

# NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## School Board Minutes

March 9, 2026  
District Office Board Room

1. Call to Order

School Board Chair Claudia Gonzalez-George called the regular meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 659 to order at 6:00 p.m. Present: Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Miller, and Quinnell. Absent: Nelson. This meeting was open to the public, live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted on 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 were no public comments..

4. Announcements and Recognitions

- The Northfield Boys Swim and Dive team took third place in the state tournament. In addition, Will Redetzke captured the state title in the 200 yard freestyle, and Odin Bergs brought home the championship in the 100 yard freestyle.
- Caley Graber won the state title at the state wrestling meet, earning her place as a three-time state champion.
- Four students from Northfield Middle School and three students from Northfield High School performed in the 2026 Minnesota String and Orchestra Teachers Association (MNSOTA) Middle Level All-State Orchestra on Saturday, February 14. Congratulations to Audrey Brien, Caitlin Cina, and Amargan Nega (9th grade violin), Robert Steed (8th grade violin), Helena Holleran and Soren Perkins (8th grade cello), Kaia Jacobi (7th grade violin), Yina Zhang (8th grade violin) was also selected as an alternate. Students in grades 7-9 audition to perform in this ensemble with a select group of other students from across Minnesota.
- ACT testing was held on Tuesday, March 3, with NHS testing 221 students in the junior class. Scores will be sent to students in the next two to seven weeks.
- Registrations for summer community education programs opens Friday, April 3. Registrations can be completed online, by phone or by visiting the Northfield Community Education Center. Scholarships are available to participate in Community Education programs. For more information, contact the Northfield Community Education Center.
- Incoming sixth grade students and their families are invited to attend an information session at Northfield Middle School on Thursday, March 19, 2026 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Parents will attend a presentation, while students will have the opportunity to meet their 8th grade WEB leaders and participate in fun activities.
- Join us for the All-District Band Concert on Monday, March 16 and the All-District Orchestra concert on Tuesday, March 17. Both concerts start at 7:00 p.m. at the Northfield High School Gymnasium.
- Rock and Roll Revival held its 30th anniversary this year. Performances were held last weekend and three more performances will be held this week.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. Raider Image Proposal. RALIE Advisor Leah Sand and RALIE student representatives Megan Carlson, Kate Sand, and Gracyn Mosley gave an overview of the Raider Image development process and presented the image finalists to the board.
- b. READ Act Update and Data Review. Instructional Systems Specialist and District Literacy Lead Alisha Clarey updated the board on the READ Act.
- c. Proposed 2026-2027 Construction Fund Budget. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf presented the proposed 2026-2027 Construction Fund Budget. The construction fund is a separate fund used to record all operations of a district's building construction funded by the sale of bonds. This will be an item for individual action at the May 11, 2026 board meeting.

- d. Financial Forecast Follow Up.
  - i. Board Renewal of Operating Levy. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf and Superintendent Hillmann answered questions from the board about the board renewal of the 2017 operating levy. Board renewal of an operating levy, using the same conditions as originally approved by the voters, is permitted by Minnesota Statute 126C.17.
- e. Superintendent Search Update. Board Clerk Maggie Epstein gave a recap of the special school board meeting held on Friday, March 6, 2026, for the purposes of discussing and deciding the superintendent search timeline, hiring criteria, stakeholder involvement and procedures, as well as to discuss, decide, and schedule the steps necessary for the rest of the hiring process.
- f. District Committees Report. Superintendent Hillmann reviewed all district advisory committee meetings held on March 2, 2026.
- g. Later School Start Times Process. Board Chair Claudia Gonzalez-George facilitated a discussion on the later school start times process.
- h. MacBook Air Laptop Sale Update. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf provided an update on the MacBook Air Laptop sale approved by the board on January 26, 2026.

6. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Minutes. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on Feb. 23, 2026 and the special school board meeting held on March 6, 2026.
- b. Gift Agreements. Gift agreements included in the board packet.
- c. Personnel Items.
  - i. Appointments
    1. Kalista Dahle, Rock and Roll Revival - Front of House Supervisor beginning 3/6/2026-3/15/2026. \$500 stipend.
    2. Josiah Kuennen, KidVentures Student Site Assistant for up to 15 hrs/week at Bridgewater beginning 2/25/2026. Step 1, \$16.45/hr.
    3. Locke Perkins, Substitute Auditorium Technician at the NCEC beginning 3/16/2026. \$28.31/hr.
    4. Isaac Rich, KidVentures Student Site Assistant for up to 15 hrs/week at Bridgewater beginning 3/10/2026. Step 1, \$16.45/hr.
    5. Isaac Wagner, Special Education EA/PCA for 20 hours/week at Greenvale Park beginning 2/24/2026-6/10/2026. Special Ed - Step 1, \$21.86/hr.
    6. Nick Avila, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation beginning 3/7/2026-5/31/2026. Step 6, \$16.37/hr.
    7. Annika Dornbusch, .25 FTE Assistant Girls Lacrosse Coach at the High School beginning 3/30/2026. \$1,131 stipend.
    8. Tamsen Hutton, Rock and Roll Revival - Hairdresser effective 3/13/2026-3/15/2026. \$30/show.
    9. Joshua Malecha, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation beginning 3/14/2026-5/31/2026. Step 6, \$16.37/hr.
    10. Davis Moore, Event Worker at the High School beginning 3/14/2026. \$100/event.
    11. Nancy Veverka, ABE Teacher for Community Education beginning 3/11/2026. MA+40, Step 7.
    12. Lillian Visaya, .75 FTE Assistant Girls Lacrosse Coach at the High School beginning 3/30/2026. \$3,393 stipend.
    13. Ian Wittek, Instructor Lead for Community Education/Recreation beginning 3/7/2026-5/31/2026. Step 4, \$16.91/hr.
  - ii. Increase/Decrease/Changes in Assignment
    1. Sara DeVries, 5th Grade Companeros Teacher at Bridgewater, will continue the job share arrangement with Anna Rubin for the 2026-27 school year. Sara will work .80 FTE and Anna will work .20 FTE.
    2. Inger Hanson, .5 FTE EL Specialist at the Area Learning Center and .5 FTE EL Specialist at Greenvale Park, change to .3 FTE at the Area Learning Center and .7 FTE at Greenvale Park effective 2/26/2026-6/10/2026.
    3. Kari Hemmingsen, Teacher at the Middle School, add Assistant Middle School Girls Golf Coach effective 3/30/2026. \$2,828 stipend.
    4. Michael Humann, 1.0 FTE Custodian Engineer at the District Office/Area Learning Center, change to .75 FTE effective 6/15/2026.

5. Vicki McKay, Child Nutrition Manager II at the Middle School, add Summer Child Nutrition Lead for up to 6 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/17/2026-7/30/2026. \$27.71/hr. - subject to change upon the settlement of the 2026-28 Child Nutrition Employees Agreement.
  6. Michelle Anderson, Special Education Bus EA for 5 hours/week, every other week for the District, change to 7.5 hours/week, every other week effective 3/9/2026-6/10/2026.
  7. Saffron Emerson, Special Education Teacher at the High School, add Event Worker effective 3/12/2026. \$100/event.
  8. Kelly Erickson, Custodian at Spring Creek, change to Head Custodian at Spring Creek effective 3/9/2026. Step 1, \$31.61/hr.
- iii. Leave of Absences
1. Carol Beumer, Special Education EA/PCA at the High School, leave of absence beginning 4/6/2026 and continuing through 5/29/2026.
  2. Brittany Ellerbusch, Teacher at Greenvale Park, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  3. Angela Kruse, Speech & Language Pathologist at Bridgewater, .80 FTE unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  4. Shari McCabe, Teacher at Bridgewater, .40 FTE unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  5. Jamie Moyer, Special Education Teacher at Bridgewater, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  6. Ellen Mucha, Teacher at the High School, FMLA leave of absence beginning 2/11/2026 and continuing on an intermittent basis for up to 60 work days.
  7. Betsy Peterson, Teacher at Greenvale Park, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  8. Emily Shroyer, Teacher at Greenvale Park, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  9. Bridget Timerson, Teacher at Greenvale Park, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  10. Laura Vind, Special Education Teacher at the High School, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year. Laura will continue as a Special Education EA/PCA for the 2026-27 school year.
- iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
1. Jacob Gonnerman, Community School Site Leader at the Middle School, termination effective 2/27/2026.
  2. Mary Czech, Payroll Specialist at the District Office, retirement effective 7/31/2026.
  3. Teresa Hasse, Special Education EA/PCA at Spring Creek, resignation effective 3/20/2026.
- v. Seniority List
1. The board is requested to approve the 2025-2026 Teacher Seniority List.
- d. Grant Application. Director of Community Education Erin Bailey requested school board approval for a grant to support expanded evening and parent engagement activities at Greenvale Park Community School for \$35,000 for each year of the two-year grant from Rice County Family Services Collaborative for the time period July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028.

7. Items for Individual Action

- a. N/A

8. Items for Information

- a. Enrollment Report. Superintendent Hillmann reviewed the March 2026 enrollment report.
- b. Construction Update No. 24. Superintendent Hillmann provided an update on the NHS construction project.

9. Future Meetings

- a. Thursday, March 19, 2026, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Operating Levy Renewal Public Hearing, Northfield DO Gymnasium
- b. Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:15 p.m., Board Work Session, Northfield DO Boardroom (Topic: Later School Start Times)
- c. Monday, April 6, 2026, 5:15 p.m., Special Board Meeting, approve bids for the NHS Reimagine project and superintendent interview training, Northfield DO Boardroom
- d. Monday, April 13, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- e. April 16, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, determine superintendent finalists, Northfield DO Boardroom
- f. April 24, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent first round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
- g. April 25, 2026, 3:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent first round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom

- h. Monday, April 27, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- i. Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent final round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
- j. Monday, May 4, 5:15 p.m., Special Board Meeting, approve superintendent's contract, Northfield DO Boardroom

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Quinell, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.



Maggie Epstein  
School Board Clerk