

# NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## School Board Minutes

April 27, 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, Nelson, and Quinnell. Absent: None. 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 Epstein, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

- The Cinco de Mayo community celebration will be held Thursday, May 5 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at Northfield Middle School. Enjoy authentic Mexican food, dancing, and activities for all ages. Money raised at the event will go towards scholarships for Northfield Latine students.
- Now through May 17, art from the Chalk Talk exhibition is on display in storefront windows throughout downtown Northfield. The work was created by Molly Otte's grade eight art class at Northfield Middle School during a four-day artist-in-residence workshop led by renowned photographer Wing Young Huie this past February and March.
- Congratulations to the Northfield Middle School eighth grade orchestra, who, under the direction of Middle School Orchestra Director Heather Olivier, earned two superior with distinction ratings at the MNSOTA Regional Festival, and an invitation to participate in the MNSOTA State Middle Level Festival Honors Concert at Orchestra Hall on Tuesday, March 31. This is the seventh time a Northfield Middle School orchestra has been invited to participate.
- The Northfield FFA had strong representation at the Minnesota State Convention April 20-21, with 17 members who attended. Northfield's FFA members competed in three career development events. In addition, Grant Kreft and Hector Villanueva earned their State FFA Degree, an honor earned by only 2% of Minnesota FFA members. Josie Kuennen and Izabella Ausmus served as FFA Foundation Ambassadors, representing Northfield among just 27 students selected statewide, and Carter Feldman and Alyssa Malecha served as voting delegates, helping shape the future of the Minnesota FFA.
- National Teacher Appreciation Week is May 4 - 8, 2026. Teacher Appreciation Week is celebrated in the first full week of May and is our chance to say thank you to those that play or have played such a huge role in the lives of our students at Northfield Public Schools.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. Proposed 2026-2027 General Fund Budget. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf presented the proposed 2026-27 General Fund Budget. This will be an item for individual action at the May 11, 2026 regular board meeting.
- b. Later School Start Times Discussion. Superintendent Hillmann facilitated a discussion about later school start times. The board directed the district to change the May 14 public input meeting to a work session to further discuss the topic of later school start times and develop a new timeline. The work session will be livestreamed and recorded.

On a motion by Gonzalez-George, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved to recess the meeting for ten minutes.

6. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Minutes. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on April 13, 2026, the special school board meeting held April 16, 2026, and the special school board meeting held April 24 and 25, 2026.
- b. Gift Agreements. Gift agreements included in the board packet.
- c. District Youth Council Members (DYC) 2026-27. The following students were approved to serve on DYC during the 2026-27 school year:  
Rising Seniors: Max Beckman\*, Mae Bowers\*, Leo Hernandez, Genevieve Knutson\*, Greta Korteum, Jack Peterson\*  
Rising Juniors: Cecelia Chapp, Hoang Doan, Glendi Gonzalez Orrego\*, Kristen Hafemeyer\*, Oliver Heiman, Hailey Kramer, Theo Miller\*, Makayah Petricka\*, Sidney Reich, Luz Santos Ruiz\*, Leo Watts, Luken Weitz  
 \*Denotes a current DYC member.
- d. Financial Reports - January 2026. Director Mertesdorf requested the board approve paid bills totaling \$3,510,341.24, payroll checks totaling \$3,756,711.60, bond payments in the amount of \$8,154,175.07, a wire transfer totaling \$250,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$200,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for January 2026. At the end of January 2026, total cash and investments amounted to \$66,153,059.21.
- e. Personnel Items.
  - i. Appointments
    1. Katherine Klein, 1.0 FTE Grade 7 Science Teacher at the Middle School beginning 8/27/2026. MA, Step 8.
    2. Evelyn Petersen, ESY Special Education EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at Greenvale Park beginning 6/25/2026-7/17/2026. Special Education, Step 2 - \$22.30/hr.
    3. Kristen Saxhaug, 1.0 FTE English/Language Arts Teacher at the High School beginning 8/27/2026. MA, Step 6.
    4. Jennifer Shea, 1.0 FTE Band Teacher at the Middle School beginning 8/27/2026. MA, Step 6.
  - ii. Increase/Decrease/Changes in Assignment
    1. Kirsten Anderson, Special Education EA/PCA at Spring Creek, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
    2. Lindsay Becker Larson, Special Education EA/PCA at the Middle School, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
    3. Sybil Betsinger, .3 FTE General Education Social Worker/.3 FTE Special Education Social Worker at the High School and .3 FTE American Indian Cultural Liaison for the District, change to .3 FTE General Education Social Worker/.5 FTE Special Education Social Worker and .2 FTE American Indian Cultural Liaison effective 8/27/2026.
    4. Brooke Bulfer, HR Generalist at the District Office, change to Payroll Lead at the District Office effective 6/1/2026. Step 2, \$76,951/year.
    5. Nicole Carel, Special Education Teacher for the District, change to Special Education RISE Teacher at Bridgewater effective 8/27/2026.
    6. Taylor Choudek, General/Special Education Hand in Hand Teacher at the NCEC, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 3.75 hours/day at the NCEC effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
    7. Andria Cornell, Special Education RISE Teacher at the Middle School, will continue in the same position at OFP status effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027.
    8. Thomas Dickerson, Special Education Teacher at the High School, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
    9. Thomas Dickerson, Special Education Resource Teacher at the High School, change to Special Education BEST Teacher at Bridgewater effective 8/27/2026.
    10. Kelle Edwards, Special Education EA/PCA at the High School, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
    11. Saffron Emerson, Special Education Teacher at the High School, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
    12. Tyler Faust, Special Education BEST Teacher at Greenvale Park, change to Special Education Teacher - Elementary Behavioral Support Specialist at Spring Creek/Bridgewater/Greenvale Park effective 8/27/2026.
    13. Leah Grisim, Special Education Teacher at Spring Creek, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
    14. Lydia Guthridge, Special Education Resource Teacher at Greenvale Park, will continue in the same position at OFP status effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027.
    15. Brittney Hubbard, Special Education SPARK Teacher at the NCEC, change to Special Education SOAR/ASD Teacher at Spring Creek effective 8/27/2026.

16. Natalie Jaeger, Special Education Resource Teacher at the Middle School, will continue in the same position at OFP effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027.
17. Roanne Johnson, Special Education Resource Teacher at Bridgewater, change to Special Education Resource Teacher at the High School effective 8/27/2026.
18. Jenny Jones, Special Education Teacher at the Middle School, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
19. Jenny Jones, Special Education ASD/SOAR Teacher at the Middle School, will continue in the same position at OFP status effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027.
20. Melanie Klein, Special Education Teacher at Spring Creek, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
21. Annie Kruse, Special Education Hand in Hand Teacher at the NCEC, change to Special Education SPARK Teacher at the NCEC effective 8/27/2026.
22. Roman Lozano, Special Education Teacher for the District, change to Special Education BEST Teacher at Greenvale Park effective 8/27/2026.
23. Angie Lynch, Special Education Teacher at the ALC/District-Wide, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
24. Carey Lynn, Special Education Teacher for the District, change to Special Education Resource Teacher at Spring Creek effective 8/27/2026.
25. Amanda Moreland, Special Education EA/PCA at the Middle School, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
26. Jenelle Mullin, CNA III for 7 hours/day at the High School, change to 7.25 hours/day effective 5/4/2026.
27. Diane Nagy, Special Education Resource Teacher at Bridgewater, will continue in the same position at OFP status effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027.
28. Diane Nagy, Special Education Teacher at Bridgewater, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
29. Joan Odell, Substitute EA for the District, change to Long-Term Substitute Special Education EA/PCA for 6.5 hrs/day plus .5 hrs/day supervisory at the High School effective 4/13/2026-5/29/2026.
30. Courtney Olukiran, Special Education Resource Teacher at Spring Creek, change to Special Education RISE Teacher at Greenvale Park effective 8/27/2026.
31. Danielle Pickup, .6 FTE Special Education Social Worker at the High School and .4 FTE Special Education Social Worker at the NCEC, change to .4 FTE Special Education Social Worker at the High School and .4 FTE Special Education/.2 FTE General Education Social Worker at the NCEC effective 8/27/2026.
32. Heather Pudas, Special Education Resource Teacher at Spring Creek and DHH Teacher for the District, change to .5 FTE DHH Teacher for the District and .5 FTE Special Education Resource Teacher at the Middle School effective 8/27/2026.
33. Elga Reyes De Broughton, Special Education EA/PCA at Spring Creek, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
34. Jessica Rushton, Special Education EA/PCA at Spring Creek, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
35. Mikayla Sannes, Special Education Teacher for the District, change to Special Education Resource Teacher at Bridgewater effective 8/27/2026.
36. Deborah Seitz, Special Education Teacher at the Middle School, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
37. Ann Shannon, Special Education EA/PCA at the High School, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
38. Kasey Storandt, Speech and Language Pathologist at the Middle School/High School, add ESY Speech and Language Pathologist for up to 5.75 hours/day at Greenvale Park/Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
39. Rebecca Stoufis, Special Education Teacher at the High School, add ESY Special Education Teacher for up to 5.75 hours/day at the Middle School effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
40. Madison Warner, Long-Term Substitute EarlyVentures Teacher at the NCEC, change to Substitute EarlyVentures Teacher and Substitute KidVentures Site Assistant effective 4/20/2026.
41. Sarah Welander, Special Education Teacher for the District, change to Special Education Resource Teacher at Bridgewater effective 8/27/2026.
42. Beth Winter, Special Education EA/PCA at Greenvale Park, add ESY EA/PCA for up to 5.5 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/25/2026-7/17/2026.
43. Dianne Wolbeck, CNA II from 7:00am-2:45pm at the High School, change to 6:15am-2:00pm effective 5/4/2026.
44. Hudson Ades, 1.0 FTE Long-Term Substitute Grade 8 Science Teacher at the Middle School, change to ongoing Grade 8 Science Teacher effective 8/27/2026.
45. Becki Haar, 1.0 FTE Teacher at Spring Creek, voluntary reduction in contract time to .80 FTE, effective 8/27/2026.
46. Melanie Klein, Special Education Teacher at Spring Creek, add Homebound Instruction for up to 10 hrs/week as needed effective 7/1/2025-6/30/2026. Lane/step.
47. Michelle Murphy, CNA II for 5.5 hrs/day at the High School, change to 7.25 hrs/day effective 5/4/2026.
48. Aidan Wallig, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation, add Lifeguard effective 4/25/2026-5/31/2026. Step 2, \$15.29/hr.

- iii. Leave of Absences
  1. Jamie Moyer, Special Education Teacher at Bridgewater, rescind previously approved leave of absence request for the 2026-2027 school year.
  2. Brian Stevens, Teacher at the High School, .3 FTE unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
  3. Naomi Golden, Teacher at the High School, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
- iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
  1. Daniel Hanegraaf, Head Custodian at Greenvale Park, retirement effective 6/12/2026.
  2. Cecelia Kivell, Educational Assistant at Bridgewater, resignation effective 6/5/2026.
  3. Cala Landsteiner, Educational Assistant at Bridgewater, termination effective 4/16/2026.
  4. Jennifer Lompart, ABE Teacher for Community Education, resignation effective 5/28/2026.
  5. Michelle Sonnega, Knowledge Bowl Advisor at the High School, resignation effective 6/10/2026.
  6. Brent Dunkelberger, Teacher at the Middle School, resignation effective 6/10/2026.

## 7. Items for Individual Action

- a. Raider Image. A motion was made by Gonzalez-George and seconded by Quinnell to reject both the “horse” and the “cow” images presented to the board at the March 9, 2026 meeting and maintain the block “N” as the sole image to represent the Northfield Raiders and NHS. The public was invited to submit their ideas for an updated Raider image in the fall of 2025, and 31 submissions were received from 25 unique individuals. Two image finalists were then selected, modified, and updated, and feedback was gathered from district stakeholders.

Miller motioned to amend the motion to strike the word “sole”, insert the word “interim” in its place, and add “The Board further establishes a Raider Image Committee with appropriate representation from students, teachers and staff, alumni, and community members. The Board charges this committee with designing and selecting a new visual image for the Northfield Raiders that reflects Northfield's values, history, and future and is consistent with the existing 'Northfield Raiders' identity. The Superintendent shall develop and issue a written charge for the committee that includes design principles addressing inclusivity, historical grounding, and the scope of acceptable subject matter, including whether figurative and non-figurative designs may be considered. The committee shall operate under the direction of the Superintendent and shall complete its work no later than May 31, 2027. Selection of a new image shall require the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the appointed committee members. An image selected by the committee under this process shall be adopted as the official image of the Northfield Raiders. If no image receives that level of support by the deadline, the block 'N' shall be retained as the sole image representing the Northfield Raiders.” The motion was seconded by Butler. The board unanimously rejected the amendment. The motion to reject both the “horse” and the “cow” images and maintain the block “N” as the sole image to represent the Northfield Raiders and NHS passed unanimously.

- b. Resolution Authorizing the Renewal of an Expiring Referendum Revenue Authorization. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Miller, the board approved by roll call the renewal of the expiring 2017 operating levy without an election for the term of ten (10) years, beginning with taxes payable in 2028. Voting yes were Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Miller, Quinnell, and Gonzalez-George. Voting no was Nelson. The motion passed 6-1. The additional revenue from the referendum revenue has and will continue to be used to finance school operations. Board renewal of an operating levy, using the same conditions as originally approved by the voters, is permitted by Minnesota Statute 126C.17. A public meeting, as required by the statute, was held on March 19, 2026. All district residents were notified via a postcard and through multiple district updates and other communications.
- c. Financial Forecast Follow Up.
  - i. Potential Budget Restorations. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously approved the budget restorations for the 2026-27 school year as presented at the April 13 regular board meeting with the Special Services Administrative Restructuring Proposal - Option 2.
- d. Resolution for Termination and Non-Renewal of Probationary Licensed Staff. On a motion by Gonzalez-George, seconded by Miller, the board unanimously adopted by roll call the resolutions related to the termination and non-renewal of the teaching contract of the following probationary licensed teachers effective at the close of the 2025-2026 school year. Voting “yes” were Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Miller, Nelson, Quinnell, and Gonzalez-George. No one voted “no.”

<u>Name</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Position</u>
Ades, Hudson	1.00 FTE	Middle School Science
Anderson, Joshua	1.00 FTE	Bridgewater Special Education
Anderson, Madison	1.00 FTE	High School/ALC Art
Choudek, Taylor	1.00 FTE	ECSE/General Education – NCEC
Drexler, Nicole	1.00 FTE	Bridgewater Grade 5 - LTS
Duncan, Jamie	1.00 FTE	Greenvale Park Special Education
Jandro, Lauren	1.00 FTE	Bridgewater Special Education
Lerbakken, Robin	1.00 FTE	LTS Speech at Greenvale Park
Shaeffer, Michael	.30 FTE	HS English/Language Arts

The following probationary teacher(s) will be returned under the following part-time contract:

<u>Name</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Position</u>
Anderson, Madison	.60 FTE	ALC Art
Choudek, Taylor	.568 FTE	General Education – NCEC

- e. Resolution Proposing to Place Tenured Licensed Staff on Unrequested Leave of Absence. On a motion by Gonzalez-George, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously adopted by roll call the resolution related to the proposed placement of the following teachers on unrequested leave of absence effective at the end of the 2025-26 school year. Voting “yes” were Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Miller, Nelson, Quinnell, and Gonzalez-George. No one voted “no.”

<u>Name</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Position</u>
Heather Guertin	.80 FTE	Spring Creek Science
Rebekah Patterson	1.0 FTE	Special Education (OFP)

This action was taken with the understanding that the following individuals will be offered a contract for the 2026-2027 school year as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Position</u>
Heather Guertin	.75 FTE	Spring Creek Science

- f. Policy 802 Disposition of Obsolete Equipment and Material. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Nelson, the board unanimously approved the recommended changes to Policy 802 to require advance payment before transferring obsolete equipment and material.

## 8. Items for Information

- a. Construction Update No. 25. Superintendent Hillmann and Sal Bagley from Wold Architects and Engineers provided an update on the NHS construction project.
- b. Superintendent Search Update. Board Clerk Maggie Epstein gave an update on the superintendent search.
- c. Graduation Update. The ALC graduation is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 4 in the Middle School Auditorium. Northfield High School’s graduation is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 7 at Memorial Field.

## 9. Future Meetings

- a. Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent final round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
- b. Monday, May 4, 2026, 5:15 p.m., Special Board Meeting, approve superintendent’s contract, Northfield DO Boardroom
- c. Monday, May 11, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- d. Thursday, May 14, 2026, 5:15 p.m., Work Session, Later School Start Times, Northfield DO Boardroom
- e. \*Tuesday, May 26, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom

\*Note that Monday, May 25, 2026 is Memorial Day

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maggie Epstein".

Maggie Epstein  
School Board Clerk