employees to create an environment of continuous growth, reflection, and improvement.

Dale Groves definitely wants the academic focuses. He thinks that a goal should be made that the students will be able to perform at this level based on an assessment by the end of a specific date. Dale wants to see pros and cons of the state test assessments being considered.

Rich Shail stated he likes the idea of grade levels having their own goals. He feels that 5 goals total with one for the School Board should be sufficient.

Dale Groves said his favorite is the PLC and he is excited to see what can be done with that. He thinks the best part is that it is backed by research.

Dr. White explained that he had identified the top performing public schools in IN during his dissertation, visited 6 of them looking for across the curriculum literacy issues. All 6 schools had high levels of adult collaboration to solve student learning problems.

It was agreed that the Board members like the Academic Goals, PLC Goal & Board Goal to build on for NPUSC Smart Goals. The other areas can be put on Values/Collective Commitments.

Dale Groves likes the “cutting edge” move for education. Rich Shail stated that this is a move in the right direction for NP.

Dr. White stated that there is no reason why New Prairie cannot accomplish these things at NP.

Dr. White thanked the Board for their attention and stated that he will work on the Goals and Values then will share with them as soon as possible, as well as share the draft with teachers and employees for their input.