
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, NAPERVILLE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 203, DUPAGE AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS, HELD AT Kennedy Junior High School, 2929 Green Trails Road, Lisle, IL 60532
February 3, 2025, AT 7:00 pm. Closed Session at 5:00 pm

Call to order

President Kristine Gericke called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Board members present: Kristine Gericke, Kristin Fitzgerald, Amanda McMillen, Joe Kozminski, Charles Cush, Melissa Kelley Black, and Donna Wandke.

Administrators present were:

Dan Bridges, Superintendent, (exited at 5:15 pm and re-entered at 5:40 pm)

Michael Frances, Chief Financial Officer, (joined at 5:40pm)

Dr. Mark Cohen, Deputy Superintendent/High Schools, (joined at 5:40pm)

Dr. Meredith Haugens, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources (joined at 5:40pm)

Lisa Xagas, Assistant Superintendent for Strategy and Engagement (joined at 5:40pm)

Closed Session

Donna Wandke moved, seconded by Charles Cush to go into Closed Session at 5:00 pm for consideration of:

- Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or legal counsel to determine its validity.
- Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(2) Collective negotiating matters between the school board and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

Those voting yes: Cush, Fitzgerald, Gericke, Kelley Black, Kozminski, McMillen, and Wandke. Those voting no: None.

The Board of Education entered closed session at 5:01 pm

Meeting Opening

Charles Cush made a motion, seconded by Amanda McMillen to return to Open Session at 7:01 pm. A roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes: Fitzgerald, Wandke, Kelley Black, Kozminski, McMillen, Gericke, and Cush. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

Welcome and Mission

Kristine Gericke welcomed all and read Naperville Community Unit School District 203's Mission Statement.

Roll Call

Board members present: Kristine Gericke, Kristin Fitzgerald, Charles Cush, Melissa Kelley Black, Joe Kozminski, Amanda McMillen, and Donna Wandke.

Student Ambassadors present: None.

Administrators present: Dan Bridges, Superintendent, Allison Boutet, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, Mark Cohen, Deputy Superintendent/High Schools, Michael Frances, Chief Financial Officer/CSBO, Chuck Freundt, Assistant Superintendent for Leadership and School Services, Meredith Haugens, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Rakeda Leaks, Executive Director for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, Katie Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, Melissa McHenry, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Patrick Nolten, Assistant

Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, Jayne Willard, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Lisa Xagas, Assistant Superintendent for Strategy and Engagement.

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by the Board of Education

Good News:

Today, we celebrate **203 Day** in partnership with the Naperville Education Foundation! Observed on February 3rd—the second month and third day of the year—this special day is all about **gratitude, giving, and celebrating** the people, places, and moments that make Naperville 203 exceptional. Let's take this opportunity to **show appreciation, perform acts of kindness, and give back** to make our community even stronger!

Mayor Scott Wehrli and his student interns attended. Mayor Wehrli read a proclamation noting this as District 203 day.

Four of our junior high FIRST LEGO League teams recently competed at the Illinois Sectional Tournament for FIRST Robotics, demonstrating their creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. These students worked hard to design, build, and program their robots while tackling real-world challenges through innovation and collaboration. Congratulations to all who participated!

At River Woods Elementary, our entire school is reading ***The One & Only Ivan***, exploring themes of friendship and freedom together as a community. Along the way, students have learned fascinating facts about silverback gorillas and even compared their arm spans to Ivan's. As part of a special community project, River Woods came together to donate funds to support the Lowland Gorillas at the Brookfield Zoo.

Lincoln Junior High welcomed our students for a Winter Wonderland Bash hosted by our amazing student council! A huge thanks to our amazing kiddos, our Lincoln Home and School who partnered with us for this fun event and a special shout out to our parent volunteers who helped make the event a success! We look forward to hosting more in the future.

In January, **Madison Junior High** students had the opportunity to "book a trip" around the world in the Learning Commons. Through this interactive experience, they explored different countries and cultures by engaging with books, artifacts, and activities that highlighted global traditions, histories, and stories. Students discovered new perspectives, broadened their understanding of the world, and celebrated diversity through literature, making connections between their own experiences and those of people from different backgrounds.

Donna Wandke made a motion, seconded by Charles Cush to move 8.06, Innovative School Experience Recommendations to prior to Public Comment and leave it in its current place on the agenda for follow up questions. A roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes: Cush, Fitzgerald, Wandke, Kozminski, McMillen, and Gericke. Those voting no: Kelley Black. The motion carried.

Innovative School Experience Recommendations

- Our outcomes for tonight include reviewing the stakeholder feedback and insights from community, staff and students and present our final recommendations for Board Approval.
- As we reflect on what school is for, it's important to remember that school is not just about helping students succeed in school or preparing them for the world we grew up in. Instead, it's about equipping them for a future we can't fully predict. Our true vision is for our school district

to help build a passion for LIFELONG learning - that means we need to prepare students for success AFTER they leave school.

- As a District we have achieved remarkable academic success, and our students, staff, and community have made strides in creating a sense of belonging and know there are still disparities that some of our students face in their learning, sense of belonging and extracurricular experiences. Our goal is not just to increase academic performance, but to lift every single student's sense of belonging. This is the work of school improvement and our reason for our innovative school experience work and proposed changes we have presented.
- Our strategic blueprint Commitment 1.3, which calls for an analysis of innovative school day models, has been part of our focus since before 2018 and was added to our blueprint in 2021 and is the focus of our presentation this evening.
- In an effort to seek input from the community regarding the experiences our students need to be successful when they leave us, we held two focus 203 events with multiple opportunities for community members to participate.
- Last Friday, the district sent an email to all families that included drafts of the recommendations proposed for next school year. The email received more than 44,000 views as of last Wednesday at noon and led to over 10,000 visits to our new Innovative School Experience webpage designed to provide all stakeholders with information. Between Friday at 3:00 and last Wednesday at noon, we received 222 Let's Talk messages, representing approximately 1% of the recipients of the message. 139 of those submissions expressed disagreement with the proposal, and 131 of those comments related to start/end times within the proposal.
- Our team has analyzed the feedback trends from the Focus 203 events and the Let's Talk submissions to make revisions to our proposal along the way. Community feedback included the need for our students to experience real-world learning that is set up in flexible, personalized and equitable ways.
- Teams conducted in-depth research using data on attendance, behavior, and academics, and participated in both in-person and virtual site visits to inform the development of foundational beliefs for the recommendations. They then collaboratively developed and built consensus around the recommendations for their level, representing the perspectives of their colleagues. The teams worked together to ensure alignment and consensus on the final recommendations.
- Staff input was gathered through a variety of methods to ensure broad participation and feedback. The Fall 2023 Staff Morale Survey identified "Recognition and Value", "Time & Resources" and "Ownership & Input" as key areas impacting morale. Listening and feedback sessions were held at each level throughout the year, along with targeted breakout focus groups for specific areas like MS Performance Music and Elementary PI. An internal website was also created as a request from the Staff Morale Committee to keep staff informed and engaged with updates on the strategic blueprint work.
- Throughout the past year, the Innovative School Experience (ISE) design team emphasized transparent communication by providing regular, level-specific updates to staff across Early Childhood, elementary, middle, and high school levels. All staff were kept informed through updates from Superintendent Bridges in the Spring and Fall of 2024, with additional communications in December and January. Key resources, such as FAQ documents based on listening session themes, were developed for elementary and middle school staff and shared in January 2025. High school staff received presentations on the proposed schedule during meetings in December, ensuring alignment across all levels. The Innovative School Experience Internal website, launched in August 2024, provided a central location for staff to learn more about the ongoing work at each level. Additionally, the Superintendent's Cabinet and the NUEA Executive Board held collaborative IPC meetings, discussing the ISE at five key dates since March.

- Student voice was gathered through surveys, focus groups, and meetings with student leaders at both the middle and high school levels to inform recommendations for the Innovative School Day Experience.
- We gathered valuable feedback from students in grades 6-12 through surveys and focus groups to inform the Innovative School Day Experience. We received input from the Middle School Student Leadership Focus Group in December, high school Principal Advisory teams throughout the fall, and the Superintendent Student Advisory Committee in both September and January.
- Students report the desire for more flexible and personalized learning experiences with increased choices and autonomy in their learning.
- Block scheduling was designed to provide work-based learning experiences at the high school and increase exploratory periods at the middle school. It also offers students more opportunities for hands-on, deeper learning at both middle and high school.
- Students report the desire for a supportive and balanced school environment and emphasized the importance of reducing academic stress, balancing workloads, and opportunities for teacher-student interactions.
- Design teams incorporated the desire for additional What I Need (WIN) time at all levels to ensure there are opportunities to connect with teachers during the day and receive individualized support and enrichment.
- Students at both Middle School and High School expressed the need for later start times and shorter school days with flexible options to better accommodate life outside of school.
- Now, we are sharing current feedback from focus groups who reviewed the proposal –
- Flexible and Personalized Learning Experiences
- Students want more project-based, hands-on, and interactive learning opportunities that engage them and allow for independent exploration and deeper learning.
- Flexible schedules should provide students with increased choice and autonomy in their learning, allowing for personalized academic paths and expanded course offerings.
- Both middle and high school students emphasize the importance of reducing academic stress through balanced workloads and opportunities for teacher-student interactions that foster meaningful connections.
- Students are asking for time to focus on social-emotional well-being, with better opportunities for peer interaction and extracurricular involvement.
- Students at both levels highlight the need for later start times to align with their developmental needs and improve focus and energy.
- Our proposals at each level are centered on increasing student engagement and deepening belonging, while delivering robust, aligned and personalized instruction that authentically and comprehensively prepares all students for their future.
- Our designs honor staff need for comprehensive professional collaboration, and build space for continuous professional learning, while thoughtfully considering the operational impacts of shifts.
- The ISE committees conducted a review of current conditions in relation to lived experiences, requirements, and district constraints. They identified core values and beliefs about student experiences, structures, and future considerations. Based on Strategic Blueprint 1.3, the committees then developed recommendations to enhance the school experience, supporting students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development. Additionally, they determined and recommended optimal learning conditions for students and staff, providing rationale and examples.
- Administration committees identified unstructured time during arrival and dismissal as a contributor to discipline concerns. They worked with teams to adjust drop-off times, considered

developmental impacts of start times, collaborated with a transportation consultant, created schedule options, and gathered leadership feedback for a final recommendation.

- The proposed schedule for early childhood introduces significant improvements to better meet the developmental needs of our students while supporting our educators' ability to plan and collaborate.
- Under this proposal, 3-year-olds would attend only in the morning for a slightly shorter session of 2 hours, and 4- to 5-year-olds would attend in the afternoon for the same 2.5-hour session as before. This change allows for tailored instruction aligned with each age groups' developmental needs.
- Similar to our current structure, on Mondays, only students requiring additional supports would attend for targeted interventions, ensuring they receive the focused help they need. Additionally, on Friday mornings, 3-year-olds would not attend, giving educators the time to conduct home visits, provide community events, and collaborate with colleagues.
- This schedule also allows educators to have 55 minutes of daily planning time—a significant increase—enabling them to design innovative and individualized instruction for every student.
- The elementary design team has identified several key proposals to address the current challenges and create a more consistent and effective school experience for our students and they propose adding 15 minutes of time to the length of the student day.
- They propose built-in time for individualized interventions and extensions to ensure that all students receive the support and enrichment they need.
- The team emphasizes the importance of establishing a daily morning meeting routine with explicit social and emotional learning opportunities to foster a sense of belonging and build essential life skills.
- They propose maximizing instructional time while accounting for non-instructional tasks like snacks and transitions.
- The team recommends increasing opportunities for collaboration, both within schools and across the district.
- The schedule includes a dedicated 15-minute homeroom period each day, ensuring time for morning meetings and explicit social and emotional learning. This routine fosters a sense of community while setting a positive tone for the day.
- The schedule accounts for necessary transitions and non-instructional tasks without taking time away from core content areas.
- The middle school design team has proposed several impactful changes to address current challenges and create a more balanced and enriching school experience for our students.
- They recommend increasing math instructional minutes to 53-60 minutes per day to align with best practices and provide deeper support for student learning. Attached to the math course is a 20-minute "What I Need" period, during which students can receive additional math intervention or enrichment from their math teacher, or support from other specialists and related service providers.
- The team proposes incorporating time for individualized interventions while ensuring students maintain access to exploratory offerings, so no one has to sacrifice opportunities for support or enrichment.
- They also suggest adding a weekly anchor day that includes advisory and a point of connection with all classes occurring. This day would focus on building community, strengthening SEL and Profile of a Learner skills, and supporting connections across content areas.

- The team emphasizes the need for deeper learning opportunities in math, science, and social studies, with flexible time built in for hands-on projects, interdisciplinary connections, and collaboration. A flexible modified block for social studies and science means that teachers have the autonomy to collaborate and decide if a full block or split period is instructionally appropriate.
- They propose adding innovative exploratory choices to expand opportunities for students to explore their interests, develop new skills, and continue to build out pathways aligned with the high school.
- Schedule includes a FLEXIBLE MODIFIED BLOCK which maintains a 2-period English Language Arts instructional block, increases mathematics instructional time to 53-60 minutes daily, aligning with best practices to ensure students have adequate time to deepen their understanding with a 20-minute WIN or What I Need period attached to math, offering individualized support for any content area including math tailored to student needs.
- Social studies and science are organized into flexible time blocks that can be combined or separated depending on the instructional needs of the day. This structure supports deeper learning and hands-on projects in these critical subjects.
- Students will have access to two daily exploratory classes, plus Physical Education, ensuring opportunities for enrichment and personal growth. Band and Orchestra would now be embedded in the schedule, eliminating the need for students to miss core classes to participate. Additionally, students receiving interventions will still be able to take an exploratory class, ensuring equity and access for all.
- Daily PE and lunch with recess remain a part of the daily schedule, meeting students' physical and social-emotional needs. We are looking at offering a variety of options for students to participate in during the recess period as many students have voiced, they want recess time, but do not all want the traditional outdoor recess as it is now.
- The recommended proposal is to have a weekly anchor day which would be on Wednesday. There will be an advisory to start the day and then students will progress through all of their classes.
- One of the key shifts recommend by the design team is a focus toward deep learning. This approach emphasizes inquiry-based, project-oriented, and collaborative work that allows students to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios.
- When student support time, including WIN and SOAR, were added to the high school schedule, class periods were made shorter, making it harder to meet our deep learning goals. The level design team seeks to increase the time for student support, while minimizing any impact on classroom instructional time.
- We recognize the importance of teacher collaboration. The proposed schedule seeks to increase opportunities for teacher collaboration to support the high-quality learning experiences our students deserve.
- To meet the goals of our desired state, the high school design team recommends a block schedule model. This framework includes four block days and one anchor day in a typical five-day week.
- On block days, each course is scheduled for 85 minutes of instruction, with the third block extended by 52 minutes to allow for lunch. Lunch periods can occur at the beginning, middle, or end of this block, and upperclassmen will retain their off-campus lunch privileges. Block days are organized into two clusters (A and B), maintaining the current number of courses while adding an additional two 40-minute periods for interventions or homeroom.

- The anchor day, shown in the middle of the week, follows a traditional high school schedule with 46-minute periods, ensuring each course meets three times in a five-day week. In shortened weeks, the anchor day would be eliminated to balance the schedule.
- It's important to note that this is not the same block schedule used during pandemic learning.
- This model doubles the time available for interventions and student support, reduces time spent in unstructured passing periods, and compacts the school day by 35 minutes, going from 7 hours and 25 minutes to 6 hours and 50 minutes.
- While the student day is shorter, instructional minutes remain maximized. The time used for these tasks has been converted into WIN and SOAR time which allows for more instruction in subjects where students may need additional support or the opportunity to extend learning. The flexibility to add time during the day in areas where students may need extension or support is designed to address the feedback we received from students and staff, and is in alignment with our level belief statement.
- The current school day schedule presents significant challenges that affect both student well-being and operational efficiency. Extensive research, including guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, emphasizes that adolescents need later start times to align with their biological sleep cycles. Adolescents experience a natural shift in their circadian rhythms, making it difficult for them to fall asleep early and wake up as early as our current schedule requires. This misalignment contributes to difficulties in focusing, increased stress, and negative impacts on mental health and academic performance. On the other hand, younger children tend to wake up earlier, making them better suited for an earlier start time.
- The current nested scheduling model, with our five levels (Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Connections), also creates significant inefficiencies in our transportation system. Schools' start and end times are too closely aligned, with only a 15-minute gap between them. This results in buses being spread thin, creating long wait times for students before and after school, particularly for high school and middle school students. With only 30-40 minutes needed per bus route, this tight overlap creates delays and forces students to wait outside for supervision, leading to safety and logistical challenges. Additionally, high school students often arrive as early as 6:45 a.m. for their 7:45 a.m. start, and middle school students may wait up to 30 minutes outside the building before school begins.
- The staggered schedule we are proposing will maximize our existing fleet and driver resources, reduce wait times for students, and improve the overall student experience. By adjusting start and end times, we can create a more efficient transportation system, alleviate supervision challenges, and ultimately provide a school day experience that better supports both the academic and personal needs of our students.
- We examined the current route lengths, times, and ridership, which revealed significant inefficiencies in our transportation system due to tight overlaps between school start and end times.
- We took into account the strengths and challenges of our current structure, including how it impacts supervision needs, particularly at the middle and high school levels where students often arrive too early or wait too long for supervision. We also looked at data regarding daily sunrise and sunset times, which helped us evaluate the feasibility of adjusting school schedules. We considered how our current bus fleet is utilized throughout the day, both for regular routes, field trips, and extracurricular activities, as well as transportation infrastructure challenges, such

as the difficulty in adding to our fleet or increasing partnerships with transportation providers due to nationwide shortages.

- We reviewed the bus tier schedules of surrounding districts to ensure our approach would be feasible within the broader regional context. We also considered the potential impacts of the proposed changes on all stakeholders, including students, families, and staff. Our proposal reflects the recommendation from our National Bus Service consultant, who identified areas for improvement while acknowledging the constraints of our current system.
- The proposal takes into account the limited flexibility we have in terms of coverage when drivers are ill or absent, ensuring that our solution remains sustainable under challenging conditions.
- Currently, start and end times for all levels are aligned in a way that creates inefficiencies in transportation and student well-being; for the 2025-2026 school year, we recommend adjusting start and end times.
- The recommendation for adjusting school start and end times was developed by the Operational Team, Steering Committee, and our National Bus Service Consultant Firm, in close collaboration with principals, district leaders, and transportation experts. The order of start and end times was determined based on a combination of research-backed findings and operational constraints.
- Elementary schools are scheduled to start at 7:45 a.m. due to the natural sleep patterns of younger children, who wake up earlier, and the operational need to use the entire bus fleet for their routes. A later start time could create more childcare burdens for families and disrupt transportation for all level field trips and middle and high school extracurricular activities. High schools have a nearly non-negotiable 3:10 p.m. dismissal time, which aligns with regional competition schedules and ensures that students can continue participating in extracurriculars or internships. Middle school dismissal is set for 3:40 p.m., which, while later than other levels, works better with the proximity of their level conference schools, making it easier to mitigate the extracurricular challenges than if high school was last. We are also working to ensure that buses can depart promptly for away events at the middle school level.
- Our transportation consultant conducted simulations that showed buses need at least 35-40 minutes between routes, which we have decreased already with our proposal. Due to infrastructure constraints and the nationwide bus driver shortage, expanding the fleet is not feasible. Additionally, minimizing the gaps further would exacerbate supervision challenges, especially for elementary students who would require additional supervision if their start time were pushed later.
- While structures themselves aren't inherently innovative, they are essential in creating the conditions for innovation to thrive. These changes are designed to ensure that our students' time in school is purposeful, engaging, and aligned with their developmental and academic needs.
- We propose a staggered school day to make better use of time and resources. By also ensuring that students arrive at school as close to the start of the day as possible, we reduce unstructured time and maximize instructional opportunities.
- We also propose shifting the elementary start time earlier, while delaying start times for middle school and high school to better align with the physiological needs of adolescents. Research tells us that later start times improve sleep, alertness, and overall well-being for teens.
- Finally, no school day will start before 7:30 a.m. or end later than 4:00 p.m., ensuring that our schedules are both developmentally appropriate and efficient for students, families, and staff.

- While we believe these proposed schedule shifts and structural changes will benefit all students, we are particularly excited about the positive impacts for students requiring additional supports or special education services.
- These structural changes lay the groundwork for a more innovative school experience, one that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of the future while supporting their growth and success today.
- Now that we've outlined the proposed structural changes, we'll transition to discussing the outcomes and metrics that will help us monitor the success of these shifts.
- We will outline the three-year professional learning outcomes that will support our staff in effectively implementing and adapting to the recommended shifts in the school day structure and experiences.
- Plan, Design, and Implement Effective Instruction:
We will measure student mathematics outcomes by tracking increased proficiency and growth across all student groups through internal and external district assessments. Professional learning engagement will be assessed by teachers' participation in sessions on block scheduling, with exit surveys showing an increased understanding of its purpose and benefits. Lesson design implementation will be reviewed to ensure lesson plans reflect intentional chunked instruction, clear transitions, and varied learning activities. Additionally, WIN/SOAR interventions will be data-driven, with students demonstrating measurable improvement in targeted skill areas aligned with our School Improvement Plan targets.
- Promote Student Engagement, Critical Thinking, and SEL:
Student outcomes will be evaluated through fewer tardies, improved attendance rates, and a reduction in disciplinary incidents during unstructured time. Active learning strategies will be assessed by classrooms incorporating collaborative or inquiry-based learning at least twice per week, as seen in walkthroughs and teacher lesson plans. Students will also demonstrate executive functioning skills, such as time management and task prioritization, which will be measured through student reflections or teacher observations.
- Build Meaningful Relationships that Cultivate a Sense of Belonging:
We will assess collaborative learning opportunities by observing lessons that include structured peer-to-peer interactions like group projects or team-based problem-solving. Student perception of belonging will be gathered through surveys showing that students feel connected to their peers and valued in the learning environment. Classroom culture and inclusivity will be evaluated through walkthroughs, ensuring evidence of inclusive teaching practices, such as student voice opportunities, culturally responsive instruction, personalized feedback, and strong teacher-to-student relationships.
- As we move forward with implementing the new schedule and instructional practices, we anticipate challenges. We believe our students deserve our resilience and efforts. Families will need time to adjust to the new schedule, and staff will need to adapt to the updated schedules and new instructional practices. There is potential impact on contract negotiations. Establishing consistency in homework expectations within a block schedule will be important, as will refining the transportation schedule once ridership data is available. We will review middle school extracurricular transportation and start times to ensure alignment and efficiency ongoing throughout implementation.
- Throughout this process, we've sought to tell the full story of our charge, and our work.
- School improvement has always been - and always will be - our North Star. Today, our commitment to that North Star extends beyond the traditional roles of school systems and

structures; it's about responding to the evolving needs of our students. An educational system truly fulfills its purpose when it actively cultivates conditions that align with the changes our students are calling for—both explicitly and implicitly. Together, we are not merely reacting to change; we are architects of a new era in education. As we build these new foundations, we are shaping a future where every student's potential is recognized, cultivated, and empowered. We are excited by this work and the opportunities it provides for every student.

Board Questions/Comments:

President Gericke stated that the Board will go through questions after the presentation then will take Public Comments and will ask additional questions when it come up on the agenda later in the meeting. She then reviewed Board Agreements.

Board member noted she had looked at all district documents and taken into account the feedback I have gotten from the community. She showed emails that she received and only two were in favor. She prepared a statement. The hardships for families and staff far outweigh any potential benefits. Many parents have complained that the Superintendent and Board of Education does not listen to their concerns. I would like to see tonight's meeting work on repairing and strengthening the community's trust. Unfortunately, I believe the Board intends to support the recommendation of the Superintendent before the next election.

Board member indicated that he sent questions ahead. Had the opportunity to speak to a number of parents and also the emails that were sent. The biggest challenge is the upsetting of routines for families. A lot of information has been shared but some has only been shared recently. The school times changes are when it really when hit home for folks. The ordering of the scheduling was also brought into question. Those are the overall sentiments that I heard. The information around scheduling was only shared recently and people felt blindsided. Those are the concerns that I heard from the community. How do we plan to measure the success of the changes? Understanding that change is hard, and here are some of the challenges. How will we get through those?

Superintendent Bridges recalled to slides 49-50 where we have listed some of the challenges. We will use WIN/SOAR to offer additional support to students. Looking at deeper learning experiences. Recognize that change is hard and it will impact everyone. Design teams were asked to build a schedule around the stated outcomes. We will continue to look at our SIP plans.

Mrs. Willard added that we do have a three-year PD plan that will be loaded into BoardDocs.

Thank you for the hard work that has gone into the development of this plan. I want to focus on the additional time and attention to Math at the Middle School Level. The addition of the WIN and SOAR to give additional support. The changing of the times affects a lot in the community. It will impact working families. Can we have a phase in? Is this the schedule that makes the most sense? Do you use the whole fleet for all levels?

Mr. Frances stated, currently the answer is no. In the proposal we are looking to maximize the efficiencies of the fleet. Most are being used at all levels. Fewer buses being used at the Junior High as some are needed for athletics/activities at the end of the day.

There is almost an hour time difference between the elementary and middle school level.

Mrs. Boutet noted that currently buses are arriving at 7:30 for an 8:00 start.

How will this new schedule change that?

Mrs. Boutet stated that the busses deliver the JH and HS students early to get to the Elementary routes. All buses are being used for elementary. One support we have not mentioned is we have two community partners who are willing to provide before and after school programs at the MS level for families.

Would that be an additional cost for families?

Mrs. Boutet responded, yes. For families who are free and reduced eligible, there would be waiver or reduced fees.

What have you done to work with community partners?

Mrs. Xagas noted that we have reached out and heard back from most and they are willing to work with the schedule.

I appreciate what has been said about the feedback we have received. In the slide of other districts that were shared, what districts have Elementary first? What is the research?

Mrs. Matthews responded there are districts that have elementary going first. The research shows that Elementary students need consistency and will adapt to new routines.

What time do some who start earlier start their day?

Mrs. Matthews stated she would need to get some specifics.

What is the Professional Learning around preparing teachers for a longer class period? Where is the planning for restructuring the curriculum and would it be delivered in time to be ready for next year?

Mrs. Willard stated the answer is both. I will make sure you get the detailed plan. There is some Professional Learning that has already started. With any shift in practice, we will have Professional Learning in place.

Interested in the block schedule and I think they work well especially for the sciences. There will be bumps in the road and there is a learning curve. Any transition like this is challenging.

Thank the community for attending. Exciting to see so many people be passionate. It helps us understand the concerns and what we need to look at. We need to look at why we are looking at this. We are not able to help all students be successful. I appreciate you taking a look at all the ways we can do better because we have to. In looking at Math data, we have not caught up to our pre pandemic numbers. The block would add not only minutes but focused time. Can you speak specifically at what you looked at in Math and what can be used for students who are in need of accelerated growth to help them catch up? How will you use this in the JH and HS levels to help students graduate and meet standards?

Mrs. Boutet stated that the MS is excited for the increased time. We will be adding over 80 minutes per week and the WIN time would add another 20 minutes per week which will put us in the best practice area.

Mrs. Willard added that we looked at data with an EC-12 lens. Some of these changes will help develop our youngest learners. The WIN time will increase the support at all levels. We will work with the whole system. To increase math minutes across all levels matters.

In looking at the HS group, I worked with the Profile of a Learner. Thanked the community for participating in that as well. How does the block help the Pathways and internships for students?

Mrs. Willard stated work-based learning experiences will benefit from a block schedule. The HS is doing an audit of courses. We have to look at those and how they align with skills. We have to have students be critical thinkers not just with content. The skills will be embedded.

Thank you for being here for sharing the research and the concerns shared by our audience. As we continue to the point where the Board makes a decision, I want to understand how there will be continued input from community, families, staff and students.

Mrs. Xagas noted we are talking about expanding ways to get feedback.

As we get that input, is there way for us to pivot?

Mrs. Xagas stated we have been doing that. Last week as we heard from families about childcare at the MS level, Mrs. Boutet reached out to some of our partners.

Mrs. Boutet added we also have to continue to look at the goals. By utilizing all the data, the ISE design teams would have to continue to meet. On a daily basis there is some review of data on how can we make tomorrow better than today. There is a lens of transparency around the plans. We will have to continue to get data around what families really need as regards to childcare, athletics.

I appreciate the global research as well as using the data from families. I appreciate the looking at before and after school care but some families are not going to be able to afford that.

Before school clubs, will be undone. We need to be careful in how we address that with staff.

Talk about the guiderails.

Mrs. Boutet remarked that many schools do have before and after school clubs. Principals are going to gather data on these before and after school activities.

I would hate to see swimmers having to practice any earlier than they do now. If we are going to research, we have to be true to the SEL, mental health.

Dr. Cohen responded the point in all of this is to get students more sleep and not have earlier swim practices.

You have answered a lot of my questions in this presentation.

I appreciate that the presentation has evolved with the questions that have come from the Board and community. The Board has directed their efforts for supporting all students. In my time on the board, we have continued that. I see this recommendation as a continuation of that. We have not addressed the time factor, for both students and staff. That being said, I support the recommendation as it addresses the time but I feel we might be doing this too quickly. Can we phase this in as it impacts the entire community? Can we do some in 2025-2026 and some the following year? This gives time for the Professional Learning and families have time to make the adjustments they need to make. I don't want to see this go away. This is an opportunity for us to learn from other districts who have made similar changes. We have to make sure all students are at the center of this. We can't be satisfied with the recovery we have made; we have to keep looking forward.

My questions have all been answered.

Superintendent Bridges thanked the Board for what was shared. The recommendation is made of multiple parts. In 2018, as part of the first strategic blueprint, it was much like this time, a cross of people across the district. We did not bring a recommendation. The recommendation came forward based on the decisions of the design teams. We believe these shifts need to happen and need to happen in the 2025-2026 school year. These are based on data from staff. Regarding the start and end times, we tried to be transparent with a window but when you see the actual times, you really see how it impacts families. We cannot lose the recommendations of the design teams.

Is the Board okay to allow the audience members who signed up for Public Comment to make their comments?

It doesn't sound like we will be ready to vote on a recommendation.

Public Comment:

President Gericke gave the parameters.

Many Staff, Parents, Community members and Members of the NUEA Executive Board shared concerns with the Innovative School Experience recommendations presented. The comments reflect significant concerns from teachers, parents, and community members regarding proposed changes to school start and end times, block scheduling, and the decision-making process. Several key concerns were raised including:

- Middle School students learn better in the morning, but the proposed schedule pushes their start time later.
- High School students will lose instructional time, with concerns about reduced effectiveness of block scheduling.
- Elementary students face an earlier start, conflicting with research on young children's sleep needs. Later end times conflict with after-school activities, leading to early dismissals and reduced participation.
- Parents and teachers worry about work-life balance and how late schedules will impact family time.
- Childcare availability is a concern, as many centers do not open early enough for adjusted schedules.
- Many feel the timeline is rushed, with insufficient time for input or preparation.
- Surveys show overwhelming opposition, with low support from teachers and parents.
- Staff and community members express frustration over lack of involvement in planning.
- Block scheduling is seen as ineffective, with fears it will negatively impact learning and instructional time.

- Critics argue the research supporting block scheduling is selective and does not align with local needs.
- Staff feel excluded from meaningful discussions and express concerns about additional unpaid workload.
- Reports of teachers being called out for voicing concerns further erode trust in administration.
- Many request at least a year to properly plan and prepare for any changes.
- Suggestions include exploring transportation alternatives and reconsidering scheduling modifications.
- The overwhelming sentiment is that while change is not inherently opposed, the current proposal lacks adequate planning, transparency, and support. Stakeholders urge the Board to slow down, gather more input, and consider alternative solutions that minimize disruption to students, families, and staff.
- This [link](#) will share the results of the survey mentioned.

Concerns have been heard by the Board. We consider you to be a vital part of our community.

Action by Consent:

It is each Board member’s responsibility to prepare for each meeting and to effectively express our concerns either to the Superintendent or the Board President in a timely manner. Board members have also agreed that avoiding surprises is paramount in displaying respect to all District Administration. The Board has tasked itself to send questions in advance of each meeting to the Superintendent to allow the provision of the best possible response for the community. It also allows for efficiency during the community’s meeting. Those same questions as well as new ones may be asked in Open Session. For transparency, please note if any questions were asked earlier. Mr. Bridges did you receive questions from Board members? Superintendent Bridges responded that he received questions from all seven Board members. Mrs. Patton confirmed that emails with a link for the Board agenda were sent and delivery confirmed at 4:09pm, Thursday, January 30, 2025.

1. Adoption of Personnel Report

	Effective Date	Location	Position
APPOINTMENT-ADMINISTRATION			
Jay Wachtel	7/1/2025	NNHS	Principal
RESIGNATION-CERTIFIED			
Christina Kale	8/10/2025	NNHS	DC-Special Education
REVISED CONTRACT-CERTIFIED FULL-TIME			
Stacie Bauman	09/30/24 - 5/27/25	ARECC	Early Childhood Teacher
LEAVE OF ABSENCE-CERTIFIED			
Abigail Zeeb	4/7/25 - 5/27/25	Highlands	3rd Grade
RESIGNATION-CLASSIFIED			
Jennifer Brecker	2/26/2025	Prairie	Special Education Paraprofessional
EMPLOYMENT-CLASSIFIED FULL-TIME			

James Kuntzi	1/27/2025	North	Special Education Paraprofessional
Jacquelyn Peters	1/27/2025	Elmwood	Special Education Paraprofessional
Jana Dawson	1/28/2025	Kingsley	Special Education Paraprofessional
Knight Middleton	2/3/2025	Madison Junior High	Custodian

Donna Wandke made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Amanda McMillen. Those voting yes: Kelley Black, Wandke, Gericke, Cush, McMillen, Kozminski, and Fitzgerald. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

Dan Bridges introduced Jay Wachtel as the next principal of NNHS. Jay stated NNHS is an awesome place and he has been there 23 years.

Board of Education reports:

Board member Kozminski reported that last Tuesday he visited Ranchview with the Superintendent. Saw the plans for the addition. Learned about some new initiatives at the school. Saw some students problem solving and having fun with Math.

Vice President Fitzgerald reported from State Assessment Review Committee-talked about the proficiency standards. They will be sent to us in the future for public comment.

Board member Cush visited Scott School-amazes me of the knowledge Principals have of the students in their building. This student had come with an idea of planting a garden. Struck by the composure of this student.

Board member McMillen visited her adopt a school at Beebe. We open it up for parents and teachers to share their thoughts. Mrs. O'Neill shared her thoughts as did some K teachers.

President's Report

President Gericke drew attention to a couple of documents. One is regarding the Bills and Claims process and that the role of the Board is governance. The other is in regards to a comment made in a public comment regarding a conflict of interest of board member Amanda McMillen and her work at the Alive Center. It has been determined there is no conflict of interest.

Superintendent Bridges

No report.

Discussion without Action:

General and Optional Fees

Superintendent Bridges noted these are presented annually. Administration recommends approval. He reviewed the increases and noted they are highlighted in yellow.

Board Questions/Comments:

Will these fees change if we go to the Block Schedule?

Superintendent Bridges responded no.

The increase to general fees of \$4, what is the process to determine what these fees will be?

Mr. Frances noted that this increase comes at the request of the building principals. The general fee was increased last year for the first time in 20 years. The dollars go to the building principals to use in their buildings.

Do you get community feedback?

Mr. Frances stated that we do not generally do that. Our fees are the lowest in our benchmark districts.

There is concern that sometimes the community that we ask for the maximum in the Tax Levy and they feel nicked and dimed. Who do we get feedback from?

Superintendent Bridges stated it appears on the agenda in the Open Meeting and the Board would receive any feedback then.

Are these annual fees?

Superintendent Bridges responded, yes.

Mr. Frances added that for EC it is a monthly fee.

This is a registration fee.

High School Course Fees

Superintendent Bridges noted that these fees are also reviewed annually. Look for action at the next meeting. Fee changes cover increases in printing fees, publishing fees. Some are removed.

Board Questions/Comments:

Do they cover the full cost per student? For example, AP drawing, does the fee cover the costs per student for that class?

Superintendent Bridges responded, yes.

Establish Hourly Rates of Pay

Superintendent Bridges noted these are also reviewed annually. These are for 2025-2026.

Dr. Haugens noted the addition of the substitute maintenance at the request of B&G

Board Questions/Comments:

Thank you for looking at these.

Want to be fully staffed-concerns about substitutes, how will the change in hours impact our getting subs?

Dr. Haugens responded that regardless of the schedule, we are always looking at ways to fill the positions.

PRESS 117 Updates

Superintendent Bridges noted this was the first look at these policies. Please review and send questions to him and we will load in BoardDocs.

Board Questions/Comments:

None.

First Reading PRESS Policy 4.80 Accounting and Audits

Superintendent Bridges noted this policy update is unrelated to the PRESS updates. This is to clarify our practices into policy, recommendations from the audit.

Board Questions/Comments:

A statement from the IASB as to what makes a good Board member was read. So, one of the issues brought up at the last Board meeting was Bills and Claims. As you know, I have a lot of issues with how we go about doing this. Board member reviewed the process.

President Gericke stated this is not an agenda item.

Let me finish my statement and you will see how this fits. I am not to be interrupted. I have the floor.

We have to adhere to the published agenda. The agenda is what the community expects to be discussed.

I have serious concerns about how our budget is overseen. We need to have more transparency with the community. We need more input from the community. A lot of school districts have a Board committee that gets feedback from all stakeholders.

I am going to propose that this policy is what is different from the PRESS recommended policy that we send it to IASB so they may want to include these changes in the PRESS policy.

Mr. Frances stated we have talked to IASB to include these changes to the PRESS Policy. In the meantime, our changes are above and beyond what PRESS has in their policy.

Superintendent Bridges asked if we could have Counsel review it before the next meeting.

Glad the auditors made this recommendation.

This has come about because there were issues with the audit.

Mr. Frances stated there were no issues with the audit. There would have been additional documentation if there had been issues with the audit. There were some minor changes that the auditors noted we should add to our policy.

The purpose of an audit is not only to find any problems but to also make recommendations on how we can do some things better.

Mr. Frances noted the auditors feel these procedures should be in policy.

Innovative School Experience Recommendations

Board Questions/Comments:

I would still like answers to the questions that she submitted earlier. I need a lot more information. I am confused and frustrated by the process.

Superintendent Bridges stated it is clear the Board will not be ready to make a decision on February 18. We will bring it back without action.

Want to thank all those who came to speak. We learned a lot about how the staff is feeling. I want to ensure there is nothing said to our staff who spoke.

I am alarmed that staff were brought in after they spoke up.

Thank you to the staff. Because it is hard to tell your boss you don't like what they are doing. Thank you.

Want answers to issues raised today. Interested to looking at what some alternatives would be to roll this out more slowly.

Appreciate all the feedback. Agree with waiting until we get all the responses. There are a lot of positives but we need to take a little more time.

My frustration is with the process and that the staff pointed that out. Appreciate all the work the Administration has done.

This whole entire thing is all of us working together to make things better. We appreciate all the intent of the work. We have an amazing district. We will find the right path.

I agree with what has been stated. The process is necessary. This is the public's meeting and we are here to balance all the information. All that Administration has done is appreciated.

Discussion with Action

None.

Old Business

Superintendent Bridges noted he has the info and will get to the Board ASAP.

New Business

None.

Upcoming Events

Superintendent Bridges noted:

Feb 17 Presidents' Day

Feb 18 is next meeting Board of Education meeting at KJHS.

Adjournment

Charles Cush motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:48pm, seconded by Donna Wandke.

Those voting yes: Fitzgerald, Kelley Black, Wandke, Gericke, McMillen, Kozminski, and Cush. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

Approved: February 18, 2025

Kristine Gericke, President, Board of
Education

Susan Patton, Secretary, Board of
Education