

**Board Notes**  
February 24, 2025

The regular meeting of the School Board was held at 6:00 p.m., Monday, February 24, 2025, at New Prairie High School in the Cafeteria Annex with Mr. Phil King, Mr. Jason DeMeyer, Mr. Rich Gadacz and Mr. Rich Shail present. Dr. Paul White, Superintendent, was also present.

Mrs. Jill Smith was absent.

Mr. Phil King, Board President, reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

There was a motion by Mr. DeMeyer, seconded by Mr. Shail and approved 4-0-1.

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION**

Mrs. Tara White, NPHS Administrator of College & Career Readiness; Mrs. Angela Ruby, NPHS Counselor; Miss Michelle Twardus gave an in-depth presentation on the Indiana Department of Education's changes to the Graduation Requirements and Diploma Types that will be in effect starting with the current 8<sup>th</sup> Graders coming into their freshman year for the 2025-2026 school year. Details can be found on

[YouTube.com/@npusboardmeetings](https://www.youtube.com/@npusboardmeetings).

**CONSENT ITEMS**

The Board approved Consent Items as follows:

- (A) Minutes – January 27, 2025
- (B) Financial Reports
- (C) Claims
- (D) Payroll
- (E) Personnel Report as follows:

**CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
  1. Julie Cinal - ECA Resignation as NPMS PLC Leadership Member effective 2/3/2025
  2. Ron McVay- ECA Resignation as NPMS PLC Leadership Team Member effective 2/27/2025
  3. Casey McKim - Resignation as New Prairie High School Social Studies Teacher effective 6/30/2025. ECA Resignation as NPHS Head Varsity Football Coach effective 2/14/2025
  4. Tonya Aerts - Resignation as New Prairie High School PLTW Biomedical Science Teacher effective 4/4/2025. ECA Resignation as New Prairie High School HOSA Sponsor effective 6/30/2025
  5. Tina Trojanowski - Intermittent FMLA Leave as PVES 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher beginning 12/3/2024 through 5/27/2025
  6. Mark Stone - Intermittent FMLA Leave as Agricultural Science Teacher beginning 12/16/2024 through 3/16/2025
- Employment
- Employment - 2025 Summer School & Camp Staff
  1. Tara Curless - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  2. Vincent Dominello - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  3. Kim Stepp - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  4. Cassie Pavey - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  5. Julie Kirkham - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  6. Amy Wolfe - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 Staff Member
  7. Sarah Huff - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 Staff Member
  8. Lisa Smiertelny - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 Staff Member
  9. Kara Mamazza - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 Staff Member 1a.Ashley Duschek - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  11. Casey Gumm - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  12. Kelle Cartwright- HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  13. Cheryl Karczewski - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 Staff Member
  14. Sue Kozumplik- HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 2 Staff Member

15. Catherine Saylor - High Ability Summer Camp Staff Member
16. Janelle Hembree - High Ability Summer Camp Staff Member
17. Laura Schreiber - High Ability Summer Camp Staff Member
18. David Burden - High Ability Summer Camp Staff Member
19. Kristen Kleist - High Ability Summer Camp Staff Member
20. Kim Stepp - Kindergarten Jumpstart Staff Member
21. Cassie Pavey - Kindergarten Jumpstart Staff Member
22. Amy Schilla - Kindergarten Jumpstart Staff Member

- Employment - Extra-Curricular/Ancillary Duty
  1. Andrew Maez - NPMS Assistant Wrestling Coach beginning 2024-2025 school year
  2. Joe Hurt- NPMS PLC Leadership Team Member beginning 2024-2025 school year
  3. Lori Rose - NPMS PLC Leadership Team Member beginning 2024-2025 school year
  4. Bobby Whitenack - Olive Twp. Elementary Wrestling Coach for the 2024-2025 school year

- Adjustments

**CLASSIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirement
  1. Jessica Frye - Resignation as NPUSC Administrative Assistant to the Curriculum Director effective 2/27/2025
  2. Steve Kuntz - Resignation as Nutritional Services Courier effective 2/19/2025
  3. Ian Whiteman - Termination as NPUSC Bus Garage Mechanic effective 2/24/2025
- Employment
  1. Elicia Ackerson - Prairie View Elementary School Instructional Assistant start date pending criminal background check results
  2. Cara Holmes - NPUSC Bus Driver to take Bus 56 double LaPorte Special Education Route beginning 2/24/2025
  3. Cheryl Firanek - NPUSC Custodian at Prairie View Elementary start date 2/18/2025
- Employment - 2025 Summer School & Camp Staff
  1. Erin Jenkins - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 1 & 2 Staff Member
  2. Heather Alva - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 2 Staff Member
  3. Shannon Rypma - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 2 Staff Member
  4. Angela Deutscher - HFL "Be Your Best" Camp Week 2 Staff Member
  5. Jessica Finn - Summer Health Aide/Secretary
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
  1. Alexis Lichtenbarger - NPMS Assistant Girls Track Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
  2. Michael Benson - NPMS Co-Assistant Wrestling Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
  3. Cody Downs - NPMS Co-Assistant Wrestling Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
  4. Dan Luther - Olive Elementary Wrestling Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
  5. Phillip Oudhuis - RPES Wrestling Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
  6. Joshua Bolakowski - PVES Wrestling Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
- Adjustments
  1. Joshua Shriber, New Prairie Middle School Custodian moved to Rolling Prairie Elementary School as Custodian as of 2/3/2025
  2. John Mathews, Prairie View Elementary Custodian moved to New Prairie Middle School as Custodian as of 2/3/2025
  3. Jannie Ivankovig, New Prairie High School Registrar, to transfer to Administrative Assistant to the Curriculum Director beginning 2/28/2025

## REPORTS

### (A) Board President Report

- Mr. Phil King reported the 2025 Legislative update as follows:

#### Legislative Update 1

- Of the 1232 new bills introduced this legislative session (Long Session aka Biennial Budget Session) 184 (approx 15%) were education bills ← Down from previous years as typically around 20% of bills introduced during the budget session are education bills and 23% are during short session.
- Of those 184 education bills introduced, only 86 made it through committee → The remaining 98 are now either did not make it to committee or died in committee (such as HB 1136 - the bill that the NPUSC board passed a resolution on - did not receive a 2nd reading and thus died in committee). Should be noted, however, just because a bill died or did not make it into committee does not mean that bill has no chance - a bill that did move on to the opposing chamber could be amended to include it.
- HB 1681/SB 1 - Local Public Question
  - Provides that a local public question or referendum may be placed only at a general election. First and foremost - the NPUSC Board has not recently considered a referendum; however, with that being said - this would limit school corporations into asking the public to vote on passing any type of referendum every two years (including but not limited controlled projects, day to day operations and school public safety). This would tie the hands of school corporations and as a result could have them operating in the red which then ties the following bills into the mix...
- HB 1001/SB 1 - Budget/Property Tax Relief
  - Phases out the authority for the DLGF to permit excess tax levy that is based on assessed value growth which in turn will result in shortfall to transportation, maintenance and other operation fund items
  - HB 1001 cuts funding overall to education, decreasing the total percentage of the state budget from 51% to 48%. In addition - although there is an overall increase of approximately 2% increase to new monies going to education, it is not in relation to the overall picture as public schools would only see 1.3% - the other portion would go to the universal voucher program.
    - Should note - on the positive side - Special Education would see an increase in funding of 3.5% in 2026 and 3.6% in 2027; CTE would see an increase in funding of 8.7% in 2026 and 8.1% in 2027; and ELL would see an increase in funding of 8.6% in 2026 and 7.5% in 2027
    - On the not so positive side - the tuition support increase that New Prairie Schools will receive will look good on paper; however, two years ago when the legislation did away with book fees, they put money aside and sent school districts funds depending on their ADM in the amount of \$157.93 per student - schools were then reimbursed to pay for curricular materials. In this budget proposal, they will eliminate that funding and school districts will need to back out the \$157.93 per student from the funding formula as it will now be included in the tuition formula calculation to determine what new monies they will have to work with during negotiations with our teacher association partners.
    - Over a 3-year period, New Prairie schools would lose just shy under \$1 Million in operations under both plans. Governor Braun has said that if SB 1 or HB 1001 passes the opposing chambers as written - he will VETO the bills as he would like to see more cuts than has been approved. → There is another bill that made it out of the Senate (SB 518) in a 28 to 21 vote (Senator Bohecek voted in opposition to the bill - Thank you Senator Bohecek). More on this bill soon.
- HB 1230/SB 287 - School Board Matters
  - SB 287 barely squeaked by with 26 "yeas" - if it were one less this bill would have failed.
    - If it would pass the house, it would require school board candidates to claim party affiliation. Would also raise compensation from \$2000 to 10% of a starting teacher's salary in the district they would be representing (currently NP starting teacher's salary is \$44,500). In my opinion - school boards should continue to be non-partisan - furthermore, I personally do not see SB 287 making it past the house as HB 1230, its' companion bill, died by vote in the house with 64 Nays and 26 Yeas (8 non votes and 2 excused/absent) and will not move to the Senate (Should be noted that Representative Pressel and Teshka both voted in opposition to the House version of the bill and Senator

Bohecek voted in opposition to the Senate version of the bill - thank you to all three of them.

- SB 518 - Passed out of the Senate and is now in the hands of the House. If passed as written, this will make it so that public schools would have to share a portion of the property taxes collected (which goes into the operations fund) with charter schools.
- HB 1002 passed and is on its way to the Senate - this will eliminate a lot of “may” language that school districts have to abide by. In addition - eliminates certain policy programs, and amends the time period school districts have to elect officers to the end of January (currently Jan 15).
- SB 249 defines “academic needs of students” for purposes of the teacher compensation model.
- SB 146 raises minimum teacher pay from \$40K to \$45K (NP Schools is already above the State minimum) and would require schools to expend 65% of tuition support on teacher compensation (up from the current 62%).
- SB482/HB1201 would define “chronically absent” as missing 10% or more of a school year for any reason. Would also increase time for conducting the attendance conference from 5 days to 10 days.

(B) Superintendent Report

- Dr. White welcomed everyone present and online watching via [YouTube.com/@npusboardmeetings](https://www.youtube.com/@npusboardmeetings). Dr. White thanked the NPHS Staff and Counseling Department for the excellent presentation and work completed for the excellent presentation given. Dr. White specifically mentioned the 4-Year Plan documents that had to help give piece of mind to parents trying to navigate the changes and the courses needed for post high school plans.
- Dr. White congratulated the Dance Team on their successful season. The Boys and Girls Swim Teams did very well this year with some swimmers advancing to State. The Wrestling Team had 4 wrestlers advance to State Finals. Matthew J. Staples, NPHS Freshman, is the first to win State competition at his weight class in 102 years. This spring there will be winter sports teams brought in to a Board meeting to be recognized.

## ACTION ITEMS

- (A) The Board accepted the following Donations:
- NPHS received a donation of \$5,000 from the Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley
  - NPUSC Angel Fund received the following donations:
    - Mr. & Mrs. David Millar donated the following: \$100 in memory of Mrs. Jeanette Jasinski and \$50 in memory of Mrs. Judith Feece
    - \$80 from Amanda Dake for Middle School Students needed assistance
  - Prairie View Elementary received \$350 in Walmart Gift cards for student needs from the following donors:
    - Rolling Prairie Business & Community Assn.
    - Saugany Lake Conservation Club
    - Individual Donors
  - Prairie View Elementary received:
    - 30 Books for Mrs. Ernst Class from Mill Creek Gleaners, Doris Price
    - \$100 toward purchase of an AED from AMVets
  - New Prairie High School Robotics received the following donations:
    - \$100 donation/sponsor from Local #1485
    - \$200 donation/sponsor from James & Vicki Mick-\$200
    - \$200 donation/sponsor from Thermco
    - \$2,750 grant/sponsor from Gene Haas Foundation
- (B) The Board approved the 2026 Budget Calendar
- (C) The Board approved the Rolling Prairie Baseball Association Agreement & New Prairie Baseball Association Agreement for 2025
- (D) The Board approved the 2025 Summer Career Camps & Athletic Camp Dates
- (E) The Board approved the Closure for all Transfer Students, grades K-12, beginning February 1st for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year
- (F) The Board approved Overnight Field Trip Requests
- (G) The Board approved Revised Job Descriptions

- (H) The Board approved NPUSC Updated Transportation Agreement for 2025-2026
- (I) The Board approved the Renewal of the Google Workspace for Education Licensing for 2025-2026

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- (A) Mr. King read the following NEOLA Board Policies out loud for the 1st Reading of NEOLA updated Board Policies Volume 36, No.2, EDGAR UGG Volume 36, No.2 & Volume 37, No.1:
  - Po 0164 – Notice of Meetings – Technical Correction
  - Po 0164.4 - Meeting of the Board Defined - Rescinded Policy
  - Po 0165 – Board Meetings – Revised
  - Po 1130 – Conflict of Interest – Revised
  - Po 1213.01 – Staff-Student Relations – Technical Correction
  - Po 1220 – Employment of The Superintendent – Revised
  - Po 1230 – Responsibilities of the Superintendent – Revised
  - Po 1617 – Weapons – Revised
  - Po 2623 – Student Assessment – Revised
  - Po 3217 – Weapons – Revised
  - Po 4217 – Weapons – Revised
  - Po 5111 – Determination of Legal Settlement and Eligibility for Enrollment of Students without Legal Settlement in the Corporation; Proof of Indiana Residency – Revised
  - Po 5410 – Promotion, Placement, and Retention – Revised
  - Po 5460 - Graduation Requirements – Adopt
  - Po 5500 – Student Conduct – Revised
  - Po 5610– Suspension and Expulsion of Students – Revised
  - Po 5772 – Weapons – Revised
  - Po 6110 – Grant Funds – Revised
  - Po 6111 – Internal Control Standards and Procedures – Revised
  - Po 6112 – Cash Management of Grants – Revised
  - Po 6114 – Cost Principles – Spending Federal Funds – Revised
  - Po 6250 – Required ADM Counts for the Purpose of State Funding and Verification of Residency for Membership – Revised
  - Po 6325 – Procurement – Federal Grants/Funds
  - Po 6550 – Travel Payment and Reimbursement/Relocation Costs - Revised
  - Po 7217 – Possession of Firearms and Weapons by Visitors – Revised
  - Po 7310 – Disposition of Surplus Property – Revised
  - Po 7450 – Property Inventory – Revised
  - Po 7540.03 – Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety – Revised
  - Po 7540.04 – Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety – Revised
  - Po 7540.09 – Artificial Intelligence – New Policy
  - Po 8400 – School Safety – Revised
  - Po 8420 – Emergency Preparedness Plans and Drills – Revised
  - Po 8600.01 – Student Safety in Transporting - Revised

The Board did not have any questions regarding these policies. Mr. King stated that these policies will be available to the public online following this meeting. He continued that these policies will have a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and a vote to adopt at the next regular Board Meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Mr. King congratulated all New Prairie students and teams for their great success during this winter season.
- Mr. King reminded all that the next regular Board Meeting will be March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. King asked if the Board had any further business. The Board had no further business to discuss. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.