

NEW PRAIRIE UNITED SCHOOL CORPORATION
New Prairie Middle School
LGI Room
5325 N Cougar Road
New Carlisle, IN 46552

NOTES

WORK SESSION
January 22, 2018

A work session was held on Monday, January 22, 2018 in the LGI Room at New Prairie Middle School with Al Williamson, Dale Groves, Phil King and Bill Romstadt present. Rich Shail was absent. Dr. Paul White was also present.

Al Williamson stated that this work session is to discuss the proposed 2018-19 NPMS Master Schedule.

- Mrs. Janet Scott, Principal NPMS, took the floor to present a PowerPoint on the proposed NPMS Master Schedule for 2018-19.
- Mrs. Scott explained how changing the Master Schedule should serve the students in the best way possible. She explained that the new standards are a lot more rigorous than former standards, and the schedule should support students learning the new standards. She explained that she had to make the biggest changes to Language Arts and Math. We started with Language Arts (LA) being the first big change in the schedule that began 2 years ago. Along with the additional 70 minute Language Arts class, a new strategy called “Close Read” was added. Note taking is taught in the “Close Read” which has increased performance on state testing. The percentage increased from 68.9% to 73% in 2 years. Growth went from 87.7% to 108.9%.
- Dale Groves asked if the data was based on the same students taking the test. Mrs. Scott said unfortunately not all the same students because the state measures 8th grade year to year.
- Mrs. Scott stated great strides had been made with the new Language Arts Curriculum and we need to make the same impact with math. It was necessary to adopt new curriculum for math since the Language Arts Curriculum has been rewritten.
- The new math curriculum is better suited for the new standards but it is evident that more time is needed each day to teach the program accurately as teachers keep asking for more time. Dr. White gave Mrs. Scott parameters to follow in reconfiguring the new Master Schedule and they are: more teacher collaboration time and more time for math; no RIFs; the addition of 1 teacher salary; and keep a 7.5 hour teacher day. Mrs. Scott found that she can fulfill Dr. White’s parameters by removing an elective such as FACS, as the FACS teacher can teach a general education class and not be RIF’d. This would add more teachers to core subjects and support the instructional time for math while only adding one salary to the budget.

- Dr. White asked for Collaborative Teacher Time to be incorporated into the schedule which Mrs. Scott created additional plan time with the collaborative time within the block.
- Mrs. Scott stated that math time will increase from 45 minutes to 70 minutes. The Language Arts class time is 70 minutes at this time. Science and Social Studies will also increase class time to 70 minutes.
- Electives will remain the same in terms of student choice.
- World Language for high school credit will no longer be available. Introductory World Language classes for 8th graders will be offered instead.
- It is proposed that classes would start 10 minutes earlier as busses arrive by 6:45 now releasing students for breakfast at 7:00 am to 7:15 am. Breakfast will be changed to 6:45 with class starting at 7:05. STAR time will be discontinued.
- CORE teachers will have a reduced number of students a day from 180 to approximately 95 which will benefit students as well as teachers to better focus on student learning
- MS has the least amount of individual plan time compared to the other 4 schools at present. 230 minutes will be increased to 270 minutes for individual teacher plan time weekly. 60 minutes will be used as team plan time, 120 minutes designated as PLC (Professional Learning Community) time.
- STAR time has been used for remediation and enrichment. With the new schedule that time will be eliminated. Remediation and enrichment will be in the classroom during class time. Teachers are doing the best they can with subjects they are not specialized in at the moment so by keeping the remediation in the classroom with the specialized teacher makes the most sense for the students. With 70 minutes in the classroom there will be time.
- Mr. Dale Groves asked if our teachers currently have common assessments. Mrs. Scott responded that yes teachers do but it is tough to look at data with such limited time.
- Mr. Bill Romstadt wanted to clarify that there are 4 classes being eliminated: FACS, high school Spanish and French and STAR. Mrs. Scott responded yes but added Spanish and French Exploratory classes will still happen. Mr. Romstadt stated that he struggles with the amount of plan time teachers will have and tying educators up in meetings. He also struggles with teaching to the test along with eliminating the Life Skills from the Curriculum.
- Mr. Dale Groves asked Dr. White and Mrs. Scott how math is tied to graduation requirements. Dr. White answered that the state of Indiana has consistently required high school students to pass a math test as part of graduation requirements. The testing has changed over the years and now the State of Indiana is considering minimum performance on the ACT exam which would measure math.
- Mr. Romstadt also stated that FACS data shows 50% of students enrolled at the MS take this class which is substantial. As a parent and School Board member, he wrestles with the elimination of FACS.
- Mr. Groves stated that as an educator he would truly appreciate the plan time and collaboration focus. The true PLC time is supported by research. PLC is what is best for student achievement.
- Mr. Romstadt asked what the 80's standards are. Mrs. Allen explained that there are 80 standards under the 5 CORE areas mandated Indiana Department of Education for FACS. There is a matrix on the DOE website of the pathways.

- Phil King asked if the 80's standards are specifically for the Middle School. Mrs. Allen responded that yes it is grade 6 through 8 FACS.
- Mr. Romstadt asked if Mrs. Scott would consider looking at a 45 minute PLC or Plan time. She responded yes.
- Phil King asked if the extra time can offer more opportunity to add more grades to the gradebook. Mrs. Scott responded yes it can.
- Dr. White stated that the Board asked for a work session to gather information before making a determination. The core plan of the schedule has multiple positives for students and teachers. He understands that FACS needs more evaluation. This has been looked at from a budget standpoint. He does not want FACS eliminated long term. Now that the books are closed on 2017 and there are hard numbers he wants to look at the possibility of keeping FACS in the schedule. He also addressed the question from Mr. Shail regarding students' attention span with the increased instruction time. Dr. White stated that the staff handles the time in the classroom very efficiently and assured everyone that this will not be an issue at all.

Mr. Williamson took comments from the community.

- Mr. Mark Sundwall addressed the Board with his concern regarding students losing the FACS program. He feels that his student, who passes ISTEP, is being punished by losing FACS to the concern over increasing test scores.
- Mrs. Wendy Sundwall expressed that she is an educator and understands testing pressure but feels we may be missing creating a love of learning by eliminating programs. She asked Mrs. Scott how much time students will have for electives in a day. Mrs. Scott responded two 45 minute periods which would be the same as it is now.
- Mrs. Jenny Hite, President of the New Prairie Classroom Teachers Association and NPMS ELA/Science Teacher, addressed the Board thanking them for taking the time to listen to comments and concerns. Mrs. Hite commented that many enrichment & exploratory classes have been lost over the years and now with the changes in the proposed master schedule, FACS may be eliminated. Eliminating these types of classes can make pathway choices difficult at the high school level. This change to the Master Schedule, however, does have many benefits such as incorporating PLCs; more plan time to collaborate, review and analyze data for the best interest of the students; more class time for math to effectively incorporate the more rigorous curriculum. The lessons are designed for a larger amount of time which the new schedule will accommodate. Consider the addition of more than one teacher to the staff so perhaps we can keep some of the other programs like FACS and keep the students education as a whole.
- Mrs. Jeannie Romstadt agrees with those that spoke regarding the loss of the Life Skills program. Her children did benefit from the FACS program. Her concern is for the children who will not learn life skills at home who only have school to learn it from. She is concerned about the students with IEP's or 504's sitting in a 70 minute class, and if there is enough staff to assist in these classes.

Mr. Williamson assured everyone that this Board has heard everyone's comments and concerns. The Board has discussed many of the same things as they have some of the

same concerns. We are glad to hear from everyone. So many things are taken into consideration before a decision is made. This Board wants what is best for kids first.