

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Minutes

January 13, 2025

District Office Boardroom

1. Call to Order

School Board Chair Claudia Gonzalez-George called the regular meeting of the Northfield Board of Education of Independent School District No. 659 to order at 6:18 p.m. Present: Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Miller, Nelson, and Quinnell. Absent: None. This meeting was open to the public, live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted to the school district website.

2. Agenda Approval/Table File

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

- Congratulations to Allison Karl and Molly Albers who participated in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Essay and Speech competition. Each wrote an essay and speech on the topic: "Is America Today Our Forefathers' Vision?" Allison's essay earned first place, and Molly's essay earned runner-up in the local competition
- Northfield High School Teacher Kevin Dahle was acknowledged and awarded the VFW Citizenship Education Teacher Award by the Northfield VFW. Kevin was also selected as the VFW's first District Teacher of the Year, which encompasses 28 Southeastern MN Communities. Mr. Dahle will now compete at the VFW's state competition, which includes over 200 Minnesota communities.
- Congratulations to Audrey Brien, Lucy Gorden Mercer, Helena Holleran, Max Mazzariello, and Amargan Nega for their acceptance into the 2025 Strings and Orchestra Teachers Association (MNSOTA) Middle Level All-State Orchestra. Soren Perkins and Mia Sahlin were also selected as alternates. Minnesota students in grades 7-9 auditioned to participate in this ensemble and will perform in conjunction with the Minnesota Music Educators Convention on Saturday, February 15 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.
- Anna Forbord and Aki Gupta, were selected as Northfield High School's 2024 MSHSL Triple 'A' Award winners. The Academics, Arts, and Athletics Award, commonly known as the Triple 'A' Award, honors high school seniors throughout the state who have a 3.0 or higher-grade point average and who participate in League-sponsored athletic and fine arts activities. Both Anna and Aki will now move into a pool of regional finalists, and if they are selected, they will be eligible to win a statewide Triple 'A' award.
- Tara Alaniz and Nicholas Livingston were awarded the 2024 MSHSL ExCEL Award. This award is designed exclusively for juniors who are active in school activities, leaders in their schools, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to community service.
- Board Members Amy Goerwitz, Ben Miller, and Jenny Nelson received the Minnesota State School Board Association's (MSBA) Leadership Development Certificate. This recognition is awarded to board members who have completed the MSBA's Member Workshop Series.
- Board Members Claudia Gonzalez-George and Amy Goerwitz received the Minnesota State School Board Association's (MSBA) Director's Award. This award is given to board members who have earned 100 or more MSBA points within a four-year period. Points are earned for attending training and advocacy events.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. Policy 429 Extension of Emergency Sick & Safe Time. Due to new information about the evolving implementation of this relatively new state law, this policy was removed from consideration at this time.
- b. Prairie Creek Community School & Arcadia Charter School Annual Reports. Simon Tyler, Director of Prairie Creek Community School, and Laura Stelter, Director of Arcadia Charter School, reported on the programs being provided in their two charter schools. Prairie Creek is in its 22nd year of operation as a charter school under the sponsorship of Northfield Public Schools. Arcadia is in its 21st year of operation. These reviews and written reports fulfill state requirements for annual reporting as well as our district's request that each charter school authorized by Northfield Public Schools present an annual report to the school board.

c. Construction Update No. 3. Dr. Hillmann provided an update on the NHS construction project.

6. Consent Agenda

On a motion by Miller, seconded by Butler, the board unanimously approved the consent agenda.

a. Minutes. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on December 9, 2024.

b. Gift Agreements. Gift agreements included in the board packet.

c. Grant Application. Director of Community Education Erin Bailey requested school board approval for a Multipurpose Community Facility Capital Projects Grant for \$499,292 from the Minnesota Department of Education for the time period May 1, 2025 to December 31, 2031. This grant will enhance the infrastructure of the Northfield Community Education Center (NCEC) to alleviate program gaps identified during the COVID-19 pandemic and directly enable collaborative education, work, and health monitoring activities.

d. Personnel Items.

i. Appointments

1. Correction of hours: Jennifer Antoine, Special Ed EA PCA for 31.5 hours/week at the NCEC, beginning 12/9/2024-6/6/2025. Step 4-\$18.05/hr.+ prorated PCA stipend. - subject to change upon settlement of 2024-26 agreement.
2. Duane Bogne, Softball/Basketball Official with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 1/5/2025-5/31/2025. \$30/game.
3. Abigail Borgerding, Instructor Lead with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 2/8/2025 - 5/31/2025. Step 2-\$15.80/hr.
4. Christina Cochlin, Speech Judge at the High School, beginning 1/10/2025. \$77/event.
5. Correction rate of pay: Jeffrey Eckhoff, 1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute Science Teacher at the High School, beginning 11/25/2024 - 1/22/2025. MA30, Step 10
6. Anna Forbord, Instructor Assistant with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 2/8/2025 - 5/31/2025. Step 2-\$14.76/hr.
7. Correction rate of pay: William Hoff, 1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute English/Language Arts Teacher at the High School, beginning 1/2/2025-2/5/2025. BA20, Step 6
8. Hollis Holden, Instructor Assistant with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 4/7/2025 - 5/31/2025. Step 1-\$14.50/hr.
9. Angela Kruse, .80 FTE Speech and Language Pathologist at Bridgewater, beginning 1/6/2025-6/6/2025. MA, Step 10
10. Katherine LaCanne, Instructor Lead with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 4/7/2025 - 5/31/2025. Step 2-\$15.80/hr.
11. Blanca Nunez, Site Supervisor with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 1/15/2025 - 5/31/2025. Step 4-\$17.35/hr.
12. Claire O'leary, Ski Club Chaperone with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 1/13/2025-5/31/2025. \$500 stipend.
13. Theresa Olson, Special Ed EA PCA for 6.75 hours/day and Special Ed Bus EA for 1.25 hours/day at Greenvale Park, beginning 1/6/2025. Step 4-\$18.05/hr. + prorated sped stipend, subject to change upon settlement of 24-26 agreement.
14. Sophia Ranslow, Special Ed EA PCA for 6.75 hours/day at the NCEC/GVP, beginning 1/7/2025. Step 2-\$17.03/hr. + prorated sped stipend, subject to change upon settlement of 24-26 agreement.
15. Alexa Schmidt, EarlyVentures Teacher for 40 hours/week at the NCEC, beginning 1/2/2025. Step 2-\$19.71/hr.
16. Zachariah Simmons, Instructor Lead with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 2/8/2025 - 5/31/2025. Step 6-\$16.84/hr.
17. William Skemp, Softball/Basketball Official with Community Ed Recreation, beginning 1/12/2025-5/31/2025. \$30/game.
18. Pamela Wollenburg, Child Nutrition Associate I for 3 hours/day at the Middle School, beginning 1/27/2025. \$21.92/hr.
19. Brooke Bevans, 1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute Grade 2 Teacher at Spring Creek, beginning on or about 3/25/2025-6/6/2025. MA, Step 1.
20. Bonnie Eliason, General Ed EA Cafeteria Supervisory for 2 hours/day at Bridgewater, beginning 1/15/2025-6/6/2025. Step 1-\$18.33/hr.

21. Updated rate of pay: Mark Johnson, 1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute Phy Ed Teacher at Greenvale Park, beginning 2/24/2025-3/21/2025. BA30, Step 10
 22. Audrey Larish, Student Event Worker at the Middle School, beginning 1/15/2025-2/16/2025. \$11.13/hr.
 23. Marcia Stanton, Event Worker at the High School, beginning 4/2/2025. \$45/77/event.
- ii. Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment
1. Jennifer Antoine, Special Ed EA for 31.5 hours/week at the NCEC, add Extended Day EA for up to 4 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 12/11/2024-6/6/2025.
 2. Jennifer Antoine, Special Ed EA for 31.5 hours/week at the NCEC, change to Special Ed EA for 35 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 1/3/2025.
 3. Kaitlin Bell, Teacher at Bridgewater, add Community School Teacher for up to 6 hours/week at Bridgewater, effective 12/19/2024-5/15/2025. \$40.00/hr.
 4. Mary Boyum, Special Ed EA at Spring Creek, add Special Ed EA Extracurricular/Non-academic support as needed with the District, effective 12/2/2024-6/6/2025.
 5. Diana Camargo, Special Ed EA for 33.5 hours/week at the NCEC, change to Special Ed EA for 30 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 1/3/2025.
 6. Isabel Fleming, KidVentures Student Site Assistant for up to 15 hours/week at Greenvale Park, change to KidVentures Site Assistant for up to 15 hours/week at Greenvale Park, effective 7/1/2024. Step 2-\$18.43/hr.
 7. Diane Frederick, Substitute Teacher for the District, change to .80 FTE Long Term Substitute Special Ed Teacher at the Middle School, effective 1/2/2025-1/21/2025. MA10, Step 10.
 8. Estella Freeman, Instructor Lead with Community Ed Recreation, add Instructor Assistant with Community Ed Recreation, effective 4/7/2025-5/31/2025. Step 2-\$14.76/hr.
 9. Elizabeth Johnson, Club Leader with Community School, add Community School Site Assistant for up to 15 hours/week for both positions at Greenvale Park, effective 12/9/2024-5/30/2025. Step 1-\$17.80/hr.
 10. Correction: Christopher Kauffeld, Driver Education Instructor with Community Education, add Adult Basic Education Teacher at the NCEC, effective 7/8/2024. MA+30, Step 10.
 11. Katherine LaCanne, Instructor Lead with Community Ed Recreation, add Instructor Assistant with Community Ed Recreation, effective 4/7/2025-5/31/2025. Step 2-\$14.76/hr.
 12. Rachael Langer, Teacher at the Middle School, add Speech Judge at the High School, effective 1/8/2025. \$77/event.
 13. Ellen Mucha, Assistant Knowledge Bowl Coach at the High School, change to Long Term Substitute Head Coach - Knowledge Bowl at the High School, effective 1/2/2025-2/15/2025.
 14. Xochitl Oaxaca, Special Ed EA for 35 hours/week at the NCEC, add Extended Day EA for up to 4 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 12/11/2024.
 15. Claire Oleary, Ski Club Chaperone with Community Ed Recreation, add Building Supervisor with Community Ed Recreation, effective 1/13/2025. \$19.32/hr.
 16. Lizbeth Ramirez, Special Ed EA at Greenvale Park, add Community School Site Assistant and Club Leader for up to 15 hours/week at Greenvale Park, effective 1/6/2025-5/15/2025. Site Assistant Step 4-\$19.71/hr. Club Leader \$25.53/hr.
 17. Micah Schultz, Social Studies Teacher at the ALC, add an overload-teaching a second class on Wednesdays (6 days) in lieu of prep at the ALC, effective 9/18/2024-10/30/2024.
 18. Scott Stanina, Teacher at the High School, add Long Term Substitute Assistant Knowledge Bowl Coach at the High School, effective 1/2/2025-2/15/2025.
 19. Gina Swenson, Teacher at Greenvale Park, add Community School Teacher for up to 8 hours/week at Greenvale Park, effective 1/6/2025-5/15/2025. \$40/hr.
 20. Rose Taylor, Special Ed EA PCA for 6.75 hours/day and General Ed EA for .25 hours/day at Spring Creek, change to Special Ed EA PCA for 5.33 hours/day and Special Ed EA Bus for 2.59 hours/day at Spring Creek, effective 1/6/2025-1/31/2025.
 21. Jessica Toft, Special Ed EA for 3.38 hours/day at Bridgewater, change to Special Ed EA for 4 hours/day at Bridgewater, effective 9/3/2024.
 22. Heather Tousignant, Special Ed EA PCA for 7 hours/day at Spring Creek, change to Special Ed EA PCA for 6.75 hours/day at the Middle School, effective 1/6/2025.
 23. Kristin Vatter, Building Supervisor with Community Ed Recreation, add Site Supervisor with Community Ed Recreation, effective 12/23/2024-5/31/2025. Step 6-\$17.87/hr.
 24. Justine Voronkova, Special Ed EA for 4 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 5 hours/day M,T,Th,F and W for 4.25 hours/day at the High School, effective 1/21/2025.
 25. Deb Wagner, Educational Assistant at Bridgewater, add Community School Club Leader for up to 6 hours/week at Bridgewater, effective 12/19/2024-5/15/2025. \$25.53/hr.
 26. John Watkins, Building Supervisor with Community Ed Recreation, add Softball/Basketball Official with Community Ed Recreation, effective 1/1/2025-5/31/2025. \$30/game.

27. Sarah Wolfe, Early Childhood Educational Assistant for 9 hours/week at the NCEC, change to Early Childhood Educational Assistant for 9.5 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 1/6/2025.
 28. William Baragary, Lifeguard with Community Ed Recreation, add Community School Student Site Assistant for up to 6 hours/week at Spring Creek, effective 1/13/2025-5/15/2025. Step 2-\$16.07/hr.
 29. Sarah Wolfe, ECFE Sib Care EA for 9.5 hours/week at the NCEC, change to ECFE Sib Care EA for 11 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 1/12/2025-3/21/2025.
- iii. Leave of Absence
1. Nancy Antoine, Principal at Bridgewater, FMLA Leave of Absence beginning 1/2/2025 and continue on an intermittent basis for up to 60 work days.
 2. Jessie Huebsch, Administrative Assistant to Technology/Teaching and Learning, FMLA Leave of Absence beginning 1/16/2025 and will continue on an intermittent basis for up to 60 work days.
 3. Tammy Iszler-Johnson, Occupational Therapist with the District, FMLA Leave of Absence beginning on 12/9/2024-3/7/2025.
 4. Danielle Olson, Social Worker at the NCEC/HS, FMLA Leave of Absence beginning on or about 5/19/2025 and continue for eight work weeks. It will continue into the 2025-2026 school year.
 5. Carol Reed, Nurse at the Middle School, FMLA Leave of Absence beginning 12/16/2024-approximately 1/10/2025.
 6. Sam Richardson, Principal at Greenvale Park, FMLA Leave of Absence beginning 12/18/2024-1/3/2025.
 7. Lillian Tharp, Special Ed Teacher at the NCEC, Leave of Absence beginning on or about 3/31/2025 for eight work weeks.
- iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
1. Susan Bolton, Teacher at Bridgewater, retirement effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
 2. Tina Dokken, Teacher at the Middle School, retirement effective 12/12/2024.
 3. Kari Gross, Education Assistant PCA at the NCEC, termination effective 1/3/2025.
 4. Katie Hanson, Teacher at the Middle School, resignation effective 12/11/2024.
 5. Spencer Klotz, Assistant Varsity Boys Lacrosse Coach at the High School, resignation effective 12/12/2024.
 6. Hope Langston, Director of Instructional Services, retirement effective at the end of the 2024-25 school year.
 7. Lillana Quiroga, Educational Assistant PCA at the Middle School, termination effective 1/6/2025.
 8. Ryan Schnaith, Assistant Track Coach at the Middle School, resignation effective 1/7/2025.
 9. Kaine Singvongsa, EA at Greenvale Park, resignation effective 1/8/2025.
 10. Kevin Dahle, Social Studies Teacher at the High School, retirement effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year. Will continue with Drivers education.
- v. Administration recommended the approval of the following employment contract for the time period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026:
1. Educational Assistants
- vi. Speech Judge Pay
Administration recommended approval of an increase in the stipend offered for speech judges from \$77 to \$100.
- e. Overnight Field Trip Northfield Boys Hockey. Northfield High School Boys Hockey Coach Mike Luckraft requested board approval to take the boys hockey team to Detroit Lakes, MN, Warroad, MN and Fargo, ND to compete against Detroit Lakes and Warroad, January 24-26, 2025.

7. Items for Individual Action

- a. Policy Committee Recommendations. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Nelson, the board unanimously approved the recommended updates to policies 103, 401, 402, 403, 404, and 405 as presented.

8. Items for Information

- a. Enrollment Report. Superintendent Hillmann reviewed the January 2025 enrollment report.
- b. Budget Prioritization Process and Teams. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf previewed the budget prioritization team recruitment process. As discussed at previous meetings, the district is projected to finish the 2025-26 school year below its 14% fund balance goal. Director Mertesdorf will present the annual financial forecast at the Jan. 27 regular board meeting.

9. Future Meetings

- a. Monday, January 27, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- b. Saturday, February 1, 2025, 9:00-10:45 a.m., Workshop, Northfield DO Boardroom
- c. Saturday, February 1, 2025, 11:00 a.m., District Youth Council Brunch, NCRC
- c. Monday, February 10, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom

d. Monday, February 24, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously approved to adjourn at 7:39 p.m.



Amy Goerwitz
School Board Clerk