

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

NOTES

WORK SESSION
March 12, 2018

A work session was held on Monday, March 12, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the LGI Room at New Prairie Middle School with Rich Shail, Al Williamson, Dale Groves, Phil King and Bill Romstadt present. Dr. Paul White was also present.

Rich Shail stated that this work session is to discuss the topic of school safety in light of the Florida tragedy. It has come to the attention of the Board that the community is concerned and has many questions about how New Prairie is handling safety going forward. He felt the work session was the best means of communication between the community and the Board. Questions are welcome but forms must be filled out in order to speak and 3 minutes will be allowed to speak only on school safety.

- Dr. White thanked everyone for attending the work session. There will be a presentation on what New Prairie is currently doing as well as some additional things being considered to ensure your students safety. He went on to explain that he has 2 children currently in this school system so he has the same questions and concerns as most parents. The only difference between the parents and himself is that he knows our schools' safety plans. The recent tragedy in Florida has had a great impact on him personally. He has asked a lot of questions as to what more can we do. Every one of our schools has a safety plan in place. We are considering additional enhancements to add to security. Advice of our attorney is that we cannot share some details but we will address some items specifically tonight such as Anti-Bullying initiatives.
- Dr. White introduced Paul Adams, NPUSC school Resource Officer and his supervisor, Captain Derek Alan with the LaPorte County Sheriff's Office, who is the supervisor of all LaPorte County Resource Officers as well as the Public Information Officer. These officers are present this evening to add their expertise as needed.
- Dr. White introduced Justin Holmquest, NPHS Asst. Principal, who will go through the presentation on safety protocols and procedures K-12.
- Justin explained safety protocols and procedures:
 - He stated that he was trained in ALICE which is a procedure for countering an active shooter situation. The acronym ALICE means Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. NPUSC is looking to use this training to enhance what we currently use. Every building locks down presently. ALICE training gives students and teachers more options to stay safe both in the classroom and anywhere else in the schools. The goal of ALICE training is to make these safety skills second nature for students and staff.

- Threat Assessment Teams are currently in place in every NPUSC building. If there is an incident report that is threatening, this team comes together with the SRO right away to assess the degree of the concern or threat.
- The County Radio Emergency Button is installed in all LaPorte County Schools. Unfortunately Olive Elementary, which is in St. Joe County, does not have this County Radio Emergency Button. This button is available to all school secretaries. If there is a situation that is threatening the button can be pushed which immediately goes to dispatch which plays a live feed so everything can be heard and the local law enforcement can be called right away. Because it is a live feed all LaPorte County School officials will hear what is going on so all schools attached are aware with a digital read out that says what school it is happening in.
- Additional Lockdown features to enhance classroom security are being considered.
- Monthly Lockdown Drills will begin as the state only requires one lockdown per semester. At the high school we did them bi-monthly last year. This year we are doing them monthly. Training will begin for unique situations such as if a student isn't in the classroom if a threatening situation happens. If the student is in the hallway, at lunch, or during dismissal, we want kids to know what to do if a lockdown is called.
- We are looking at Raptor Technologies which utilizes a visitor security system that requires all building guests provide a state issued ID to be scanned. It creates a custom, one time ID badge for the guest which is dated and includes the location being visited along with a picture. Also, it scans the national registered sex offender database. If there is an alert on the guest it will show up on the office computer screens. It is technology that we are looking to implement at all schools. Raptor also offers App technology that Educators can communicate and report in real time during an evacuation. Raptor is number one in this ID Technology.
- A Safety-Bullying Hotline is being established so the school community can report things anonymously.
- We are looking to make additional security features at all main entry areas in all schools. At the high school, with the new security being implemented, there will be a secondary layer of entry which will be at all the schools. Cameras will be installed for full views of interior entryways and the full exterior.
- Building a proactive climate and culture is the biggest piece to school safety that gets overlooked in times of tragedy. Anti-bullying initiatives and character building are very important as well. The high school is currently working on building student-teacher relationships. We are looking at more tools to offer more social services to our students.
- Mrs. Sass, Principal at NPHS, spoke on learning more about the culture of high school students and teachers by having everyone complete a survey last school year. The biggest response was building of positive relationships student to teacher. The Lilly Grant funded SEARCH survey and staff training from Eric Kalenze in the fall of 2017. This staff training helped our teachers understand what the kids need and how important it is for them to know they have someone they can go to if in need. A

- Cougar Mentor Period was created so the students know whom they can go to when help is needed. This has become a huge focus at the high school to help kids feel safe. Mrs. Sass added that she has noticed this year that students communicate more than ever with administration about what is going on out in the school community that is concerning to them.
- Mrs. Scott, Principal at NPMS, discussed the middle school programs going on for last 3 years. Mentors come in from the community to have lunch with students individually. Teachers are also participating and meeting with students weekly. About bullying, Mrs. Scott cited that bullying can occur more frequently between 6th and 8th grade. She is considering establishing more pro-active programs on the issue of bullying. Next school year the MS will have a theme called HEART (Helping Everyone with Anti-Bullying, Respect and Tolerance). August 2018 will Kick-Off the year starting with an overview of the anti-bullying initiative at a school wide assembly. Also, development of the Kindness Club initiative which empowers students to speak up. The St. Joseph County Police Department will come in to talk about Cyberbullying. A Character Education Program will be established for all students. November through January for 10 weeks a school-wide book study about bullying will be held for 30 minutes once a week on an alternate schedule. April through May, for 6 weeks Cypress Website will be instituted to teach lessons from the HEART Program for 30 minutes once a week on an alternate schedule. This multi-faceted plan is said to be the most effective way to prevent bullying. Mrs. Scott stated that they will institute an Anonymous Reporting Program and will bring in the School Resource Officer weekly so the students can get to know Officer Adams.
 - Mrs. Bush, Principal of Olive Twp. Elementary School, stated that the elementary schools have been doing a lot of the same initiatives as the upper levels as far as offering Character Education Classes which include cyber bullying and anti-bullying curriculum. The Annual Anti-bully assembly is held along with an Anti-Bully Pledge yearly. Children are taught to report on their iPads their problems. Next year the Kindness Initiative will be implemented. Problem areas will be focused on and will be improved.
 - Mr. Holmquest discussed the LaPorte County School Safety Commission and the event that will take place called “The Tall Cop” Jermaine Galloway will present “High in Plain Site” Training and a Community Event being held Tuesday, March 20, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm CST at the LaPorte Civic Auditorium for parents. ALICE Training will be held August 2 & 3, 2018 at the Middle School in the LGI Room for all LaPorte County Schools. This is open to Business Owners, Hospital Staff etc. Suicide Prevention Training will be held August 6 & 7, 2018. Assessment of NPUSC Safety Plans and Buildings are assessed by the DOE. Local law enforcement will come in to assess all our buildings as well. Regarding social media and safety, Mr. Holmquest would like to impress upon parents to go home and check their student’s social media big 3; Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. You do want to follow them as it is shocking some of the things you might see.

- Dr. White closed stating that we are trying to send a message that we are challenging ourselves to do more with this entire topic. We welcome all public comments.
- Rich Shail thanked everyone for coming tonight and especially the presenters and all their hard work as it is very informative.
- Rich Shail introduced Mr. Mark Sundwall as the first presenter. Mr. Sundwall thanked the Board members and the administration for getting in front of this issue. He stated he does not want teachers armed for the protection of our students. He feels there is enough other tools to protect our students. He feels that a trained armed presence at each school would be able to take care of a situation quicker. He is happy to hear about the Raptor System and feels it may be a deterrent. He understands that the improvements will cost money and wonders where the money comes from to fund it. He also feels that no matter what the cost, you can't put a dollar amount on a child's life. Rich Shail thanked Mr. Sundwall.
- Rich Shail introduced Miss. Allison Schweller, student at New Prairie High School. Miss Schweller explained that as a student, she wants to be united to insure our schools are the best that they can be. Students shouldn't have to worry about their safety in school. Her mother sent a video of a safety system to Dr. White of a high school in Shelbyville, Indiana with an expensive security system. She asked if a student's life is worth it. Yes it is, she explained. What parent wouldn't pay to insure the safety of their child? Rich Shail thanked Miss Schweller commenting that she did a good job.
- Rich Shail invited the next community member, Brian Bechinski. Mr. Bechinski stated his concern that his students who currently attend Prairie View state that they are unsure of what to do in an event of an active shooter. This concerns him greatly. As far as teachers being armed, he feels it is a teachers right to be armed if they choose to be. Can fees be increased \$50 toward an officers pay to have one in each school or possibly volunteers. He offered to help in any way he can.
- Dr. White would like to address Mr. Bechinski's concerns. He wants to say that he agrees with Mr. Bechinski about the training. We have had drills once a semester as mandated by the state, however, it is clear that it is not enough. The only solution is monthly drills so students will know what to do.
- Rich Shail called Cathy Rea to speak. Ms. Rea presented the Board with a printout of different ways of locking doors. Also, on the issue of bullying, she feels that privacy protects the bully while the student who is being bullied is not. She feels that the teachers need to know the students being bullied and who the bullies are but they are protected more than the student bullied. She feels that if there are consequences for bullies perhaps it would deter them. Teachers cannot watch for patterns if they don't know what is going on between students in order to keep the bullied safe. She feels they need to all be made aware of these issues with students. Privacy once again is an issue.
- Vicky Schweller spoke on Shelbyville High School and their security. It is worth every penny. We don't need to arm our teachers. There are retired

veterans and officers who know how to use firearms that may need an income or may even volunteer as they know how to use firearms and are trained to do so. This is something to look into.

- Rich Shail concluded the work session thanking everyone who attended. He hopes it was informational for all. He stated that we are all learning and this world is changing fast which makes it hard to financially keep up. The state mandates forced upon us can be costly and the state doesn't fund their mandates. We feel we do very well here at New Prairie in being fiscally responsible with our community. Please keep in communication with us. We are listed on the website and we are here to listen. Please feel free to contact us as we are here for you.