

# NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## School Board Minutes

September 27, 2021  
District Office Boardroom

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Julie Pritchard called the Regular meeting of the Northfield Board of Education of Independent School District No. 659 to order at 7:00 p.m. Present: Baraniak, Butler, Gonzalez-Goerge, Goerwitz, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. Absent: None. This meeting was open to the public, live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted to the school district website.

2. Agenda Approval/Table File

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

3. Public Comment

There was public comment from Lindsey Briskie, Dr. Sandra Turbes, Lisa Sexton, Ricky Livingston, and Sarah Meerts regarding masking and COVID-19.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

- Open houses were held at Spring Creek Elementary, Bridgewater Elementary, District Office and Area Learning Center, Northfield Community Education Center, and Greenvale Park Elementary on Thursday, September 23, 2021. We want to thank the student who spoke at the Greenvale Park ribbon cutting ceremony: Ellie Njagi, Santi Peralta Marcial, Leo Steinberg, and Mary Lou Street.
- The Northfield Raiders are celebrating Homecoming this week and a multitude of events are scheduled.
- Congratulations Michele Warden! Michele is an educational assistant at Bridgewater and became a U.S. citizen on September 23.
- At Friday night's football game in New Prague, the Northfield Raiders were recognized by the New Prague Trojans for their support of a New Prague student diagnosed with cancer.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. Request to Hire an Additional Licensed Special Education Teacher. Cheryl Hall, Director of Special Services, and Assistant Director of Special Services Sara Pratt, requested to hire 1.0 FTE licensed special education teacher for the Portage online program and Greenvale Park. The total projected cost of salary and benefits is \$95,627 with approximately 55% of the salary reimbursed through special education revenue for a net cost of \$32,355. Director Mertesdorf indicated the total projected cost of salary and benefits will be 100% federally funded.

Goerwitz made a motion to move this to an item for individual action. Seconded by Butler. Motion carried.

- b. Superintendent State of the District Overview. Superintendent Hillmann presented an overview of the programs and activities completed during the 2020-2021 school year and organized the successes and challenges around the district's five strategic commitment areas: people, learner outcomes, stewardship, partnerships, and equity. School districts are a human enterprise and we are committed to caring for the people we serve: our students, families, and staff. As a district, we focus on high-quality results for our students as academic and social/emotional learners; our goal is to prepare them for lifelong success. The district is committed to using our human and financial resources wisely. Partnerships are critical and we are grateful for the community support from many partners including Northfield Promise, Northfield Hospital+Clinics, and Rice County Public Health. We continue our equity and anti-racism work.
- c. Policy Committee Recommendations. Superintendent Hillmann presented the policy committee's recommended updates to policies 102, 406 and 413. This will be an item for individual action at the next board meeting.

- d. Superintendent Operations and COVID-19 Update. Dr. Hillmann provided an update about district operations and COVID-19. COVID numbers continue to increase in the county but the district has quarantined far fewer students who were considered close contacts to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 when compared to last year's procedures. The first Hispanic Parent Advisory Committee meeting was held earlier this month, and the district continues to focus one of each month's professional learning community sessions on anti-racism/equity training.
- e. District Youth Council (DYC) Update. DYC co-chairs Amelia Arnold and Sylvi Hanson updated the board about their plans for the 2021-2022 school year. DYC's purpose is to foster connections between the school board, administration, and the student body, and is comprised of subcommittees. DYC committee members serve on a variety of districtwide committees. Goals for 2021-22 include a school board brunch, care packages for students, game night, Black Student Union discussion, survey about equity within the district, and a Rotary culture night.

6. Consent Agenda

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

a. Minutes

- Minutes of the Special Closed School Board meeting held on September 13, 2021
- Minutes of the Regular School Board meeting held on September 13, 2021
- Minutes of the Special Closed School Board meeting held on September 21, 2021

b. Gifts Agreements

- \$4,404.00 from Northfield Fine Arts Boosters to fund sketchbooks for Northfield Middle School art students for the 2021-22 school year
- \$13,150.00 from Bridgewater Booster Club: \$15.00 per student for classroom teachers, and funds for specialists and special education teachers

c. Financial Reports

Financial Report - April 2021. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf requested that the board approve paid bills totaling \$1,708,729.96, payroll checks totaling \$3,386,660.56, a wire transfer totaling \$805,579.83 from MN Trust-Bldg Bond to MSDLAF Liquid, a wire transfer totaling \$200,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$150,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for April 2021. At the end of April 2021 total cash and investments amounted to \$26,459,904.60.

Financial Report - May 2021. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf requested that the board approve paid bills totaling \$1,910,066.77, payroll checks totaling \$3,479,372.19, a wire transfer totaling \$1.76 from MN Trust-Bldg Bond to MN Trust-Oper, a wire transfer totaling \$450,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$400,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for May 2021. At the end of May 2021 total cash and investments amounted to \$31,976,622.99.

Financial Report - June 2021. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf requested that the board approve paid bills totaling \$2,632,278.00, payroll checks totaling \$3,438,244.40, a wire transfer totaling \$350,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$250,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for June 2021. At the end of June 2021 total cash and investments amounted to \$34,412,236.92.

d. Personnel Items

i. Appointments

1. Claire Breitenfeldt, Community School Site Assistant for up to 2 hours/day for up to 4 days/week at Greenvale Park, beginning 10/5/2021-6/3/2022; Step 1-\$14.11/hr.

2. Lupema Celis Castillo, Special Ed EA PCA for 5.38 hours/day at Greenvale Park, beginning 9/29/2021; Step 1-\$16.17/hr.
  3. Josten Coleman, 1.0 FTE STEM Teacher at the Middle School, beginning 9/27/2021; MA, Step 6
  4. Correction: Kyle Fearing, 1.0 FTE Health Teacher at the Middle School, beginning 8/30/2021; BA+10, Step 4
  5. Georgia Johnson, KidVentures Student Site Assistant for up to 15 hours/week at Greenvale Park, beginning 9/20/2021; \$10.08/hr.
  6. Lisa Kobes, Special Ed EA PCA for 6.75 hours/day and General Ed EA for .25 hours/day at Spring Creek, beginning 9/27/2021; Spec Ed Step 2-\$16.53/hr.; Gen Ed Step 2-\$15.92/hr.
  7. Laurie Rupp, 1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute Second Grade Teacher at Bridgewater, beginning 9/20/2021-3/4/2022; BA, Step 6
  8. Larry Sanftner, Site Supervisor/Scheduler with Community Education Recreation, beginning 9/23/2021-5/31/2022; \$16.00/hr.
  9. Karl Stromley, Gen Ed EA WILL Program for 7 hours/day at the Middle School, beginning 9/27/2021; Step 4-\$16.92/hr.
  10. Elizabeth A Winter, EarlyVenture Teacher for 40 hours/week at the NCEC, beginning 10/5/2021; Step 4-\$18.90/hr.
  11. Anthony Amys-Roe, Program Assistant with Community Education Recreation, beginning 10/2/2021-5/31/2022; \$10.50/hr.
  12. Helen Dillon, Fall Play Costumer with the High School beginning 9/27/2021;\$14.00/hr.
  13. Daniel Kallman, Fall Play at the High School beginning 9/30/2021; \$14.00hr.
  14. Samantha Massie, Program Supervisor with Community Education Recreation, beginning 10/9/2021-5/31/2022; \$10.89/hr.
  15. Jane Moore, Fall Play Accompanist at the High School beginning 9/27/2021; \$15.00/hr.
  16. Jessica Provancha, American Sign Language Interpreter EC for 1.5 hours/week at the NCEC, beginning 10/1/2021; Level C - \$26.24/hr.
  17. Coral Ramos, Community School Site Assistant for up to 3 hours/day for 2 days/week at Greenvale Park, beginning 9/28/2021-6/3/2022; Step 4-\$15.48/hr.
- ii. Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment
1. Adriana Bermudez, ECFE EA for 30 hours/week at the NCEC, change to ECFE EA for 16.5 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 9/20/2021.
  2. Carol Beumer, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  3. Pam Charlton, Teacher at Bridgewater, add Literacy Lead at Bridgewater, effective 9/18/2021-6/9/2022; \$750 Stipend
  4. Lianne Deanovic, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  5. Kelle Edwards, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  6. Susan Eidenschink, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  7. Susan Eidenschink, Special Ed EA at the High School, add Special Ed EA Bus for 1.40 hours/day with the District, effective 9/20/2021-6/10/2022.
  8. Nancy Fox, Teacher at Spring Creek, add Co-lead Student Council Advisor at Spring Creek, effective 9/21/2021-6/9/2022; 50% stipend
  9. Marilyn Frey, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  10. Robert Garcia, Teacher at Greenvale Park, add Math Lead at Greenvale Park, effective 9/20/2021-6/9/2022; \$750 Stipend
  11. Ann Hehr, Teacher at Spring Creek, add co-lead Student Council Advisor at Spring Creek, effective 9/21/2021-6/9/2022; 50% stipend
  12. Roanne Johnson, Spec Ed Teacher at Bridgewater, add Spec Ed New Teacher Mentor at Bridgewater, effective 8/30/2021-6/10/2022. \$750 Stipend.
  13. Anna Kelly, LTS Teacher at Greenvale Park, add Community School Club Leader for up to 6 hours/week at Greenvale Park, effective 9/27/2021-6/3/2022; \$23.01/hr.
  14. Leanne King, Special Ed EA at Spring Creek, add Special Ed EA Bus for 1 hour/day with the District, effective 9/20/2021-6/10/2022.
  15. Kristi Kortuem, Teacher at the Middle School, add Event Worker at the High School, effective 9/21/2021.
  16. Marcy Korynta, 1.0 FTE School Psychologist at the Middle School, add a 1/2 overload in lieu of prep for the 2021-2022 school year at the Middle School, effective 8/30/2021-6/9/2022.

17. Shelly Kruger, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  18. Heather Kuehl, Teacher at the High School, add Secondary Portage Content Tutor, effective 9/17/2021-6/8/2022; Stipend \$10,500/year
  19. Karen Lane, Teacher at Bridgewater, add Math Lead at Bridgewater, effective 9/18/2021-6/9/2022; \$750 Stipend
  20. Melissa Larsen, Teacher at Greenvale Park, add Event Worker at the High School, effective 9/17/2021.
  21. Correction: Rita Lattimore, Custodian at the Middle School, change to Night Custodian Engineer w/o License at the Middle School, effective 9/13/2021-11/22/2021; \$24.55/hr.
  22. Becky Malecha, Teacher at Spring Creek, add Math Lead at Spring Creek, effective 9/18/2021-6/9/2022; \$750 Stipend
  23. Kathy Mellstrom, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  24. Nick Mertesdorf, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  25. Rebecca Meyer, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  26. Curt Mikkelson, Teacher at the Middle School, add Secondary Portage Content Tutor, effective 9/17/2021-6/8/2022; Stipend \$10,500/year
  27. Deb Pack, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  28. Alyssa Parsons, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  29. Darrell Sawyer, Teacher at the Middle School, add Secondary Portage Content Tutor, effective 9/21/2021-6/8/2022; Stipend \$10,500/year
  30. Tammy Schwagerl, Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, change to Special Ed EA for 6.25 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .50 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/9/2021-6/8/2022.
  31. Bernard Selwan, Teacher at the High School, add Secondary Portage Content Tutor, effective 9/16/2021-6/8/2022; Stipend \$10,500/year.
  32. Amanda Sieger, Teacher at Spring Creek, add Literacy Lead at Spring Creek, effective 9/18/2021-6/9/2022; \$750 Stipend
  33. Jeffrey Sullivan, Coach, Weight room supervisor at the High School, add Special Ed EA PCA for 6.75 hours/day at the High School, effective 9/27/2021; Step 1-\$16.17/hr.
  34. Diane Torbenson, Teacher at Greenvale Park, add Literacy Lead at Greenvale Park, effective 9/18/2021-6/9/2022; \$750 Stipend
  35. Karen Lane, Grade 3 Teacher at Bridgewater, change to Small Group Teacher at Bridgewater, effective 8/30/2021-6/9/2022.
  36. Elena Mayrhofer, Special Ed EA for 7 hours/day and Gen Ed EA for .25 hours/day at Spring Creek, change to Special Ed EA for 6.75 hours/day at Spring Creek, effective 9/20/2021-6/10/2022.
  37. Eric Swan McDonald, Teacher at the ALC, add Secondary Portage Content Tutor, effective 9/23/2021-6/8/2022; Stipend \$10,500/year.
- iii. Leave of Absence
1. none
- iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
1. John (Hal) Eckhart, Custodian at the NCEC, retirement effective 11/5/2021.
  2. Lacy Knutson, Special Ed EA at the Middle School, declined position effective 9/26/2021.
  3. Claire Little, Assistant Alpine Coach at the High School, resignation effective 9/23/2021.
- e. Grant Proposal. Superintendent Hillmann requested board approval of a \$297,500.00 grant request from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) from December 1, 2021 - November 30, 2026. The Northfield Teaching Fellows initiative will support 17 local individuals of color in successfully completing a PELSB-approved teaching program, positioning them for careers in teaching. Fellows will receive tuition assistance and an annual stipend. They will also be paired with a current Northfield Public Schools teacher, who will serve as an ongoing mentor for them throughout the program. Moreover, each Fellow will meet every other week with a program Navigator, who will provide: academic advising; financial aid assistance; connections with tutors; and linkages with social service and community resources. The Northfield Community College Collaborative will offer space for Fellows to come in the evenings and weekends to study, receive tutoring, print, access the internet, and connect with peers. All recipients will reside in the

geographic boundaries of the Northfield Public Schools, thereby positioning them to hopefully choose to remain in the community following completion of the program. All individuals of color, the 17 Fellows will include representation from each of the following groups: Northfield graduates, parents of current Northfield Public Schools students, current Northfield Public Schools non-teaching staff, and community members.

7. Items for Individual Action

- a. Action on Grievance. On a motion by Pritchard, seconded by Stratmoen, the board unanimously moved to deny the grievance.
- b. Policy Approval. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Baraniak, the board approved policies 524.2 and 616 as presented at the September 13, 2021 school board meeting and recommended by the policy committee.
- c. Proposed 2021 Payable 2022 Property Tax Levy. The amount of the preliminary levy for 2022 is \$20,017,034.10 and represents a 1.46% decrease over last year. The preliminary property tax levy for 2022 is required to be certified to the district's home county auditor no later than September 30, 2021. Val Mertesdorf, Director of Finance, reviewed the levy certification timelines and analysis of the preliminary levy.

On a motion by Butler, seconded by Goerwitz, the board approved to certify to County Auditors the 2021 Payable 2022 Preliminary Levy Limitation and Certification at the maximum authority.

- d. Request to Hire an Additional Licensed Special Education Teacher. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Baraniak, the board approved the request to hire 1.0 FTE licensed special education resource teacher for the Portage online program and Greenvale Park Elementary at a total projected cost of salary and benefits of \$95,627. This cost will be covered in full by one-time federal funding.

8. Items for Information

There were no items for information.

9. Future Meetings

- a. Monday, October 11, 2021, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- b. Monday, October 25, 2021, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Quinnell, the board adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Noel Stratmoen  
School Board Clerk