

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Minutes

September 22, 2025
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, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Miller, Nelson and Quinnell. Absent: Epstein. 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 Quinnell, seconded by Butler, the board approved the agenda.

3. Public Comment

There were four public comments.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

There were no announcements.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. District Youth Council (DYC) Update. DYC co-chair Atticus Mayer updated the board about the DYC's plans for the 2025-2026 school year.
- b. Northfield High School Continuous Improvement Showcase. Northfield High School Principal Chris Dibble and Northfield High School Assistant Principal Rico Bohren provided the board with an overview of the high school's successes and highlights in 2024-2025 and the focus areas for the 2025-2026 school year.
- c. Reimagine Northfield High School Update and Renderings. Sal Bagley from Wold Architects and Engineers provided an update to the board on the progress of the Reimagine Northfield High School Project.
- d. Superintendent Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee Update. Board Chair Gonzalez-George updated the board on the progress of a refreshed superintendent evaluation tool. The ad hoc committee proposed providing a more informal six-month check-in with the superintendent during the month of December, with a new evaluation tool to be adopted for the 2026-27 school year.

6. Consent Agenda

On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Nelson, the board approved the consent agenda.

- a. Minutes. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on September 8, 2025.
- b. Gift Agreements. Gift agreements included in the board packet.
- c. Financial Reports - June 2025. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf requested the board approve paid bills totaling \$3,091,330.37, payroll checks totaling \$3,831,068.51, a wire transfer totaling \$200,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$50,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for June 2025. At the end of June 2025, total cash and investments amounted to \$78,048,226.98.
- d. Overnight Fieldtrip Request. Northfield High School FFA Adviser T.J. Austin requested board approval to take seven students to the FFA State Convention in Indianapolis, IN October 29-November 1.
- e. Personnel Items.
 - i. Appointments
 1. Alexander Altermatt, Instructor Lead/Swim Lead for Community Education/Recreation for 4 hours/week, beginning 9/13/2025-5/31/2026. Step 3, \$16.64/hour.

2. Theodore Cledwyn, Instructor Lead/Swim Lead as needed with Community Education/Recreation, beginning 9/29/2025-5/31/2026. \$16.91/hour.
 3. Maisie DeGrote, Instructor Lead/Swim Lead for Community Education/Recreation for 2.5 hours/week, beginning 9/11/2025-5/31/2026. Step 4, \$16.91/hour.
 4. Estella Freeman, Instructor Lead/Swim Lead for Community Education/Recreation for 4 hours/week, beginning 9/13/2025-5/1/2026. Step 3, \$16.64/hour.
 5. Guadalupe Gallego, Community School Student Site Assistant at Greenvale Park for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. Step 2, \$16.88/hour.
 6. Zachary Gjerdingen, Event Worker at the High School for 2.0 hours/week, beginning 9/15/2025. Event Worker rate of pay.
 7. Kiera Hasan, Community School Site Assistant at the Middle School for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/25-5/14/2026. Step 4, \$20.72/hour.
 8. Stephanie Hernandez Flores, Community School Student Site Assistant for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. Step 2, \$16.88/hour.
 9. Lily Holman, Event Worker at the High School for 2.0 hours/week, beginning 9/15/2025. Event Worker rate of pay.
 10. Amy Kaiser, Community School Club Leader at Spring Creek for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/1/2026. Step 1, \$20.31/hour.
 11. Emyla Lewis, Community School Club Leader at Greenvale Park for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. Step 4, \$22.33/hour.
 12. Atticus Mayer, Lifeguard as needed for Community Education/Recreation, beginning 9/20/2025-5/31/2026. \$15.29/hour.
 13. Amy Merritt, Special Education EA/PCA at Bridgewater Elementary for 5.5 hours/day plus 1.25 hours/day special education bus route, beginning 9/19/2025. Step 4, \$23.51/hour.
 14. Star Nesseth, Community School Site Assistant at Bridgewater for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/25-5/14/26. Step 2, \$19.37/hour.
 15. Blanca Nunez, Site Supervisor for Community Education/Recreation for 2.75 hours/week, beginning 9/17/2025-5/31/2026. \$18.24/hour.
 16. Osiris Perez Dorantes, Community School Student Site Assistant at Greenvale Park for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. Step 2, \$16.88/hour.
 17. Jackson Reade, Instructor Lead/Swim Lead for Community Education/Recreation for 4.5 hours/week, beginning 9/11/2025-5/31/2026. Step 6, \$17.45/hour.
 18. Loretta Anderson, Event Worker at the High School, beginning 9/23/2025. \$45/\$77 per event.
 19. Amanda Hallet, Community School Site Assistant at Bridgewater for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. Step 1, \$18.71/hour.
 20. Kaija Halvorson, Community School Site Assistant at Bridgewater for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. Step 2, \$19.37/hour.
 21. Emily Makitalo, 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist at Spring Creek and Greenvale Park, beginning 1/5/2026. MA, step 6.
- ii. Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment
1. Alexander Altermatt, Instructor Lead for Community Education/Recreation, add Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation for 4 hours/week on Saturdays, beginning 9/13/2025-5/1/2025. Step 3, \$15.56/hour.
 2. Mairin Born, 1.0 FTE Teacher at Spring Creek, add Community School licensed teacher for up to 10 hours/week, effective 9/29/2025-5/14/2-26. \$40/hour.
 3. Shari Bridley, Special Education EA/PCA at NCEC for 6.8 hours/day, change to Special Education EA/PCA at Bridgewater for 6.8 hours/day, effective 9/2/2025.
 4. Kristen Cade, 1.0 FTE teacher at Bridgewater, add Community School licensed teacher for up to 10 hours/week, effective 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. \$40/hour.
 5. Diana Camargo, Special Education EA/PCA at Head Start for 3.20 hours/day, add Special Education EA/PCA at Greenvale Park for 3.0 hours/day, beginning 9/2/2025.
 6. Jasmine Celis, Kid Venture Site Assistant for up to 15 hours/week at Spring Creek, change to up to 18 hours/week at Spring Creek, beginning 9/22/2025.
 7. Taylor Choudek, .50 FTE Early Childhood teacher/.50 Early Childhood Special Education teacher at the NCEC, change to .50 FTE Early Childhood teacher at NCEC and .50 Special Education teacher at Bridgewater, effective 9/10/2025.
 8. Theodore Cledwyn, Instructor Lead as needed for Community Education/Recreation, add Lifeguard as needed for Community Education/Recreation beginning 9/29/2025-5/31/2026. \$15.83/hour.
 9. Tracy Closson, Summit Ski Instructor for Community Education/Recreation, add Ski Club Chaperone on Monday, beginning 1/5/2026-5/31/2026. \$250 stipend.
 10. Robert Coleman, General Education EA at Spring Creek for 5 hours/day, add Kid Venture Site Assistant Substitute as needed, beginning 9/22/2025.
 11. Lindsey Downs, ADSIS Interventionist at Spring Creek, add Community School licensed teacher at Spring Creek, effective 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. \$40/hour.

12. Rikki Drewitz, Media Center EA at the Middle School for 7.0 hours/day, add Middle School Spelling Bee Coordinator, beginning 9/15/2025. \$601 stipend, subject to change upon the settlement of the 2025-27 NEA agreement.
13. Brianna Grabinger, General Education EA for ECFE for 22.25 hours/week, add an additional 1.5 hours/week for a total of 23.75 hours/week, effective 9/15/2025.
14. Madalyn Heinz, long-term substitute early childhood teacher at the NCEC through 9/10/2025, extend long-term substitute contract until 4/3/2026.
15. Jaelyn Holz, Kid Venture Student Site Assistant at Spring Creek for up to 15 hours/week, change to up to 18 hours/week, beginning 9/22/2025.
16. Nicole Lazaro-Ascencio, Kid Venture Site Assistant at Greenvale Park for up to 15 hours/week, change to on call as needed, effective 9/22/2025.
17. Melvin Miller, Building Supervisor for Community Education/Recreation, add Site Supervisor for Community Education/Recreation as needed, beginning 10/1/2025-5/31/2026. \$18.51/hour.
18. Kevin O'Brien, Building Supervisor for Community Education/Recreation, add Knightcrawler's Swim Coach for Community Education/Recreation for 1.5 hours/day for 3 days/week, beginning 9/17/2025-5/31/2026. \$90/hour.
19. Stefany Perez Dorantes, Special Education EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day and .25 hours/day general education EA at Spring Creek, add Community School Site Leader at Spring Creek for 4 hours/day, beginning 9/15/2025. Step 1, \$24.05/hour.
20. Deborah Russell, Grade 2 teacher at Spring Creek, add Community School licensed teacher at Spring Creek, effective 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. \$40/hour.
21. Melissa Spitzack, Building Supervisor for Community Education/Recreation, add Raider Fitness Instructor for four days/week, effective 9/12/2025-5/31/2026. \$55/participant.
22. Heather Stanton Ims, School Social Worker at the Middle School, add Community Schools licensed teacher for up to 10 hours/week, effective 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. \$40/hour.
23. Sarah Wolfe, General Education EA for ECFE for 11 hours/week, decrease to 7.25 hours/week, effective 9/15/2025.
24. Carly Amys-Roe, Special Education EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day and General Education EA for .50 hours/day at Bridgewater, add Community School Club Leader for up to 10 hours/week, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2025. Step 4, \$22.33/hour.
25. Joshua Anderson, 1.0 FTE long-term substitute teacher at Bridgewater, add Community School licensed teacher for up to 10 hours/week at Bridgewater, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. \$40/hour.
26. Michelle Anderson, Special Education EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day and General Education EA for .50 hours/day at Greenvale Park, change to Special Education EA/PCA for 6.5 hours/day and General Education EA for .25 hours/day, and add 1.0 hour/day Special Education bus route (Monday-Friday) beginning 9/30/2025-6/10/2026.
27. Kaitlin Bell, 1.0 FTE teacher at Bridgewater, add Community School licensed teacher for up to 10 hours/week at Bridgewater, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. \$40/hour.
28. Katie Casson, 1.0 FTE teacher at the High School, add senior class advisor for graduation purposes, beginning 9/3/2025. \$300 stipend.
29. Nick Connor, 1.0 FTE teacher at the High School, add Math Curriculum Facilitator at the High School, beginning 9/18/2025-6/10/2026. \$1,000 stipend.
30. Nancy Fox, 1.0 FTE teacher at Spring Creek, add Community School licensed teacher for up to 10 hours/week at Spring Creek, beginning 9/29/2025-5/14/2026. \$40/hour.
31. Nancy Fox, 1.0 FTE teacher at Spring Creek, add Event Worker at the High School, beginning 10/6/2025. Event Worker rate of pay.
32. Anna Hawanchak, Class IV HR Generalist at the District Office, add \$1.00 hour stipend for Spanish Language skills, effective 9/22/2025.
33. Ian Johnson, CN student worker substitute, change to Child Nutrition student worker for up to 1.0 hour/day, beginning 9/22/2025. \$11.13/hour.
34. Alisa Larsen, Special Education EA/PCA for 6.15 hours/day at the NCEC, add 1.0 hour/day Monday-Thursday special education bus route, beginning 9/29/2025-6/10/2026.
35. Jill Lauritzen-Kohl, 1.0 FTE teacher at the High School, add teacher mentor for the Grow Your Own program, beginning 9/17/2025-6/10/2026. \$1,500 stipend.
36. Becky Malecha, 1.0 FTE teacher at Spring Creek, add teacher mentor for the Grow Your Own program, beginning 9/17/2025-6/20/2026. \$1,500 stipend.
37. Amy Merritt, Special Education EA/PCA for 5.50 hours/day at Bridgewater, plus 1.25 hours/day special education bus route, change to working as a substitute for 5.50 hours/day at Bridgewater, plus 1.25 hours/day special education bus route, beginning 9/19/2025-until pre-work screening can be completed.
38. Katherine Norrie, 1.0 FTE teacher at the High School, add joint senior class advisor, beginning 9/3/2025. \$716.67 stipend.
39. Ian Rhodes, 1.0 FTE teacher at the High School, add English Language Arts Curriculum Facilitator at the High School, beginning 9/18/2025-6/10/2026. \$1,000 stipend.

40. Sarah Swan McDonald, 1.0 FTE teacher at the High School, add joint senior class advisor, beginning 9/3/2025. \$716.67 stipend.
 41. Amanda Tracy, 1.0 FTE teacher at the High School, add joint senior class advisor, beginning 9/3/2025. \$716.67 stipend.
 42. Deborah Wagner, Special Education EA/PCA for 6.88 hours/day and General Education EA for 1.12 hours/day at Bridgewater, add Community School Club Leader for up to 10 hours/week, beginning - 9/29/2025-5/14/2025. Step 4, \$22.33/hour.
- iii. Leave of Absence
1. Stephen Cade, Spanish Teacher at the High School, FMLA leave of absence beginning 9/15/2025 and continuing on an intermittent basis for up to 60 work days.
 2. Natalie Giles, .90 FTE general education Hand-in-Hand Preschool teacher, extending current childcare leave of absence through December 19, 2025. Natalie will also be on leave of absence 1/5/26 through 4/4/26 under the MN Paid Leave law.
 3. Steven Kovach, Special Education EA/PCA at the High School, leave of absence beginning 10/19/2025 - 11/16/2025.
 4. Rebekah Patterson, Special Education Teacher at Bridgewater Elementary, leave of absence beginning 9/15/2025-9/27/2025.
 5. Danielle Pickup, School Social Worker at the NCEC and High School, FMLA leave of absence beginning 9/18/2025- approximately 10/2/2025.
 6. Mimi De Rosas, long-term substitute administrative assistant at NCEC, medical leave of absence for up to 8 weeks, beginning 9/17/2025.
- iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
1. Jair Ascencio Puga, Assistant Boys Soccer Coach at Northfield High School, resignation effective 9/10/2025.
 2. Robyn Dietz, Media EA at Bridgewater for 5.5 hours/day and general supervision for .50 hours/day, resignation effective 9/26/2025.
 3. Willard Wilson, III, Head Alpine Ski Coach at Northfield High School, resignation effective 9/8/2025.
 4. Willard Wilson, IV, Assistant Alpine Ski Coach at Northfield High School, resignation effective 9/8/2025.
 5. Tammy Iszler-Johnson, Occupational Therapist with the District, termination effective 8/26/2025.
 6. Dylan O'Toole, Special Education EA/PCA at Bridgewater, resignation effective 10/3/2025.

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

7. Items for Individual Action

- a. Policy Committee Recommendations. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Miller, the board approved the policy committee's recommended changes to policies 613, 620, and 707.
- b. Co-Curricular Adds. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Miller, the board authorized the district to hire an additional assistant boys cross country coach at a total cost of \$4,435, subject to change upon the settlement of the 2025-27 NEA agreement. This request makes the additional assistant coach position for boys cross country permanent. The boys cross country program has had consistently higher numbers the past three years, with 74 participants this fall. The co-curricular committee had made this request on a temporary basis for both the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years, with a plan to assess the situation for fall of 2025.
- c. Proposed 2025 Payable 2026 Preliminary Property Tax Levy. On a motion by Miller, seconded by Butler, the board certified to county auditors the 2025 Payable 2026 Preliminary Levy Limitation and Certification at the maximum authority. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf reviewed the levy certification timeline and analysis of the preliminary levy. The amount of the preliminary levy for 2026 is \$27,468,778.21 and represents a 0.98% decrease over last year. This represents the maximum levy amount as of this publication. The board, for many years, has certified the preliminary levy using the term "maximum" because the final levy certification can be lower than the preliminary certification but cannot be higher. Certifying at the "maximum" allows for flexibility should the calculation be higher than what is printed at the time of this board action. The preliminary property tax levy for 2026 is required to be certified to the district's home county auditor no later than September 30, 2025.
- d. MSBA Platform Recommendation Resolution. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Nelson, the board authorized the superintendent to submit a resolution to MSBA for consideration as part of their 2026 legislative platform to request the Minnesota Legislature broaden the definition of operating capital to include essential training that supports the adoption of new, high-quality curriculum materials.

8. Items for Information

- a. Retired Educators Luncheon. Board members are invited to attend the district's annual retired educators luncheon on Friday, Oct. 24. The luncheon will be held at Ruth's on Stafford beginning at 11:30 a.m. If you plan to attend please RSVP to Kelly Spillman-Kramer no later than Oct. 15.

9. Future Meetings

- a. *Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
*Note that Monday, October 13, 2025 is Indigenous Peoples' Day
- b. Monday, October 27, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- c. Monday, November 10, 2025, 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 regular board meeting at 8:50 p.m.



Amy Goerwitz
School Board Clerk