**An Insider’s Guide to NPA 2019-20\***

\* Keep in mind that this is a fluid document and is subject to change at a moment’s notice. See Charter School.

**Alumni Day.** By tradition, the first day back after winter break (January 6, 2020) is alumni day with our former students running panel discussions on specific topics about college life for upper classmen. Participation in these sessions is voluntary; in other words, teachers may opt out for their classes if there is a pressing curriculum need. In addition, upperclass teachers can allow an alumni guest speaker panel to invade their class(es) for a designated session. Expect a lot of “guests” that day. Turnout is unpredictable but often is pretty high.

**Assemblies.** During the course of any school year, there are a variety of assemblies held in the gym. Each grade level has an assigned location for seating, with the upperclassmen seated in the bleachers (seniors far right). Students are expected to walk to the gym silently and be quiet and still throughout. All teachers are expected to attend these events, supervise students throughout, and model polite and attentive behavior (no grading, no phone “play,” and no sidebar conversations during presentations).

**Blackouts.** On the school calendar, there are a few days designated “Blackout,” which means there may be no scheduled events after 8 p.m., as the students have an important test the next morning.

**Building History**:

* Old Building/Old Main (100’s & 200’s): the second home to NPA, originally a Gore building, houses most admin offices, the main reception area (the one with all the college pennants), mailboxes and the copier most likely to be working (the building in which interviews are conducted)
* Gym and Arts Wing (300s): the first addition, houses music classes, PE/Health, the stage, and the faculty lounge. Our Athletic Director, Mike Elder, has an office here as well.
* Nu Building or Bob’s Building (800-814): includes the 6th grade wing as well as the (mostly) middle school wing, a second reception area with a copier named Bob Marley who seems to vacation frequently, and the office of the assistant principal (Vada Visockis)
* NuNu Building (815-820): includes our latest addition, with 6 classrooms and a fabulous dance studio. Underneath, there is a workshop for Joe Gaun and a kiln room.

**Career Day**. Sponsored by the guidance department, students attend panel discussions focusing on different career paths. The speakers are people—typically NPA parents—who have expertise in a particular field. The discussion usually includes a description or demonstration of work activities, as well as a summary of the education required to become part of the field. New last year, this was run in the gym, with students visiting different career stations.

**Charter School:** a public school that is ever fluid and dynamic (see: nail jello to the wall)

**Conferences**: parent/teacher conferences are conducted in the fall, allowing parents to sign up for 10 minute time blocks with each teacher. In advance of the parent sign up period, teachers will be given an opportunity to block out 30 minutes of break time. This is a good time to print out grade reports on all students who will have a parent attending conferences. During the conference, be sure to point out missing assignments, as well as any other behaviors students can embrace to improve performance in your class. Conferences this year are October 7 (Monday) – October 9 (Wednesday). During this time, we run an early release schedule. Thursday-Friday will be fall holiday (also a homework holiday), but this is primarily for teacher recovery.

**Confidentiality.** We are legally obligated to keep personal information about students private. *Please take this seriously.*

* Do not speak or write about students in any public arena.
* In emails, please use initials only.
* Do not allow students access to your computer as this also gives them access to confidential records.

**Course Evaluation**. See student survey.

**COW**: computers on wheels. See Technology.

**Curriculum Maps**: Each year teachers are expected to create or update curriculum maps for each class. The template for these maps are available from the Dean of Faculty. The chart includes information about each unit, including timing, teaching materials, texts, and assessments. These documents are expected to be detailed overviews and are typically 4-5 pages in length (1 page/ quarter. An alternative format would be to create/print Planbook units, which compiles the same information. Completed curriculum maps are submitted to the Dean of Faculty.

**Dances.** Throughout the school year, STUCO (student council) runs a variety of dances and other socials at both the middle and high school levels. In addition, Prom Committee (composed of Juniors) sponsors a junior/senior prom—this year on May 9. Teachers are expected to chaperone at least one dance per school year.

**Day of Play.** In an effort to minimize disruptions because of spring assemblies, STUCO organized a Day of Play on Monday, May 18, an early release day. (In prior years, this was always on a Friday but the AP schedule forced us to relocate this special day to Monday. Activities included Talent Show, Words of Wisdom, and yearbook distribution and signing, as well as fun carnival type games, including a dunk tank (weather permitting).

**Dean of Faculty.**

**Dusty’s** is the walled concrete patio on the Sparrow Avenue side of the building. It is used for organizing during evacuation drills and hanging out during lunch.

**Duty**. All faculty are expected to perform 2-3 duties per week. It is essential that you remember to do these! If you are unable to do your duty, get someone to cover. This includes days you will be off campus. These duties can be before or after school in crosswalks directing traffic or during lunch, indoors or out. The schedule will be created during preplanning after teachers submit requests.

**ED PD.** Early Dismissal (every Wednesday starting in 2019-20) Professional Development. Please refrain from scheduling appointments during this time. All teachers are expected to be on campus until 3:45 on these days.

**Event Planning** and other forms, like Check Request, are kept in the mail room (left side of right side of room). Step stool available for the height challenged. All events (like field trips) must be completed and approved by the assistant principal (principal for out of town field trips) prior to confirmation and advertisement. Electronic versions are available in “Forms” on the website.

**Extended Schedule/Days.** Every other week, Tuesday and Wednesday goes to a block schedule where we have 90 minute classes. Tuesday: P1, P3, P5, P7. Wednesday: P2, P4, P6 with a 1:40 p.m. release. The afternoon is used for professional development.

**Face Book.** A visual guide to all adults employed by NPA updated yearly in August.

**Family Link** is a live portal (of Schoolmaster) through which students, parents, ILS teachers, and admin can view student progress. It is **essential** that grades are kept up to date, so missing work will be noted immediately. The Dean of Students will pull the D & F report every Monday.

**Field Trips of Note**. These are regular yearly field trips that involve multiple days and may decimate your class during that time.

* Zion. Attended by high school students taking APES and Earth/Space/Env.
* Band Competition. Occurs every other year with changing destination.
* Grand Canyon Youth River Trips. Affects middle and high school (2 trips) in the spring.

**Final Exams**: occur at the end of Q1 and Q2. (The one at the end of Q1 is really a midterm, but most people still refer to it as a final. Don’t ask.) All classes are expected to have some sort of “final” assessment that includes a rigorous and significant writing component. The last week of each quarter is split between a reading periods (2 days), during which no new material is introduced, and final exam period (3 days run on alternate schedule). Teachers proctor their own exams.

During finals, we have 90 minute time blocks. On day 1 of finals (Wednesday in the fall), periods 1-3 will have exams. If a student has three core classes during periods 1-3, s/he may petition her/his teachers to change one of these exams. Day 2 will include exams for periods 4-5, and Day 3 will include exams for periods 6-7.

No early finals. If a student is going to miss any of the final days, s/he will have to make up the missed finals at a later date (January for the December exam and over the summer for the spring exam).

Teachers may determine the weight of their finals in Schoolmaster, even though there is a preset percentage. The typical range is between 5 – 20%.

Spring Finals

* Senior Finals. In the spring, seniors have finals early, typically on the Monday-Tuesday prior to Graduation. These will be organized separately from the main finals.
* AP Exams. Any student who takes an AP exam is not required to take a final in the related class. If, however, the student opts out of the AP exam, s/he must be given a final in that class.

**Flag IT**: see Technology

**Formative Assessment**: are essential daily assessments that demonstrate that all the students have mastered the day’s concept. These could be in the form of exit tickets or a quick write in response to a pointed question about the day’s material. When students are not “getting” the material, formative assessments demonstrate this as well and allow teachers to rethink and reteach the lesson before moving on to additional material. Please document Formative Assessments in Planbook.

In *A Close Look at Close Reading*, Moss et. al. explain:

“Formative assessment is an ongoing process that asks teachers to *identify* standards, *plan* related instruction, *teach, assess* student performance, *analyze* collected information to identify patterns of student need, and *plan* forward steps or revision sot instruction that will address the perceived needs. . . . [T]he cycle of formative assessment begins with identifying the lesson purpose; making note of the standards that will serve as the foundation for the lesson; and plotting instruction in logical, purposeful segments that will advance students, step by step, toward the achievement of those standards.” (172-3)

**Google Calendar**. NPA maintains a Google calendar on its Webpage (northlandprep.org) to track non-classroom events (like Homecoming, Prom, Conferences, etc.). If you are planning an approved event that will affect more than your own class, like a field trip, it must be put on the Google calendar. The calendar guardian is DianaLynn Cody.

**Graduation** occurs on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 2 p.m. This event is our own personal version of this auspicious occasion. It includes baby pictures, so bring Kleenex. All faculty are expected to attend and participate. School is dismissed early to accommodate this expectation.

**Homework Holidays**: occur at the end of each quarter (fall break, winter break, spring break) + Thanksgiving break. This means that teachers may not have tests, essays, projects, homework, etc. due the Monday or Tuesday after these significant breaks. To reduce stress, students really need a mental break from school. No exceptions please.

**Jail.** Every afternoon, the school is “swept” for abandoned student stuff. The stuff is kept in “jail” in room 108 and may be retrieved by the student for $1.

**Kick-Off Days** are mandatory planning days for all teachers. Please make summer plans accordingly. New teachers are contracted to attend 5 days prior to the start of school; returning teachers are contracted to attend 3 days prior to the start of school.

**Learning Objectives:** teachers are expected to post a learning objective every day that is tailored specifically to the day’s lesson. The best learning objectives include a “know” (what the students will learn, usually indicated by an active verb like “analyze” or “evaluate”) and a “show” (how the teacher will know that the student has learned the “know,” usually demonstrated through a formative assessment). These should be documented in Planbook each day as well.

**Letters of Recommendation.** Teachers are often asked to write letters of recommendation for students, especially those of us who teach upper classmen. Due to the large number of seniors who make this request, we now have a questionnaire for students to complete to make this process easier for letter writers. See Dean of Faculty for the actual form. In addition, our practice has been not to give copies to students, as they are considered more credible to the recipients if students do not have access to them because then we are free to write anything we want on them. That being said, if you cannot write something nice…decline the request.

**Monday Memo.** This weekly email contains pertinent teacher/staff/admin information about all things NPA, including scheduling information and professional responsibilities. Please read it weekly so you know what is going on.

**MPR**: Multi Purpose Room, located in the Nu building. See Mrs. Cody (receptionist in Nu Building) for availability.

**NHS**. National Honor Society. Students are selected according to academic and behavioral criteria. NJHS is the middle school version of this society. Yearly, teachers will be asked to help with the selection process.

**Observations**

* Observations are drop in—so they probably will be a surprise to you.
* Observations occur throughout the school year and take three forms.
  + Formal Observations require the observer to sit in your class for about 45 minutes. These require that you fill out a form explaining the context of the lesson as well as meeting with the observer to review the written observation.
  + Pulse Checks (new in 2018-19) is a mid-year review, with teacher feedback. They were designed to improve teacher understanding of their own status, as well as, as a bridge to the Summative Evaluation. They require a meeting with the observer.
  + Informal Observations can be any where between 5 minutes and a full class period. These use the same observation form but are intentionally more limited in scope. They do not require any supporting paperwork or a conference.

**OneCall.** This phone app is used as a communication tool during emergency events (Lockdowns, specifically) and occasionally for important group messages.

**Parent Night**: an open house for Grades 6-12 on September 10, 2019 for parents/guardians (no students) to have a meet and greet with their kids’ teachers. We run a regular schedule, except that each “class” is only 7 minutes long. Parents follow their child’s schedule. This is a time to orient parents to your expectations and the larger goals of the class; it is not a time for parents to express individual concerns about their child. Insist they schedule a conference if they try this. Creating a short handout with key information is useful for guiding your “talk” but is not required.

**Prep Rally**. NPA at its nerdiest. This yearly tradition is a pep rally to encourage our students to try their best on standardized testing. As one might expect, it occurs prior to spring state testing. Typically, admin (Steve Danner) rewrites song lyrics as a way to get students excited about standardized testing. If you are really lucky, you will never hear us sing our version of Journey’s, “Don’t Stop Believin.”

**Prom**. See Dances

**Protocol for Noncompliant Students**, students who do not do submit work in a timely manner

1. Privately, talk to student about the issue, reminding him/her of the consequences
2. Contact parents
3. Alert the ILS (study hall) teacher about the missing work
4. Involve Assistant Principal (Middle School) and/or Principal (Principal)

**Schoolmaster** serves as both our attendance and electronic grading system.

* Attendance must be taken in the first 10 minutes of every class period. (Note: after taking attendance, switch to another page, so it knows you have been there—weird but true.)
* Grades. Keep all grades up to date, so stakeholders know immediately if there is missing or unacceptable (D and F) work. Grades are due every Monday morning.
  + Homework and other minor assignments must be graded and returned within a week.
  + Essays and Large Projects must be graded and returned within two weeks.

**Semester Exams.** See Final Exams

**Senior**: a term used to refer to our students who see themselves as the most entitled, independent and yet simultaneously, the most needy and sentimental. Who can blame them, they live the entire school year somewhere between, “I am out of here,” and “Pleeeeeze don’t make me leave.”

**Senior Dinner** or “Finishing School.” The seniors are invited to attend a dinner during which they are taught how to behave in a formal social setting. This event is paid for by tax credit or other donations.

**Senior Triangle**. An area behind the main reception desk for seniors alone. They usually spend their ILS period here, after checking in with their ILS teacher for attendance. This is a privilege and not a right. This privilege is reserved for those seniors who are academically eligible, maintaining a C or above in all classes.

**Sevies.** A term of endearment for the 7th graders.

**Sex Ed** is delivered to 7th and 9th grades by the county health department typically in the spring. Teachers may be in of the room while these sessions are taught; this is a personal choice. This is an opt-in program so not all students participate.

**Sixers.** A term of endearment for the 6th graders.

**Snow Days/Delays**. Toni makes the call by 6 a.m. and posts it on the NPA webpage. Check regularly in the winter, especially if the NWS is forecasting an incoming storm. Delays mean we start 2 hours later (10:00/10:15), and we are on an alternate snow day schedule. If a delay occurs on a Early Release Wednesday, the early dismissal (1:15) is cancelled. Teachers may also be alerted through OneCall.

**SST**. The purpose of a Student Study Team is to identify struggling students who may need interventions to be successful.

**Standardized Testing.** Because we are a school, we test our students in the usual ways. Expect disruptions. Erin Wilkinson is our testing coordinator. Be nice to her—it is a challenging role.

* AZ Merit. These are state mandated and created tests that test students on the Arizona State Standards (essentially, Arizona’s brand of the Common Core Standards). Expect disruptions in time and place during these tests. This affects grades 6-8 and some high school (Grade 10).
* AIMS Science. This is still administered to 8th and 10th graders in the spring.
* ACTs. This test will be given to Grade 10 and 11. This will occur during the school day in spring.
* PSATs/SATs are not administered on campus. However, students may take them in Flagstaff during the year.
* AP Exams are given in May per College Board’s designated schedule. In most years, these exams are administered on campus. This schedule affects many of our upper classmen and may decimate class attendance.

**STUCO**. Student Council, occurring at both the middle and high school level.

**Student Surveys**. These mandatory surveys are administered near the end of fall and spring semesters to provide teachers essential feedback from their primary stakeholders, their students. The feedback from these surveys is only reviewed by the teacher at this time. Teachers are encouraged to use these surveys as a learning tool, as a means of improving instruction, dismissing the extreme outliers.

**Summative Evaluations/Conferences.** Summative assessments are the end product of the yearly evaluation loop.  Teachers assess themselves, reflecting on areas of success, as well as areas in need of improvement for the schoolyear.  This is done on the Summative Teacher Evaluation Form, which was built on the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards. Administration also completes the assessment on each faculty member.  Conferences are held in May with an eye on planning for the next schoolyear.

**Talent Show.** Students show off their gifts (or lack thereof), competing for the grand prize. (See Day of Play)

**Technology**:

**Computer Use.** Students are NOT permitted to use teacher computers. This is an important security issue.

**Emails are Public Record**. Do not put anything in a school email that you do not want to see on the front page of the paper.

**Passwords**: Do NOT keep/post important passwords anywhere visible to students.

**Tech Support**: Flag IT assists us with our technology woes. If you need their help, submit a service ticket using the life preserver icon found bottom right drop “up” screen. They will need your computer number and a screen shot of any concerning error messages. Toni is our tech master, but most of us can also help create a service ticket.

**Tech in the Classroom**. If you are doing a project that requires laptops or ipads, you can checkout one of these carts on the electronic calendar designated for this purpose. Plan ahead, our technology is in high demand. In the old building, carts will be housed in the closet on the science hall (downstairs). In the new building, carts will be located in the multi purpose room (MPR). Please do not move carts between buildings.

**Webpage: NPA**. This site contains a lot of important information, thanks to Beth. Use your Webpage password to access all sorts of forms and information for NPA teachers.

**Webpage: Teacher**. Our online public presence is each of our webpages. It is important to make them welcoming and to keep all stakeholders up to date on upcoming assignments and due dates.

* Embedded Google calendar. The following video explains how to embed Google calendars: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbr7URdbZrs&t=18s>
* Planbook links. Another means of providing stakeholders with information is by making portions of Planbook open to students. The link for this can be included in your webpage.
* Google Classroom. For those teachers using Google Classroom, link the calendar created by Classroom to keep stakeholders up to date. It is also helpful to include the class code.

**Words of Wisdom**. Seniors create videos, speeches, dramatic readings, poems, etc., to pass on their “words of wisdom” about NPA culture to underclassmen. Most of these are clever videos that both poke fun and provide keen insight. Don’t miss these. (See Day of Play)

**Yearbook** is created in-house by students under the ever-cheerful supervision of Jill Proudfoot. Occasionally, throughout the year, there will be picture requests/opportunities. She will also need a bit of help from teachers for the yearbook signing party that is a yearly tradition (See Day of Play).

**301 Money.** This additional payment is made to teachers twice a year. The amount varies by 1) what is supplied by the state (which is based on tax money), and 2) the number of points received on the Summative Evaluation.