

August 14, 2017

Dear Staff,

The purpose of this letter is to officially kick off the 2017-18 school year! I hope you have enjoyed the summer break. I am looking forward to seeing all of you as we begin the new school year.

The importance of our work becomes clearer to me every day. I encourage you to revisit the moment when you decided to work for a school. My decision was made while working for the Bronx Y.M.C.A. in an after-school program. I saw the difference I could make by serving others. It is important – more than any other point in our lifetimes -- for us to embrace the altruistic nature of public education. We must prioritize connecting with our students, making them feel valued, and modeling acceptance. I cannot think of a time when it has been more important to do our jobs well. Strong relationships, high-quality instruction, wise use of data, and a commitment to continuous improvement is our recipe for success.

I am excited for the implementation of the Second Step curriculum in Kindergarten-8th Grade classrooms. I am excited to observe the implementation of the peer helper program at Northfield High School. Our commitment to social/emotional learning, rooted in our strategic plan, will make a difference for all students. Thank you in advance for your efforts to support this important instruction within our school cultures.

Also rooted in our strategic plan is this Fall's operating levy and bond referendum election, scheduled for November 7, 2017. The first question will ask voters to revoke the current operating levy and replace it with an operating levy increased by \$470.15 per pupil. Passage of the operating levy is critical to ensure our current programming is sustainable given the chronic underfunding of Minnesota schools by the Legislature. The second question, contingent upon the first question passing, will ask voters to authorize the District to sell \$109 million bonds to finance the components of the Master Facilities Plan. This includes constructing a new elementary school at the same location as the current Greenvale Park Elementary site and repurposing that building as an early childhood center, modest renovations or additions at Bridgewater Elementary, Sibley Elementary, and Longfellow School, constructing a new high school on the current high school property, and razing the existing high school. The elementary projects are projected to cost \$30.5 million and a new high school is estimated to cost \$78.5 million. You can find additional information on the District's web site.

One of my goals as Superintendent is to be a regular and effective communicator. Effective communicators use a variety of strategies and modalities. Please read the semi-monthly *District Staff Newsletter* for important information about the District. You can also check out my #nfdlead blog at: <https://northfieldschools.org/nfdlead/>.

There are also a number of 'housekeeping' issues that need to be addressed at the beginning of each school year. One of these 'housekeeping' duties is to provide notification of policies that we have a responsibility to review. These policies are listed on the page following this letter. All policies can also be found at: <https://northfieldschools.org/about/school-board/policies/>.

Our school year will be filled with successes, opportunities, and challenges. I hope you will embrace all three of these conditions as they present themselves.

Sincerely,



Matt Hillmann, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

It is the responsibility of each employee to read and be familiar with the following policies that can be found on the School District's website. They are linked below for your convenience.

Policy 102– Educational and Employment Opportunity

Procedures for Policy 102

Policy 409 – Employee Publications, Instructional Materials, Inventions and Creations

Policy 410 – Family and Medical Leave Policy

Policy 413– Harassment and Violence

Procedures for Policy 413

Report Form for Policy 413 (Religious, Racial or Sexual Harassment or Violence)

Policy 414– Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse

Procedures for Policy 414

Reporting Form for Policy 414

Policy 415– Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults

Procedures for Policy 415

Policy 418 – Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School

Policy 419 – Tobacco-Free Environment

Policy 441 – Use of Technology and Telecommunications Systems by Employees

Policy 514– Bullying Prohibition Policy

Reporting Form for Policy 514

Policy 522– Student Sex Nondiscrimination

Reporting Form for Policy 522

Policy 526 – Hazing Prohibition

You can also view all policies at <https://northfieldschools.org/about/school-board/policies/>