

# NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## School Board Minutes

November 9, 2020

Northfield High School Media Center

### I. Call to Order

Board Chair Julie Pritchard called the Regular meeting of the Northfield Board of Education of Independent School District 659 to order at 7:00 p.m. Present: Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. In accordance with Governor Walz's Stay Safe Plan, this meeting was set up in accordance with the plan's social distancing guidelines. In addition, all those present wore face coverings the duration of the meeting. Board member Hardy attended via teleconference in accordance with Minnesota Statute 13D.021, which permits boards to hold a meeting by telephone conference call or other electronic means. Present at this meeting was Dr. Matt Hillmann, Superintendent, and Anita Aase, Executive Administrative Assistant. Also present via video conference was Erin Bailey, Director of Community Education; Val Mertesdorf, Director of Finance; elementary school principals Nancy Antoine from Bridgewater, Sam Richardson from Greenvale Park, and Scott Sannes from Sibley; Molly Viesselman, Director of Human Resources; and Daryl Kehler, ALC Director. Observing the meeting in person was Sam Wilmes, a reporter with the Northfield News. This meeting was live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted to the school district website.

### II. Agenda Approval/Table File

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

### III. Public Comment

To accommodate the public comment portion of our meeting, members of the public were invited via the school district website to submit feedback to the Board via email by 5:00 p.m. on November 9, 2020. All submissions that followed the district policy regarding public comment would be read by Chair Pritchard at this time. There was public comment submitted by Erika Kroetch Campbell, 33 Lincoln Lane, regarding new CDC guidelines for close contact and activities.

### IV. Announcements and Recognitions

- Congratulations to Noel Stratmoen, Amy Goerwitz, Corey Butler and Claudia Gonzalez-George for being elected to the school board.
- Thank you to Northfield United Methodist Church for their continued donation of homemade masks for both adults and students.
- Rice County Public Health has helped the district obtain N95 masks for our Health Office Staff, at no cost to us. They were delivered on October 30.
- Congratulations to Angie Schock's class. The Imagine Math Ready, Set...SOLVE! contest kicked off the math year in style. This contest ran from August 31 through October 30. Eligibility for the classroom award required 8+ students actively working in Imagine Math. They received a \$50 e-gift card from Amazon, Pizza Hut, Papa John's, or Domino's.
- The following students will be signing national letters of intent on 11/11/20 to further their educational and athletic careers in college: Jessica Boland, hockey, Mankato State; Sylvia Koenig, volleyball, Miami of Ohio; Megan Reilly, volleyball, Arizona State; Emma Torstenson, volleyball, Colorado; Rachel Wieber, volleyball, Southern Utah; Brynn Hostettler, softball, Minnesota; Cole Stanchina, baseball, Winona State.

### V. Items for Discussion and Reports

#### A. Bridgewater, Greenvale Park and Sibley Elementary School Updates

Elementary school principals Nancy Antoine, Sam Richardson and Scott Sannes updated the Board about activities, accomplishments and challenges occurring at the elementary schools. Staff and students have done well implementing the COVID protocols of masking, distancing, frequent hand washing and sanitizing during the day. Stress management for adults in the schools and finding substitute teachers and educational assistants has been a challenge.

B. Self-Funded Health Insurance Plan

Director of Human Resources Molly Viesselman provided an analysis of the District's health insurance and shared an update on the Benefit Advisory Committee's recommendations in preparation of open enrollment for calendar year 2021. The District moved to a self-funded program for health insurance in September 2011. In the second year of self-funded health insurance there was a small increase to premiums and there was no change in premiums until a slight premium decrease occurred in 2018. Overall, our self insurance has been incredibly successful. The Benefits Advisory Committee had set a minimum fund balance goal of 40% of claims expenditures; our claims experience has been rising and our fund balance is decreasing. The cost of prescription drugs is a large part of this issue, and there are concerns about possible future spend spikes due to the global health pandemic and COVID-19. The Benefits Advisory Committee recommended a 5% increase to overall premium and plan design changes to existing health plans. All five union/associations in the District have to approve this recommendation. If it is not passed through the voting process, there will be a 10% increase to premiums but no plan design changes.

C. Financial Update

Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf reported we are still working through our Federal CARES and Coronavirus Relief Funding. She noted we received \$340.00 additional funds from Goodhue County. The audit is being finalized and will be presented to the Board in December. Once the budget is finalized, Director Mertesdorf will begin to prepare a revised budget and a financial forecast.

D. Operations Update

Dr. Hillmann provided an operations update. In response to feedback from families and staff, the District has modified the way it communicates about laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases. We have eliminated using the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) notification letter and have expanded our website dashboard to include additional information. The COVID-19 case rate has increased at an alarming rate in Rice County, and we have seen this reflected in the case rate increase in the City of Northfield and in Northfield Public Schools, particularly at the high school. This is highly problematic and we continue to implore families to have a plan in place in the event that we need to shift to a different learning model.

We now have 640 students as part of our Portage all-the-time-online program. Beginning in the second quarter, middle and high school Portage students can participate in remote band, choir, and orchestra instruction. Northfield High School will begin a process to update the Raider mascot logo and Superintendent Hillmann may ask the Board to take official action so that the people involved in the process have clarity that their work will result in updating the mascot logo.

MDH has offered Northfield Public Schools to serve as a pilot site for COVID-19 testing, specifically targeting asymptomatic people. We anticipate moving forward with this testing pilot project and will strongly encourage staff to participate and urge families to have their children participate, although it cannot be required. Northfield Public Schools would be the first in the State to do this pilot testing program.

VI. Consent Agenda

On a motion by Iverson, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board approved the following Consent Agenda.

A. Minutes

- Minutes of the World's Best Workforce public hearing held on October 26, 2020
- Minutes of the Regular School Board meeting held on October 26, 2020

B. Gift Agreements

- Rice County Public Health donated N95 masks to use in our district health offices. These masks will help us to have the appropriate PPE until vendors have available supplies. Value estimated at \$390.
- \$7,000.00 for the pool's starting blocks from Northfield Swim Club
- \$1,000.00 for the Chamber scholarship from the Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce

## C. Personnel

### a) Appointments

1. Scott Cloud, Assistant Boys Hockey Coach for 2 hours/day for 5 days/week at the High School, beginning 11/30/2020; Level E, Step 5
2. Julene Johnson, Gen Ed Instructional EA, and Cafeteria Supervisor for 5.5 hours/day at Bridgewater beginning 11/6/2020-6/10/2021; Gen Ed Step 4-\$16.72/hr.
3. Sandra Reiman, Gen Ed Instructional EA Literacy Support for 2.75 hours/day at Sibley, beginning 11/4/2020-6/10/2021; Gen Ed Step 4-\$16.72/hr.
4. Taylor Storlie, Assistant Dance Team Coach for 2 hours/day for 3 days/week at the High School, beginning 11/9/2020; Level F, Step 1
5. Giselle Barojas Velazquez, Targeted Services PLUS Site Leader for up to 1.5 hours/day at Sibley, beginning 11/16/2020-5/6/2021; Site Lead Step 2-\$17.19/hr.
6. Allison Ims, Health Aide EA-PCA for 2.45 hours/day at St. Dominic, beginning 1/4/2021-6/4/2021.

### b) Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment

1. Michelle Bauer, Instructional Coach with the District, add Portage Grader for 25 students with the District, effective 10/30/2020-6/10/2021; Stipend \$13,000
2. Samantha Becker, Gen Ed EA Media for 7.5 hours/day at the Middle School, change to Gen Ed EA Media for 6.75 hours/day at the Middle School, effective 9/14/2020-6/10/2021.
3. Samantha Becker, Gen Ed EA Media for 33.75 hours/week at the Middle School, change to Gen Ed EA Media for 33 hours/week at the Middle School, effective 9/14/2020-6/10/2021.
4. Sarah Bloom, Teacher at the Middle School, add Portage Grader for 25 students with the District, effective 10/30/2020-6/10/2021; Stipend \$13,000
5. Sebastian Bursat, Long Term Substitute Cultural Liaison with the District, will continue in the position for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, effective 11/2/2020-6/10/2021.
6. Erik Burton, Teacher at the High School, add Portage Grader for 25 students with the District, effective 10/30/2020-6/10/2021; Stipend \$13,000
7. Margaret Christiansen, Special Ed EA Bus with the district, change to Substitute Bus EA with the District, effective 10/29/2020-6/10/2021.
8. Jan Ensrud, Teacher at the Middle School, add Portage Grader for 25 students with the District, effective 10/30/2020-6/10/2021; Stipend \$13,000
9. Janet Gannon, Gen Ed EA for 33.75 hours/week at the Middle School, change to Gen Ed EA for 33 hours/week at the Middle School, effective 9/14/2020-6/10/2021.
10. Cindy Keogh, Building Supervisor with Community Education, add Gen Ed EA Literacy Support for Portage for 4 hours/day with the District, effective 11/2/2020-6/10/2021; Gen Ed Step 4-\$16.72/hr.
11. Melanie Klein, Special Ed Teacher at Sibley, add Homebound Instruction for approximately .50 hours/day for 5 days/week with the District, effective 11/2/2020-6/10/2021.
12. Mitchel May, 1.0 Assistant Weightlifting Coach at the High School, change to .5 Assistant Weightlifting Coach at the High School, effective 11/16/2020.
13. Debra Pack, Spec Ed EA at the High School, add Spec Ed EA Bus PCA for 1 hour/day for 4 days/week with the District, effective 11/2/2020-6/10/2021.
14. Scott Stanina, Teacher at the High School, add Portage Grader for 25 students with the District, effective 10/30/2020-6/10/2021; Stipend \$13,000
15. Michelle Steele, 1.0 FTE Phy ED/DAPE Teacher + overload through 10/30/2020 at the Middle School, change to 1.0 FTE Phy ED/DAPE Teacher +overload through 11/10/2020 at the Middle School, effective 11/2/2020-11/10/2020.
16. Katrina Warner, EA at Bridgewater, add Targeted Services PLUS Site Leader for up to 1.5 hours/day Mon.-Thurs. at Bridgewater, effective 11/15/2020-5/6/2021; Step 1-\$16.85/hr.
17. Matthew Crase, Special Ed EA-PCA at the Middle School, change to Long Term Substitute Special Ed ASD Teacher at the High School, effective 11/5/2020-12/22/2020. Daily sub teacher rate until regular license is obtained, then BA, Step 1.
18. Kathleen Mellstrom, Spec Ed EA PCA-LI program for 6.75 hours/day 5 days/week at the High School, change to Spec Ed EA PCA-ASD program for 6.75 hours/day 2 days/week at the High School, effective 11/10/2020-6/10/2021.
19. Mallory Nystuen, Spec Ed EA-PCA at Sibley, add Spec Ed EA-PCA Extracurricular hours will vary with the District, effective 11/3/2020-6/10/2021.
20. Ella Stromme, Social Worker at the NCEC, add Community School Evening Club Leader for up to 6 hours/week at Greenvale Park, effective 11/10/2020-6/10/2021; \$22.27/hr.

### c) Leave of Absence

1. Ann Ackerman, Speech and Language Pathologist at Sibley, Family/Medical Leave of Absence beginning on or about 3/11/2021 for 12 workweeks.
  2. Matt Crase, EA at the Middle School, Leave of Absence, effective 11/5/2020-12/22/2020.
  3. Laura DeGroot, Olympic Weightlifting Coach at the High School, Leave of Absence for the 2020-2021 season, effective 11/2/2020.
  4. Whitney Docken, Speech and Language Pathologist at Greenvale Park, Family/Medical Leave of Absence beginning on or about 3/7/2021 through the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
  5. Joan Lizaola, Cultural Liaison with the District, Leave of Absence extended to the end of the 2020-2021 school year, effective 10/30/2020-6/10/2021.
  6. Kathleen Mellstrom, EA at the High School, Leave of Absence Mondays through Wednesdays, working only Thursdays and Fridays, for the duration of the 2020-2021 school year, effective 10/29/2020-6/10/2021.
  7. Jane Weiland, Teacher at the Middle School, Family/Medical Leave of Absence beginning on or about 2/27/2021 for 8 workweeks.
  8. Mary Boyum, EA at Sibley, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective on 10/20/2020-12/22/2020.
  9. Arleene Gallardo, HR Generalist in the District Office, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective 12/14/2020-2/5/2021.
  10. Jennifer Hildahl, EV Teacher at NCEC, Leave of Absence, effective 3/26/2021-6/4/2021.
  11. Tiffany Kortbein, Teacher at Greenvale Park, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective on or about 5/3/2021 for 8 work weeks.
  12. Maimouna Toure-Keita, District Nurse, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective 11/2/2020-11/13/2020.
- d) Retirements/Resignations/Terminations

D. Northfield Swim Club Agreement

The School Board was asked to approve an agreement with the Northfield Swim Club. This agreement is for the time period November 9, 2020 to November 8, 2021. Updates to the agreement included an increase in custodial fees and a requirement to provide an inventory of any lockers being used by participants in the boys or girls locker rooms.

VII. Superintendent's Report

A. Items for Individual Action

1. Memorandum of Understanding Between the ALC and Randolph & Tri-City United High Schools. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Baraniak, the Board approved a memorandum of understanding to develop a framework of cooperation between the Northfield ALC, Randolph High School, and Tri-City United High School. Voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.
2. Policies 419, 516 and 607. On a motion by Iverson, Seconded by Baraniak, the Board approved modifications to policies 419, 516 and 607. Voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.
3. Resolution of School Board Supporting FORM A Application to Minnesota State High School League Foundation. On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board approved the resolution supporting the District's application to the Minnesota State High School League Foundation for a FORM A grant to offset student activity fees. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.
4. Resolution Establishing Combined Polling Places for Multiple Precincts and Designating Hours during which the Polling Places will Remain Open for Voting for School District Elections Not Held on the Day of a Statewide Election. On a motion by Iverson, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board approved the Resolution Establishing Combined Polling Places for Multiple Precincts and Designating Hours during which the Polling Places will Remain Open for Voting for School District Elections Not Held on the Day of a Statewide Election. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.

VIII. Items for Information

- A. Enrollment Options Report. Superintendent Hillmann reviewed the 2020-21 Enrollment Options Report that was prepared by Student Information Systems Specialist Christine Neset.
- B. Community Education Day. Governor Tim Walz has proclaimed Thursday, November 12, 2020 as Community Education Day.
- C. Timeline for Renaming Longfellow and Sibley. Dr. Hillmann shared a proposed timeline for renaming Longfellow and Sibley Elementary School in compliance with Policy 809: Naming of School District Buildings. The proposed timeline for renaming Longfellow may need to be adjusted.
- D. Construction Update #36. Superintendent Hillmann updated the Board on the District's construction projects.
- E. Enrollment Report. Superintendent Hillmann reviewed the November 2020 enrollment report.

IX. Future Meetings

- A. Friday, November 13, 2020, 1:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, Zoom
- B. Monday, November 23, 2020, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, NHS Media Center & Zoom
- C. Monday, December 14, 2020, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, NHS Media Center & Zoom

X. Adjournment

On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Noel Stratmoen  
School Board Clerk