

NMS PTO Meeting Notes & Recap

May 28, 2026 | 11:30 a.m.

Attendance

- Deb Dozeman (Parent)
 - Kristen Lenzion (Parent)
 - Travis Thomsen (Principal)
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Principal's Report

Mr. Thomsen provided an overview of the school year and shared updates on school culture, academics, staffing, and upcoming events.

School Climate & Student Experience

Reflection Zone Success

One of the biggest successes this year continues to be the Reflection Zone, supervised by Mr. Matthews. The program was created to help students address minor behavioral issues quickly and return to class without requiring a formal office referral.

Prior to implementing the Reflection Zone, administrators often spent significant time handling student discipline issues, resulting in students waiting extended periods before returning to class. The Reflection Zone has helped reduce those interruptions while allowing administrators more time to support students, staff, and families.

As a result:

- Office referrals have dropped dramatically from nearly 5,000 referrals two years ago to approximately 1,600 this year.
- Students are spending more time in class and less time waiting in the office.
- Administrators are able to focus on more significant student needs and school improvement efforts.

Student Council & School Activities

Student Council continues to play an important role in building school culture by organizing:

- Spirit weeks and dress-up days
- Red Ribbon Week activities
- School-wide parties and celebrations

The final all-school party is scheduled for May 29, with the eighth-grade farewell party taking place after promotion ceremonies on June 4.

PAC Strong Store

The PAC Strong Store remains a successful incentive program that rewards students for demonstrating positive behavior.

Students earn PAC Strong tickets and can redeem them for:

- Snacks and treats
- Small prizes
- Special lunch opportunities with friends
- Other rewards

Parents have been very supportive of the program through donations and Amazon wish list contributions.

Academic Updates

Sixth Grade Teaming Grant

Mr. Thomsen shared updates on the district's teaming initiative at the sixth-grade level.

North, Central, and West Middle Schools received a grant through Arizona State University and the Michigan Education Workforce Initiative designed to strengthen sixth-grade teaming practices.

The grant provides:

- Professional development opportunities
- Funding for staff training
- Visits to model schools in Arizona that have successfully implemented teaming programs

Positive outcomes already being seen include:

- Increased student attendance
- Reduced behavior concerns
- Improved academic achievement
- Greater student connection and sense of belonging within their teams

The district will continue participating in the grant program over the next several years.

Math Curriculum Review

The district is currently reviewing middle and high school math curriculum options.

Three curriculum programs are being piloted:

- One pilot has already been completed.
- Additional pilot units will take place during the fall.

The Curriculum Department will review:

- Teacher feedback
- Student achievement data
- Survey results

A recommendation is expected to go before the Board of Education during the winter, with implementation likely in a future school year.

Staffing Updates

North Middle School continues to experience very little staff turnover.

Updates include:

- One special education teacher is leaving to pursue other opportunities.
 - The position has already been filled by Jessica Jeffrey, who brings previous experience at North Middle School and within Portage Public Schools.
 - One shared position with Portage Northern High School remains open, with interviews scheduled for next week.
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Upcoming Events

May 28

Student Showcase

- Student work from multiple grade levels and content areas will be on display.
- The event has expanded beyond elective classes and now highlights learning across the school.

May 29

6th Grade Growlers STEM Day

- Students will participate in STEM activities and attend a Kalamazoo Growlers game.

All-School Party

- Open to all students immediately after school.

June 2

6th Grade Field Day

June 3

Talent Show

June 4

8th Grade Promotion Ceremony

- Held at Husky Stadium at 4:30 p.m.

8th Grade Farewell Party

- Takes place immediately following promotion ceremonies.
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PTO Business & Discussion

Spirit Wear Fundraiser

The group discussed creating a new spirit wear program for North Middle School.

Topics included:

- Creating NMS-specific apparel in addition to existing Northern apparel options.
- Building stronger school pride and student identity.
- Offering apparel that includes both school branding and extracurricular activities.
- Avoiding large upfront inventory purchases by using an online ordering model.

The proposed vendor:

- Handles production and fulfillment.
- Provides a fundraising benefit to the PTO.
- Gives the PTO approximately \$5 per item sold.

The group agreed that launching spirit wear before the start of the school year would be ideal, particularly around:

- Sixth Grade Orientation
- Open House
- Back-to-School events

Providing sample items for families to see and feel before ordering was also discussed.

PTO Bylaws

Members discussed reviewing the PTO bylaws over the summer.

Discussion included:

- Updating outdated language.
- Simplifying sections that are overly wordy.
- Reviewing bylaws used by other PTO organizations in Portage.
- Creating a document that better reflects the goals and structure of the current PTO.

The bylaws will be shared with interested parents for review before being formally adopted during the 2026-27 school year.

Action Items

PTO Leadership

- Continue recruiting PTO officers and committee chairs for the upcoming school year.
- Establish regular meeting schedules for 2026-27, including additional options for times that works for working parents or those unable to attend meetings during the work day.

Spirit Wear

- Finalize vendor partnership.
- Select apparel options and designs.
- Create promotional materials.
- Prepare sample items for Orientation and Open House.
- Launch sales before school begins.

Bylaws

- Post draft bylaws for parent review.
- Collect feedback over the summer.
- Prepare final revisions for approval in the fall.

Communication

- Begin regularly checking and utilizing the new PTO email account.
 - Continue growing communication through social media and parent outreach.
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Closing

The meeting concluded with discussion about the opportunities ahead for rebuilding and growing the NMS PTO. Participants expressed enthusiasm about increasing parent involvement, strengthening school spirit, and creating a solid foundation for the upcoming school year. The summer months will focus on organizing leadership, updating bylaws, and launching initiatives that will support students, staff, and families beginning in the fall.