

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent
Memorandum

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Matt Hillmann Ed.D., Superintendent
RE: Table File Items for February 11, 2019, Regular School Board Meeting

VI. Consent Agenda

C. Personnel Items

a) Appointments

6. Gertrude Bauer, Long Term Substitute Special Ed EA-PCA for 6.75 hours/day and General Ed for .25 hours/day at Sibley, beginning 02/21/2019; Gen Ed Step 3-\$15.73/hr., Spec Ed Step 3-\$16.30/hr.
7. Solvay Metelmann, Boys Basketball Coach for 4 hours/day on Saturday's with Community Services, beginning 02/09/2019-05/31/2019; \$10.00/hr.
8. James Smith, Targeted Services PLUS Club Leader for up to 1 hour/day at Greenvale Park, beginning 02/12/2019-05/02/2019; \$21.01/hr.

b) Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment

9. Christopher Fatze, Special Ed Teacher at the Middle School, add an overload for the remaining 77 days of the 2018-2019 school year, effective 2/11/2019-06/07/2019.
10. Ashley Flom, Special Education Teacher at the Middle School, add an overload for 38 days or the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year, effective 2/11/2019-06/07/2019.
11. Michelle Gaertner, Special Education Teacher at the Middle School, add an overload for 39 days of the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year, effective 2/11/2019-06/07/2019.
12. Jacalyn Harding, Teacher at Greenvale Park, add Targeted Services PLUS Teacher for up to 1.5 hours/day Mon.-Thurs. at Greenvale Park, effective 02/13/2019-05/02/2019; Yr. 1-\$27.11/hr.

d) Retirements/Resignations/Terminations

3. Emy Torres, Lunch Supervisor EA at Bridgewater, resignation effective 1/19/2019.

e) Employment Agreements

The Tier 1 Teacher employment agreement is enclosed.

** Conditional offers of employment are subject to successful completion of a criminal background check and Prewrite screening (if applicable)*

VIII. Items for Information

- D. Flexible Learning Days. Superintendent Hillmann has provided a written report on preliminary findings regarding the Flexible Learning Day Pilot Program initiated during the 2018-2019 school year.

Good evening members of the school board:

My name is Miranda Schornack and I am the primary advocate collaborating with Northfield Public Schools for the next three years. School advocates provide in-person support, networking, and resources that directly match the vision of schools and districts that qualify for comprehensive support under Minnesota's state plan to meet ESSA. We are employed by Minnesota's Regional Centers of Excellence, not the department of education, because the very nature of our work is supportive, not evaluative.

I am humbled by the good work happening in the district and the dedicated educators leading continuous improvement efforts. To that end, it has been a pleasure getting to know Hope, Matt, Daryl, among others at Northfield. This year, we've already begun looking at data in new ways that augment the innovative practices in Northfield. You'll hear about some of this tonight. I've also been able to share some of Northfield's practices with districts around the state. For example, other districts have been very interested in learning more about the collaboration between the high school and ALC, interventions that happen at the high school to prevent loss of credit, practices to increase the rate of credit recovery at the ALC, and wrap around support that envelops students in what they need to be successful beyond high school.

As a school advocate with experience supporting dozens of districts in MN, I can attest that the systems-thinking in Northfield Public Schools is particularly noteworthy. Staff have been thoughtful and reflective in their data collection and analysis, looking not for an easy answer but for the right answer. I wish I could have joined you in-person this evening but, in my physical absence, I wanted to at least send a note that reflects the hard work folks in Northfield are doing and the joy I've had in working with them.

Sincerely,

Miranda

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 659
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Tier 1 Teachers

Policy Extends from
July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019

ARTICLE I
EMPLOYMENT

Section 1.01 – Introduction

These Personnel Policies and Practices contain information pertaining to your employment with Independent School District No. 659, Northfield (“District”). Please note that the information contained in this document may be changed from time to time. Nothing in this document establishes any form of a contract between you and the District, nor does anything in this document alter your at-will employment relationship with the District. In the same sense that you can resign your employment with the District at any time for any reason or no reason at all, so can the District terminate your employment at any time for any reason or no reason at all, consistent with the concept of at-will employment. When changes occur to the information contained in this document, the revisions will be issued to you. The statements contained in this Section 1.01 are subject to the requirements of any applicable law, such as the Veterans’ Preference Act, granting the employee employment rights.

Section 1.02 - Basic Services

Employees shall faithfully perform the services prescribed by the School Board or designated representative whether or not such services are specifically described in this manual or in a general job description, abide by the rules, regulations and policies as established by the School Board and the State Board of Education, and any additions or amendments thereto, for the annual salary indicated in this contract.

Section 1.03 - Duty Year

The duty year shall be the number of teacher duty days on the school board approved calendar for the 2018-19 school year . The employee shall perform services on those legal holidays on which the School Board so determines.

ARTICLE II
SALARIES

Section 2.01 - Compensation

The annual salary of positions covered by these policies shall be based upon the salary schedule set forth in Appendix A.

While the District reserves the right to set salaries, it will seek and receive input from employees and their supervisor regarding the salary structure. The input may be in the form of written or oral communication.

Section 2.02 – Experience Credit

Individuals employed before January 1st, who are still employed by the District on June 30th, shall for the purposes of salary increases be given credit for (1) year of experience.

ARTICLE III LEAVES

Section 3.01 - Sick Leave

An employee must work a regular schedule of 20 or more hours per week in order to be eligible for sick leave.

Employees shall receive 12 sick leave days per year to a maximum accumulation of 200 days:

Sick leave shall be available to the employee at the beginning of the year (July 1st), however, sick leave is considered earned on a monthly basis.

One day of leave allowance may be used by an employee for each day of absence due to illness or injury which precludes the employee from performing the duties of his/her position.

Sick leave with pay shall be allowed whenever an employee's absence is due to illness or injury of the employee, the employee's dependent child, or another individual as allowed by Minnesota law which prevented the employee's attendance at work on that day or days.

Any employee who has been absent may be required to present a statement from a doctor of medicine verifying an illness and certifying that the employee has recovered sufficiently to return to normal duties. Any employee absent more than five (5) consecutive working days must present such certification. If certification is required for an absence of fewer than six (6) days, the District will designate the physician and pay his/her fee. Charges for certification of absences greater than five (5) consecutive working days will be the responsibility of the District unless the employee requires examination by a specified physician, in which instance the employee will assume the cost of the examination.

There shall be no payment for unused, earned sick leave balances upon termination or separation of employment, for any reason, with the School District.

Section 3.02 – Disaster Leave

The Employer will provide paid disaster leave for employees who have exhausted accumulated sick leave days prior to the commencement of long-term disability insurance benefits. An employee will become eligible for paid disaster leave after the employee has been continuously disabled and unable to work for fifteen (15) consecutive duty days, as certified by a medical doctor. Disaster leave payments shall commence as of the duty day following the last day of sick leave payment, and shall continue only for the period during which the employee remains continuously disabled and unable to work.

Disaster leave payments shall cease in any event after the fortieth (40th) duty day of absence.

Section 3.03 – Bereavement Leave

Employees may be allowed up to ten (10) days per year of leave with pay in case of death. Bereavement leave may be used in the case of a death of family members or friends. Time off for bereavement shall be deducted from unused sick days.

Section 3.04 – Personal Leave

The employee shall be allowed two (2) personal business days per year for business that ordinarily cannot be conducted outside the duty day with prior approval of their immediate supervisor. A deduction of these days will be made from sick leave. Request for leave under this Section must be made through the District's substitute/leave system at least three (3) days in advance, except for emergencies.

There shall be no paid personal business days for those employees who do not qualify for sick leave.

Section 3.05 - Leave of Absence Without Pay

The employee may apply for a leave of absence without pay in the event of personal extenuating circumstances. The employee, when on medical leave of absence, is eligible to continue to participate in group insurance programs as permitted under the insurance policy provisions, but shall pay the entire premium for such programs as he/she wishes to retain commencing with the beginning of the leave, subject to the requirements of applicable law.

Section 3.06 - Child Care Leave and Adoption Leave

A. A child care leave shall be granted by the school district subject to the provisions of this Section. Child care leave may be granted because of the need to prepare and/or provide parental care for a child or children of the employee for an extended period of time.

B. An employee making application for unpaid child care leave shall inform the superintendent in writing of his/her intention to take the leave at least two calendar months before commencement of the intended leave, except in unusual circumstances. The superintendent and the employee will attempt to work out a satisfactory plan for the leave.

C. If the reason for the child care leave is occasioned by pregnancy, the employee shall also provide at the time of the leave application, a statement indicating the expected date of the delivery. Sick leave under Section 3.02 is available for any period of disability associated with the pregnancy prior to the commencement of the child care leave.

D. The availability of a suitable replacement may also be considered by the school district in both the granting of a child care leave or the duration of such leave.

E. In making a determination concerning the commencement and duration of a child care leave, the School Board shall not, unless otherwise agreed, be required to:

- (1) grant any leave more than six (6) months in length or at the beginning of the school year following such six (6) month period.
- (2) permit the employee to return to his or her employment prior to the date designated in the request for child care leave.

F. An employee returning from child care leave shall have a right to return to his or her original position as specified in the employee's child care leave plan if the employee's leave is commenced and concluded within the same fiscal year. If the employee's child care leave plan does not call for his or her return within the fiscal year it is commenced, the employee shall have the right to be returned to an equivalent contractual position, unless such employee has been previously terminated pursuant to the provision of M.S. 122A.40 or such employee has been placed on unrequested leave pursuant to the provisions of M.S. 122A.40.

G. Failure of the employee to return pursuant to the date determined under this Section shall constitute grounds for termination unless the school district and the employee mutually agree to an extension in the leave.

H. An employee who returns from child care leave within the provisions of this Section shall retain all previous experience credit and any unused leave time accumulated under the provisions of this document at the commencement of the leave. The employee shall accrue additional experience credit or leave time during the period of absence for child care leave-only if the leave commences and ends within the same fiscal year.

Section 3.07 – Religious Observance Leave

Up to three (3) days leave shall be granted to an employee for required religious observance. Such days must be recognized religious holidays and shall not be permitted for circumstances where personal alternative attendance options exist. A deduction of these days will be made from sick leave. Notification must be submitted to their immediate supervisor, in writing, at least three (3) days prior to such absence.

Section 3.08 – Judicial Duty

For any employee who is required to serve as a juror or is subpoenaed to appear as a witness (not as a defendant) in a criminal court case, Northfield Public Schools will make up the difference between such employees basic salary and the fees (but not reimbursed expenses) received by the employee. In order to be eligible for this supplement, the employee must submit to the finance office an itemized certification of fees and expenses for judicial duty.

Section 3.09 – Superintendent's Discretionary Leave

Any circumstance that arises necessitating the absence of an employee not specifically included in any of the sections above may be granted as discretionary leave. Such leave must be approved in advance by the superintendent or his/her authorized representative.

Section 3.10 – School Conference and Activities Leave

In accordance with the provisions of MS.181.9412, the District will provide each employee with up to sixteen hours of school conference and activities leave during any twelve month period to attend school conferences or school related activities related to the employee's child, provided the conference, activity or observation cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. One school day advance written notice shall be provided via the District's substitute/leave reporting system. Such leave will be deducted from the employee's sick leave allowance.

ARTICLE IV
INSURANCE

Section 4.01– Insurance Eligibility

An employee must work a regular schedule of 20 or more hours per week for at least the number of student contact days in the board approved school calendar in order to be eligible for group insurance coverage.

Section 4.02 – District Obligation

The District's only obligation is to purchase the group insurance policies addressed below and pay such amounts as stated herein. No claim shall be made against the District as a result of a denial of insurance benefits by an insurance carrier.

Section 4.03- Health and Hospitalization

The School District shall provide eligible employees an opportunity to enroll for either single or family coverage in the District health and hospitalization insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the amounts listed below toward the monthly premium for single and family coverage. The amounts listed below reflect a proration for employees who work less than full-time. The effective date for employer contributions shall be January 1 each year.

The school district will contribute the same amount toward the monthly premiums for single and family coverage as identified in the Northfield Education Association Master Agreement.

Section 4.04 - Dental Insurance

The School District shall provide eligible employees with an opportunity to enroll for either single or family coverage in the District dental insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the amounts listed below toward the monthly premium for single or family coverage. The amounts listed below reflect a proration for those employees who work less than full-time. The effective date for employer contributions shall be January 1 each year.

The school district will contribute the same amount toward the monthly premiums for single and family coverage as identified in the NEA Master Agreement.

Section 4.05 - Life Insurance

The School District shall provide, at District expense, a group term life insurance plan providing \$50,000 of coverage for each eligible employee. The eligible employees may purchase additional group term life insurance in increments of \$25,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000 at the group rate upon evidence of insurability and acceptance by the carrier. The cost of such additional coverage shall be paid fully by the employee through payroll deduction.

Section 4.06 - Long-Term Disability Insurance

The School District shall pay the full premium for long-term disability insurance for eligible employees. Benefits shall be payable after 60 consecutive days of total disability at 66 2/3% of the basic monthly earnings.

Section 4.07 - Liability Insurance

The School District agrees to insure the employee for loss because of claims brought against him/her caused by any negligent act, error, omission, or breach of duty while acting within the scope of his/her employment or any claim against him/her solely by reason of the holding of his/her position. The amount and extent of coverage shall be subject to limitations imposed by the insurance carrier and applicable law.

Section 4.08 - Duration of Insurance Contribution

Upon separation of employment, all district participation and contribution toward group insurance benefits shall cease effective at the end of the month of the last working day except as provided under other provisions of this manual. However, the employee may be continued in the group insurance plans at his or her own expense for a period following separation determined by the insurance carrier and applicable laws.

ARTICLE V
OTHER BENEFITS

Section 5.01 - Travel

Necessary and approved transportation that is required of the employee in the performance of school duty shall be at the expense of the School District. The mileage reimbursement rate and the rate between buildings shall be set by the School Board.

Section 5.02 - Professional Improvement

The employee will participate in professional development activities which are directly related to his or her areas of responsibility and other areas designated by their immediate supervisor. The School District shall pay for all legally valid travel, lodging, and meal expenses and fees for attendance at professional conferences and meetings with other educational agencies when attendance thereof is required, directed, or permitted by their immediate supervisor.

APPENDIX A

**TIER I LICENSED TEACHERS
SALARY SCHEDULE 2018-19**

Step	BA	MA	Notes
1	41,313	47,346	<p><u>Lane Placement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Tier 1 individuals will be placed in the BA lane, unless they have a Master's in the content area they are being hired for. In this case, they will be placed at the MA lane. • Lane changes will not be allowed until after the individual secures a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license. • No credits beyond the initial lane placement will be considered for lane placement. <p><u>Step Placement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the individual has 1-7 years of specific experience directly related to the class/classes they will teach, they will be placed on the appropriate step. • Incoming teachers holding a Tier 1 license will not be placed above step 7 on the salary schedule. • Steps will be allowed to roll-up if the individual works more than 1 year under a Tier 1 license. <p><u>Evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time worked under a Tier 1 license does not count towards probation. Evaluation will be handled the same as regularly licensed teachers (3 evaluations per year).
2	42,377	48,826	
3	43,467	50,352	
4	44,587	51,922	
5	45,733	53,544	
6	46,912	55,216	
7	48,121	56,941	
8	49,360	58,718	
9	50,631	60,553	
10	51,935	62,444	
11	53,273	64,394	
12	54,645	66,405	
13	56,052	68,479	
14	57,495	70,618	
15	-----	72,823	

Why Flexible Learning Days?

Flexible learning days are intended to counter the loss of curriculum momentum resulting from school cancellations due to Minnesota’s winter weather. Flexible learning days cannot replace the face-to-face time students have with their teachers but it can serve as a bridge for learning when school is interrupted. Flexible learning days also negate the need for makeup school days in June, helping families more effectively plan summer activities. This is a “pilot” year to test this strategy’s effectiveness in Northfield.

2018-19 Pilot Year Update

- The first two cancellations due to winter weather **were not replaced** with a flexible learning day. The September 2018 cancellation resulting from the tornadoes did not count towards this total. The District has closed school campuses and used flexible learning days on January 30, January 31, February 6, and February 7 due to extreme cold (January 30 and 31) and heavy snow/ice/winds (February 6 and 7).

Staff Availability

- Teachers, administrators, and other licensed professionals are available by [email](#) or via the grade-appropriate digital learning space (Schoology or SeeSaw) from 9:00 am - 11:30 am and then from 12:00 pm until 3:00 pm on flexible learning days. Elementary students used activities from the District’s flexible learning day activity matrices. The second set of matrices was made available for the fourth flexible learning day. The matrices are all available in both English and Spanish. Secondary students received their daily learning plan from their teachers via Schoology for access on their iPad or another device at home.

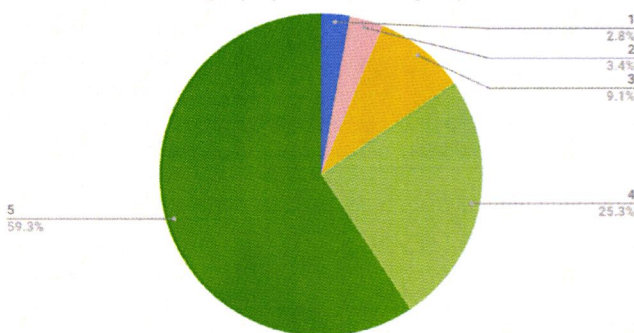
Survey Results

Families were asked to complete a survey on the first two flexible learning days. The survey was available from February 1-February 8, 2019.

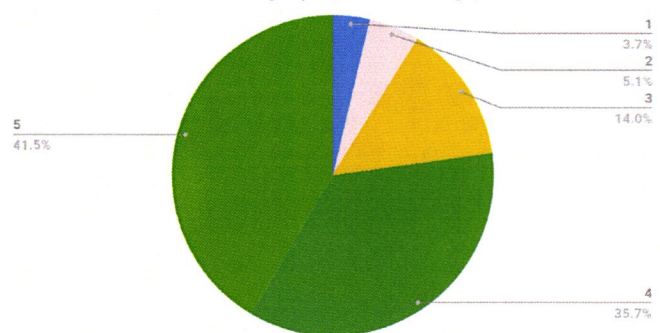
Parent Feedback

There were 990 survey responses. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. Overall, parent feedback was very positive. The question "Please rate your overall satisfaction with the communication about our flexible learning days" has an average rating of 4.3 on a five-point scale with 84.5% of parents scoring the question a four or five (five being the highest). The question "Please rate your overall satisfaction with the quality of the activities on our flexible learning days" has an average rating of 4.1 on a five-point scale with 77% of parents scoring the question a four or five (five being the highest).

Parent Survey: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the communication about our flexible learning days. (1 = lowest • 5 = highest)



Parent Survey: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the quality of the activities on our flexible learning days. (1 = low • 5 = high)



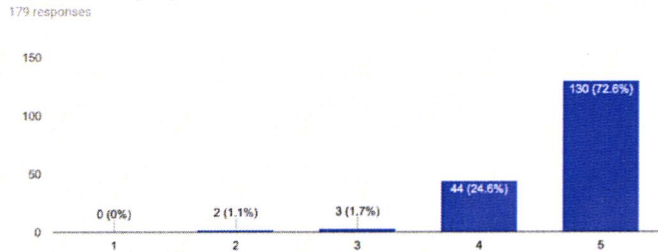
While comments are still being analyzed, a preliminary review indicates parents prefer the flexible learning day option to rescheduling days in June. Overall, parent comments indicated an appreciation for teacher interaction and organized academic activities for their children on days when school is closed due to weather. A smaller number of parents commented with concerns about the flexible learning days providing a true replacement for regular school days (see “Why flexible learning

days” above. In addition, there was also excellent feedback about the technical details of managing flexible learning day instruction. This included the timeliness of the posting and concerns about the total amount of time required to complete assigned activities. This was expected and staff will refine what and how much is assigned, especially at the secondary level, on flexible learning days.

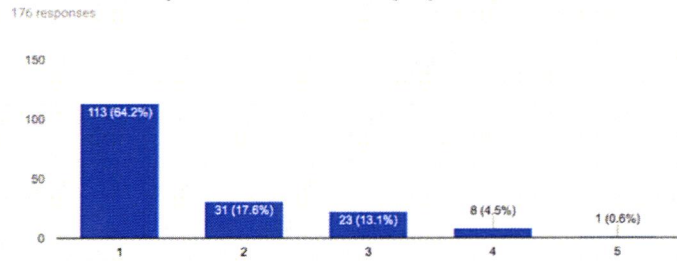
Teacher Feedback

There were 180 survey responses. Overwhelmingly, teachers were positive about flexible learning days. The question "Please rate your overall satisfaction with the communication about our flexible learning days" has an average rating of 4.7 on a five-point scale with 97.2% of teachers scoring the question a four or five (five being the highest). Teachers also, overall, feel comfortable with their ability to implement flexible learning day instruction. The question “Rate the level of additional support or professional development you need to more effectively facilitate flexible learning day instruction?” has an average rating of 1.6 on a five-point scale with 81.8% of teachers scoring the question a one or two (one meaning that they need no additional support and five meaning they need substantial additional support.)

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the communication about our flexible learning days.



Rate the level of additional support or professional development you need to more effectively facilitate flexible learning day instruction?



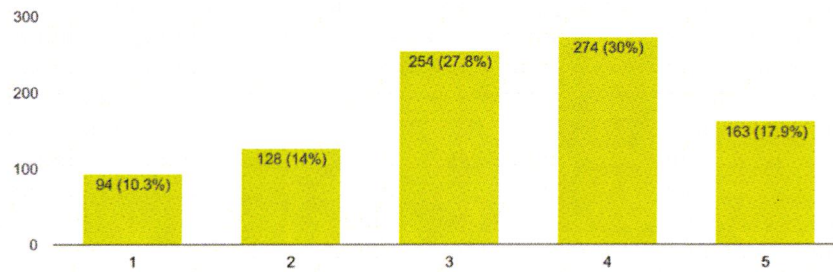
A preliminary review of the comments indicates teachers agree with parents that flexible learning days present a better learning option for students than rescheduled days in June. They appreciated the opportunity to keep the momentum of learning moving forward despite weather-related interruptions to the school calendar. They appreciated the chance to virtually interact with their students. There were some unique challenges presented by the first two flexible learning days occurring at the beginning of the first semester, but the staff understood the quandary. There were technical suggestions for improvement that staff indicated would be remedied with the evolution of the approach.

Student Feedback

Students in Grades 6-12 were surveyed between February 1 and February 8, 2019. There were 914 survey responses. Overall, students expressed general satisfaction with the flexible learning day approach, though their responses were far more distributed among the five-point rating scale than parents or teachers. A preliminary review of student comments indicate satisfaction with exchanging a flexible learning day for a rescheduled day in June. Students reported a variety of feedback about the activities assigned and the amount of time it took them to complete the activities. As was anticipated, many students had concerns about being assigned any work on a canceled day but numerous students also commented that this approach is preferable to rescheduling school days and extending the calendar further into June.

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the activities on the flexible learning days.

913 responses



The majority of students indicated their work took them between 2-4 hours. However, there were 136 students who spent more than four hours, with 54 of those students spending more than five hours. This inconsistency aligns with concerns that some parents commented on regarding the amount of work - both too much and too little. This will be an area for improvement.

Flexible Learning Days and Minimum Required Hours for Instruction

There have been a few questions from stakeholders about the minimum number of instructional days required by the Minnesota Department of Education. Minnesota has two sets of guidelines for instructional time. 165 days are 'required' but they prioritize the total number of school hours. Grades 6-12 require 1,020 annual hours, Grades 1-6 need 935 hours, and 850 hours for Kindergarten. Northfield substantially outpaces that minimum requirement. In fact, the total hours on our 174 student contact days eclipses the state requirement by almost 12 days at the secondary level (Grades 7-12) and by more than 20 days at the elementary level. While there is a mechanism at the state-level to count flexible learning days as official student contact days, we are still at least four days above the state minimum even by counting all seven days as straight-up cancellations. The chart below identifies the amount of time required by the state compared to the current number of cancellations.

Building	Hours Per Day	Minutes Per Day	Hours Reported	Hours Remaining	Days Remaining
ALC	6.29	377.4	1050.4	30.43	4.8
BW	6.3	378	1052.1	117.1	18.6
GV	6.3	378	1052.1	117.1	18.6
HS	6.29	377.4	1050.4	30.43	4.8
MS	6.3	378	1052.1	32.1	5.1
SB	6.3	378	1052.1	117.1	18.6

Notes: Kindergarten students have more hours remaining than identified at their elementary schools. Grade 6 students also have more hours remaining than identified at the middle school. Seniors have less hours remaining than the rest of their high school peers since they are released earlier than others.

Since 2018-19 was intended to be a pilot year for Northfield's flexible learning days, the District had not originally intended to use the MDE's eLearning Day mechanism to officially count the days for instruction. However, since most of the State's requirements are being met, the District is asking MDE to provide guidance about how many of the flexible learning days might be counted towards the District's total number of instructional hours.

Easier Cancellation Calls?

A few parents questioned whether implementing flexible learning days would make it "easier" to cancel school. This has not been nor will it be the case. Each of the flexible learning days used this year would have otherwise been cancellations. Our desire is to have students on school campuses as much as possible.

Summary

Northfield Public Schools' investment in technology systems has supported a successful initial round of flexible learning days. Survey feedback indicates strong support from parents and teachers. A high level of satisfaction regarding communication and substantial satisfaction in the activities offered for students are present in the survey data. Areas for growth, specifically in clarifying the amount of time each class activity should take at the secondary level and increasing the amount of time for activities at the elementary level, will be addressed as part of the program review this Spring.

What's Next?

The District will complete a detailed review of the data provided in the surveys and share the results with the district staff, parents, and students. Professional development will be offered for those wanting additional support to better deliver curriculum online during flexible learning days. While the first iteration can be called successful based on the survey data and a substantial review of anecdotal feedback, there is an opportunity for significant growth.