

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Minutes

August 10, 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, Gonzalez-George, and Quinnell. Absent: Goerwitz, Miller, and 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 Butler, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

- The district received \$6,000 from Dakota Electric to support the Greenvale Park Community School programming. This grant will go directly to support club leaders and materials for the program.
- The Northfield Chamber of Commerce will host the 2026 Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener in Northfield this fall. On Friday, Oct. 9, Greenvale Park Elementary will serve as a site for outreach activities in coordination with the DNR and Community Ed to have fourth grade learning stations.
- The City of Northfield anticipates they will be transitioning from the old ice arena to the new one this month and are pleased to announce that they were authorized for on-site solar after initial uncertainty. The district's first payment to the city will be issued this month. The city thanks the district for their partnership, and all parties involved are excited to start utilizing the new facility.
- Thirty-four incoming seventh grade students had a successful trip to Eagle Bluff July 20-22. While there, the Northfield students demonstrated a willingness to challenge themselves, and displayed top-tier energy and great teamwork. Community Education thanks district staff and parent chaperones for assisting with the trip. Northfield School District staff included Chris O'Neill and Paula Baragary. Volunteer chaperones included Troy Pasch, Liz Pasch and Travis Pasch.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. Leadership Introductions. New district and building leaders were introduced and briefly addressed the board. Each leader shared their professional background, what drew them to Northfield Public Schools, an early highlight or appreciation from their experience so far, and what they are most looking forward to in their work.
- b. Area Learning Center (ALC) School Improvement Showcase. ALC Director Daryl Kehler provided the board with an overview of the school's successes and highlights in 2025-2026 and the focus areas for the 2026-2027 school year.
- c. Permanent School Fund. Superintendent Anderson presented to the board about the Permanent School Fund, which provides a source of financial support for Minnesota's public schools generated by revenue from public lands. This November, voters will be asked to update the Minnesota Constitution by voting on an amendment to modernize how the Permanent School Fund revenue is distributed. Superintendent Anderson will provide background information, explain the proposed constitutional amendment, and outline the potential impact to Northfield Public Schools.

6. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Minutes. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on July 13, 2026.

- b. Gift Agreements. Gift agreements included in the board packet.
- c. Overnight Field Trip Request. Northfield High School Boys Hockey Coach Charlie Cloud requested board approval to take approximately 37 students to Brainerd, MN November 20-21, 2026 for a pre-season scrimmage festival.
- d. Personnel Items.
 - i. Appointments
 1. Corey Douville, Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day at the Middle School beginning 8/31/2026. Step 3, \$23.18/hr.
 2. Nicole Drexler, 1.0 FTE Grade 5 Teacher at Spring Creek beginning 8/27/2026. BA, Step 2.
 3. Lily Hollerung, Assistant 9th Grade Volleyball Coach at the High School beginning 8/17/2026. \$4,614 stipend.
 4. Abigail Kemper, .90 FTE Art Specialist at the High School beginning 8/27/2026. MA, Step 10.
 5. Emmalee Knoch, Early Ventures Teacher for 40 hours/week at the NCEC beginning 8/27/2026. Step 6, \$24.09/hr.
 6. Michelle Lepper, 1.0 FTE Grade 1 Compañeros Teacher at Bridgewater beginning 8/27/2026. MA+20, Step 7.
 7. Cathy Malecha, Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School beginning 8/12/2026. Step 4, \$23.98/hr.
 8. Jeffrey Mueller, Assistant Boys Soccer Coach at the High School beginning 8/17/2026. \$5,191 stipend.
 9. Mallory Nystuen, Special Ed EA/PCA for 7 hours/day at Spring Creek beginning 8/15/2026. Step 4, \$23.98/hr.
 10. Heather Olson, Lunch Supervision EA for 2.25 hours/day at Greenvale Park beginning 8/31/2026. Step 1, \$22.30/hr.
 11. Christine Peterson, 1.0 FTE Administrative Support Assistant to the Principal at Bridgewater beginning 8/5/2026. Class IV - Step 5, \$28.23/hr.
 12. Rose Taylor, Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School beginning 8/31/2026. Step 4, \$23.98/hr.
 13. Hanna Valescu, Special Ed EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day at the Middle School beginning 8/31/2026. Step 4, \$23.98/hr.
 14. Lori Bjork, 1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher at the Middle School beginning 8/27/2026. MA, Step 2.
 15. Kathy Lansing, Bridges to Kindergarten EA for 7 hours/day at Spring Creek beginning 8/17/2026-8/21/2026. Step 4, \$23.98/hr.
 16. Melissa Simmer, 1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher at Greenvale Park beginning 8/27/2026. BA+40, Step 10.
 17. Marcia Welch, KidVentures Site Assistant for up to 17.5 hours/week at Spring Creek beginning 8/31/2026. Step 4, \$21.34/hr.
 - ii. Increase/Decrease/Changes in Assignment
 1. Kirstin Anderson, Special Ed EA/PCA for 7 hours/day at Spring Creek, change to Special Ed EA/PCA for 7.25 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 8/24/2026.
 2. Richelle Audiss, Child Nutrition Associate at the Middle School, add Assistant Middle School Girls Tennis Coach effective 8/31/2026. \$2,884 stipend.
 3. Nick Connor, Teacher at the High School, add Math Lead effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027. \$1,000 stipend.
 4. Nicole Drexler, LTS Grade 5 Teacher at Greenvale Park, change to ongoing Grade 5 Teacher at Spring Creek effective 8/27/2026. BA, Step 2.
 5. Kelle Edwards, EA at the High School, add Concessions Stand Manager at the High School effective 8/1/2026. \$3,000 stipend.
 6. Noah Gagnon, .8 FTE Science Teacher and .2 FTE Engineering Teacher at the High School, change to 1.0 FTE Science Teacher effective 8/27/2026.
 7. Claire Gardner, Teacher at the Middle School, add Literacy Lead effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027. \$1,000 stipend.
 8. Madison Hince, 1.0 FTE Assistant Dance Coach at the High School, change to .25 FTE effective 10/26/2026.
 9. Elena Howe Solberg, Assistant 9th Grade Volleyball Coach at the High School, change to Assistant Volleyball Coach effective 8/17/2026. \$5,191 stipend.
 10. Abby Johnson, LTS EL EA at Greenvale Park, change to ongoing EL EA at Greenvale Park effective 8/31/2026.
 11. Cindy Keogh, Kindergarten EA for 4 hrs/day at Bridgewater, extend position through 6/11/2027.
 12. Rebecca Knight, 1.0 FTE Assistant Dance Coach at the High School, change to .25 FTE effective 10/26/2026.
 13. Joanna McLees, LTS Early Childhood Teacher at the NCEC, add Bridges to Kindergarten Teacher at Bridgewater for up to 44 hours effective 8/10/2026-8/21/2026. \$40/hr.
 14. Dylon Rowe, .5 FTE Assistant Dance Coach at the High School, change to 1.0 FTE effective 10/26/2026.
 15. Heather Ryden, Grade 6 Teacher at the Middle School, change to Instructional Services Systems Specialist at the District Office effective 8/3/2026.
 16. LauraAnn Talbot Peterson, Teacher at the Middle School, add Math Lead effective 8/27/2026-6/11/2027. \$1,000 stipend.
 17. Kristin Johnson, Summer Plus Teacher at Greenvale Park, change to 1.0 FTE Long-Term Substitute Grade 5 Teacher effective 8/27/2026-1/27/2027. MA, Step 10.

18. Updated: Vicki McKay, Child Nutrition Manager II at the Middle School, add Summer Child Nutrition Lead for up to 6 hours/day at Greenvale Park effective 6/17/2026-8/20/2026. \$28.26/hr.
19. Courtney Olukiran, Special Education Teacher at Greenvale Park, change to Special Education Instruction & Inclusion Coach for the District effective 8/10/2026. Lane/step.
20. Pilar Sullivan, EA at the NCEC, add Bridges to Kindergarten EA for 7 hours/day at Bridgewater effective 8/17/2026-8/21/2026.
21. Grace Swanson, Community School Site Leader at Bridgewater, change to Community School Site Leader at the Middle School effective 8/3/2026.
- iii. Leave of Absences
 1. N/A
- iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
 1. Pamela Bennewitz, EL Educational Assistant at Greenvale Park, resignation effective 7/28/2026.
 2. Christian Blanck, Teacher at the High School, resignation effective 7/15/2026.
 3. Rebekka Flickinger, Teacher at Spring Creek, resignation effective 7/15/2026.
 4. Amy Kolars, Special Education Teacher at the Middle School, resignation effective 8/3/2026.
 5. Mariah O'Donnell, Special Ed EA/PCA at the Middle School, declined position effective 7/28/2026.
 6. Faith Torgeson, Special Education EA/PCA at the Middle School, resignation effective 8/3/2026.
 7. Lillian Visaya, Assistant Girls Lacrosse Coach at the High School, resignation effective 8/3/2026.
 8. Stefany Perez, Assistant Middle School Girls Soccer Coach, resignation effective 8/5/2026.
 9. Andrea Robbins, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher at the NCEC, resignation effective 7/14/2026.

7. Items for Individual Action

- a. Resolution Relating to the Election of School Board Members and Calling the School Board Election. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Epstein, the board adopted by roll call vote the resolution regarding the school board election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. Voting "yes" were Butler, Epstein, Quinnell, and Gonzalez-George. No one voted "no." This resolution is the board authorization necessary to formally establish this year's election process. The adoption of this resolution will meet the requirements necessary to comply with the election process. Ballots for school board election will be included in the general election ballots prepared by the county auditors. The official canvass of the election results will be scheduled as an agenda item for the regular board meeting on Monday, November 9, 2026.

8. Items for Information

- a. Construction Update No. 29. Superintendent Anderson provided an update on the NHS construction project.
- b. Annual Fundraising Report. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf reviewed the fundraising report as required by Policy 713.
- c. Staff Breakfast and Program. Northfield Public Schools will welcome back staff for the 2026-27 school year on Tuesday, September 1 from 7:30-10:00 a.m. at Northfield Middle School. The board is invited to attend.
- d. 2026-2027 e-Learning Day Plan. Superintendent Anderson shared the 2026-27 e-Learning plan. The use of the e-Learning Plan was approved by the board in unison with the 2024-25 school year calendar in December 2023. The district is required to share the plan each year with the board and post it on the district's website.

9. Future Meetings

- a. Monday, August 24, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- b. Monday, September 14, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- c. Monday, September 28, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Butler, the board unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m.



Maggie Epstein
School Board Clerk