

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 659
SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Monday, April 6, 2026 ~ 5:15 p.m. ~ Special Board Meeting
Northfield District Office Boardroom
[Meeting Link](#)

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Agenda Approval
3. Items for Individual Action
 - a. Bids for NHS Reimagine Project
4. Items for Discussion and Reports
 - a. Financial Forecast Follow Up
 - i. Potential Budget Restorations
 - b. Superintendent Search
 - i. Review and discuss Northfield Public Survey Report
 - ii. Discuss options and decide on community and/or staff interview input
 - iii. MSBA interview training
 - iv. Review draft round one interview questions and schedule
5. Future Meetings
 - a. Monday, April 13, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
 - b. April 16, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, determine superintendent finalists, Northfield DO Boardroom
 - c. April 24, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent first round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
 - d. April 25, 2026, 3:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent first round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
 - e. Monday, April 27, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
 - f. Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent final round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
6. Adjournment

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MEMORANDUM

Monday, April 6, 2026 ~ 5:15 p.m. ~ Special Board Meeting
Northfield District Office Boardroom
[Meeting Link](#)

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew Hillmann, Ed.D., Superintendent
RE: Explanation of Agenda Items for the Monday, April 6, 2026, Special School Board Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Agenda Approval
3. Items for Individual Action
 - a. Bids for NHS Reimagine Project. Sal Bagley with Wold Architects and Josh Cooper with Knutson Construction will discuss the outcome of the bidding process for the Reimagine Northfield High School project. The board is requested to approve four of the 23 trade package contracts at a total contract award of \$26,523,160.00.

Superintendent's Recommendation: Motion to approve the four trade package contracts as follows:

Low Bid Contracts:

3A - Structural Concrete, Thompson Construction of Princeton, in the amount of \$3,878,878.00.

3F - Precast Concrete, Taracon Precast, in the amount of \$7,088,282.00.

7A - Roofing, Jackson & Associates LLC, in the amount of \$4,980,000.00.

Best Value Contract:

31A - Site Demolition, Earthwork and Utilities, Edge Contracting, in the amount of \$10,576,000.00.

4. Items for Discussion and Reports
 - a. Financial Forecast Follow Up
 - i. Potential Budget Restorations. Superintendent Hillmann and Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf will propose budget restorations and administrative restructuring for the 2026-27 school year. This proposal will be an item for individual action at the April 13, 2026 regular board meeting.
 - b. Superintendent Search
 - i. Review and discuss Northfield Public Survey Report. Amy Jordan, associate director of leadership development and executive search with MSBA, will provide an overview of the attached Northfield Public Survey Report, compare the results to the board's survey results and discuss common responses.
 - ii. Discuss options and decide on community and/or staff interview input. The board is requested to review and decide how they would like to receive public input during the superintendent interview process.
 - iii. MSBA interview training. The board will receive interview training from MSBA for the superintendent search.
 - iv. Review draft round one interview questions and schedule. The board is requested to review MSBA's recommended interview questions and schedule and identify 14-18 questions for round one interviews.
5. Future Meetings
 - a. Monday, April 13, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
 - b. April 16, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, determine superintendent finalists, Northfield DO Boardroom

- c. April 24, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent first round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
- d. April 25, 2026, 3:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent first round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
- e. Monday, April 27, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- f. Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent final round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
- g. Monday, May 4, 5:15 p.m., Special Board Meeting, approve superintendent's contract, Northfield DO Boardroom

6. Adjournment

Reaching Out, Reaching Up:

THE 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



VISION

We prepare every student for lifelong success by developing critical thinkers who are curious and ready to engage in our society.

BENCHMARKS

1
All children are ready for **kindergarten**.

2
All students are connected to the **community**.

3
All students are at grade level in **reading and mathematics** by the end of third and sixth grades.

4
All students exhibit physical, social and emotional **well-being**.

5
All students have a **connection** with a caring adult beyond their parents as they transition to middle school.

6
All students have interests, goals and a **vision** for the future by the end of eighth grade.

7
All students **graduate** from high school with a plan to reach their full potential.

8
All **employees** report satisfaction in the workplace.

9
All **parents** report satisfaction with their children's educational experience.

10
The district maintains 14% of its annual expenditures in its unassigned fund balance to ensure **financial stability**.

11
Community education provides relevant and accessible learning opportunities for all residents.

Note: The first seven benchmarks are aligned with the language identified by Northfield Promise, a collective impact consortium of 20 community organizations committed to helping Northfield's youth thrive "from cradle to career."

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS



People

We prioritize the engagement, satisfaction, and support of every student, staff member, and family.



Learner Outcomes

We prepare every student to be academically and socially ready to choose their preferred pathway after high school graduation.



Equity

We ensure that every child has a fair opportunity to reach their full potential.



Communication

We communicate effectively and transparently with all stakeholders.



Stewardship

We responsibly manage our personnel, finances, property, time and environmental impact.



Partnerships

We seek community partnerships that accelerate student achievement of district benchmarks.

Date: April 1st, 2026
To: Independent School District 659
From: George Sullivan, Knutson Construction
Subject: Northfield High School Addition and Renovation – Bid Results

Dear Members of the Board,

Bids for the Northfield High School Addition and Renovation project were received on Thursday, March 26th, 2026. The project received over 77 bids covering 23 Trade packages.

Knutson Construction recommends that the motion be approved to award the following contracts:

Low Bid Contracts:

3A – Structural Concrete

Thompson Construction of Princeton in the amount of **\$3,878,878.00**

3F – Precast Concrete

Taracon Precast in the amount of **\$7,088,282.00**

7A – Roofing

Jackson & Associates LLC in the amount of **\$4,980,000.00**

Best Value Contracts:

31A – Site Demolition, Earthwork and Utilities

Edge Contracting in the amount of **\$10,576,000.00**

The total recommended contract award is **\$26,523,160.00**.

Upon Board approval, Knutson Construction will proceed with Contracts as recommended to begin the construction phase of the project.

Thank you,

George Sullivan
Project Manager
Knutson Construction

Attachments: 31A Best Value Scoring Matrix

CC: Dr. Matt Hillmann, District 659
Valori Mertesdorf, District 659
Josh Cooper, Knutson Construction
Sal Bagley, Wold Architects and Engineers

Northfield High School 31 Earthwork							
Vendor Code		Veit Companies	Bolander	Edge Contracting	Frattalone Companies	Rachel Contracting	Icon
5 criteria 1000 points possible		780	431	891	430	847	510
Criteria (Assigned Points)	Weight						
Level of Expertise rating	150	150.0	75.0	150.0	75.0	150.0	75.0
Risk Assessment rating	100	100.0	50.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	50.0
Value Added rating	100	100.0	50.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	50.0
Interview rating	350	175.0	0.0	262.5	0.0	262.5	35.0
Cost	300	255.1	256.3	278.7	254.8	234.2	300.0

TO: Board of Education, Northfield Public Schools
FROM: Dr. Matt Hillmann, Superintendent, and Val Mertesdorf, Director of Finance
DATE: April 6, 2026
SUBJECT: Proposed Budget Restorations and Restructuring for the 2026-27 School Year

Overview: During the 2025 Priority-Based Budget Reduction Process, the district faced difficult decisions to offset a projected deficit driven by declining enrollment, inflation, and unfunded mandates. Ultimately, the Board approved \$5,792,888 in reductions for the 2025-26 school year across five budget packages. As we prepare the budget for the 2026-27 school year, we are proposing targeted restorations and adjustments to our administrative and instructional models.

Rationale for Restorations and Restructure:

1. **Stronger Financial Position:** The district ended FY25 in a stronger financial position than originally anticipated. This allows some flexibility while still striving to maintain the Board's benchmark of a 14% unassigned fund balance to ensure ongoing financial stability.
2. **Disproportionate Reductions in District Services:** During the 2025 reduction process, the District Services package took the largest proportionate share of the cuts, totaling 1,821,251. This was \$261,988 more than the original target.
3. **Administrative Transition:** A significant transition in administration will present notable operational challenges if we continue with the current, highly consolidated model.

Proposed 2026-27 Restorations and Restructure: To address these challenges, we recommend the following adjustments for the upcoming school year:

- **Return the Human Resources Director to Full-Time (1.0 FTE):** During the previous budget cycle, this position was reduced to a 0.60 FTE contract upon the former director's retirement, with duties redistributed to save \$74,993. Returning this position to full-time is necessary to properly manage staffing and navigate recent administrative changes.
- **Add Back a Full-Time Director of Instructional Services:** This role was previously restructured upon retirement to save \$190,000, which resulted in the Superintendent absorbing oversight of the department. Reinstating a dedicated, full-time director will ensure our instructional teams receive the focused leadership they require and support the incoming superintendent.
- **Restructure the Special Services Department:** Last year, the Special Services package absorbed \$1,008,276 in reductions, which included eliminating several special education educational assistants, nursing staff, and teaching positions. A restructuring is now recommended to optimize support for our students with special needs and better manage the ongoing special education cross-subsidy, which requires over \$4 million from the general fund annually.
 - Eliminate the Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator
 - Reduce 1.0 full-time equivalent Psychologist
 - Add five (5) extra duty days distributed across the school psychology team
 - Add Assistant Director of Special Services while revising the salary in alignment with current market data
 - Net reduction will provide professional development for licensed staff and additional hours for educational assistant support

- **Add 1.0 FTE for Middle School Social Studies:** We propose adding a 1.0 FTE social studies teacher at the middle school to ensure compliance with state standards. This was a reduction in the 2022 Priority-Based Budget Reduction Process.
- **Restore the Assistant Principal at the High School with fewer total days:** We propose eliminating the Dean of Students and restoring the Assistant Principal position. This restored position would have 192 work days for the 2026-27 school year. There was a request to increase this position to 1.0 FTE for the second semester.
- **Reduce the High School Principal from 235 days to 192 days:** We propose a short-term reduction in the high school principal's days to offset the restoration of the Assistant Principal. This change will be evaluated at the end of the 2026-27 school year.

Financial Impact of Restoration and Restructuring:

Budget Package	Restoration/Restructure	Estimated Impact
District Services	Restore the Director of Human Resources from 0.6 FTE to 1.0 FTE	\$103,328
District Services	Restore the Director of Instructional Services (1.0 FTE)	\$237,632
Special Services	Restructure Special Services Department	\$0
Secondary	Restore 1.0 FTE Middle School Social Studies	\$125,000
Secondary	Eliminate the High School Dean of Students and restore the previously eliminated Assistant Principal role at 192 days rather than 217	\$51,602
Secondary	Reduce the High School Principal from 235 days to 192 days for one year	(\$38,197)
	Total	\$479,365

The financial forecast, with these items included, estimates the unassigned fund balance to be 13.4% at the end of 2027-28. This is \$394,896 less than the Board’s 14% goal. We will continue to advocate for increased state funding and seek other opportunities to close this funding gap before 2027-28, while facing new challenges we had not anticipated.

We look forward to discussing these recommendations with the Board to ensure we continue to responsibly manage our resources while delivering on our commitment to preparing every student for lifelong success.

Northfield Public Schools Superintendent Search

Public Engagement Superintendent Search Survey

Overview: On March 10, 2026, the “Northfield Public Schools Superintendent Search Survey” was made available to the public both online and in hard copy. The survey remained open for respondents until March 22, 2026, and a total of 251 people completed the survey.

Although this survey was opt-in (meaning individuals must actively choose to participate), MSBA’s analysis of the results do indicate a cross-section of people who are invested in the district were reached through the survey process. Knowing it took time and effort to do so, the school board and MSBA deeply appreciate each and every respondent who participated in the survey. The information these individuals shared through their responses will provide valuable input for the school board to consider as they move forward in selecting the next superintendent to lead Northfield Public Schools.

The results of all quantitative survey responses are summarized in the first five pages of this report, beginning below with those from across the district who participated in the survey.

Self-identifiers: Survey takers were first asked to identify the role that best reflected the basis for their responses. The categories selected by the survey takers are as follows:

- 53.20% of respondents selected “Parent/Guardian”
- 27.20% of respondents selected “Staff Member”
- 8.80% of respondents selected “Community Member”
- 5.60% of respondents selected “Student”
- 2.40% of respondents selected “Other”
- 1.60% of respondents selected “Business Owner”
- 1.20% of respondents selected “District Partner”
- 0.00% of respondents selected “Agriculture”

Areas of Expertise: Those who responded to the survey were also asked to identify the top six desirable areas of expertise they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted areas of expertise are listed below in order of preference.

- Budget and Finance
- Collaborative Leadership
- Strategic Planning
- Curriculum Development/Evaluation
- Personnel Management
- Educational Equity

Previous Experience: Respondents were asked if previous superintendent experience is important. Based on the results, 46.66% of the respondents selected "Yes," while 53.33% of the respondents selected "No."

Specialized Skills: The top six specialized skills the new superintendent must possess were identified in the survey results as shown below.

- Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight
- Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities
- Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
- Develops and directs an effective leadership team

Personal Characteristics: Survey takers were also asked to identify the top six personal characteristics they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted personal characteristics are listed below in order of preference.

- Effective communicator
- Ethical
- Transparent
- Problem solver
- Personable
- Consistent

The following tables provide another perspective of the quantitative data, categorizing each question's responses by self-identifiers. The number of individual responses per category were:

- Parent/Guardian (133)
- Staff Member (68)
- Community Member (22)
- Student (14)
- Other (6)
- Business Owner (4)
- District Partner (3)
- Agriculture (0)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Parent / Guardian (133)	Staff Member (68)	Community Member (22)	Student (14)	Other (6)	Business Owner (4)	District Partner (3)
Yes: 42.31%	Yes: 56.25%	Yes: 84.21%	Yes: 21.43%	Yes: 00.00%	Yes: 25.00%	Yes: 33.33%
No: 57.69%	No: 43.75%	No: 15.79%	No: 78.57%	No: 100.00%	No: 75.00%	No: 66.67%



TOP SIX AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Parent / Guardian (133)	Staff Member (68)	Community Member (22)	Student (14)	Other (6)	Business Owner (4)	District Partner (3)
Budget & Finance	Collaborative Leadership	Collaborative Leadership	Educational Equity	Collaborative Leadership	Collaborative Leadership	Personnel Management
Collaborative Leadership	Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Contract Administration & Negotiations	Budget & Finance	Strategic Planning
Strategic Planning	Personnel Management	Strategic Planning	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Cultural Competency	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Budget & Finance
Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Strategic Planning	Contract Administration & Negotiations	Collaborative Leadership	Budget & Finance	Strategic Planning	Collaborative Leadership
Educational Equity	Educational Equity	Public Relations	Strategic Planning	Business Partnerships	Educational Equity	Educational Equity
Personnel Management	Public Relations	Personnel Management	Social/Emotional Support Services	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Special Education	Public Relations

TOP SIX PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Parent / Guardian (133)	Staff Member (68)	Community Member (22)	Student (14)	Other (6)	Business Owner (4)	District Partner (3)
Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Transparent	Resourceful	Effective Communicator
Ethical	Personable	Ethical	Inclusive	Problem Solver	Transparent	Consistent
Transparent	Transparent	Consistent	Empathetic	Sense of Humor	Ethical	Ethical
Problem Solver	Ethical	Problem Solver	Enthusiastic	Creative	Consistent	Inclusive
Personable	Problem Solver	Transparent	Ethical	Personable	Empathetic	Personable
Resourceful	Consistent	Empathetic	Consistent	Resourceful	Effective Communicator	Transparent

The following two pages directly compares the school board's responses to the specialized skills question. These results do indicate significant alignment between the board and public, as board members prioritized many of the same categories as a majority of the district's constituencies.

Northfield – Superintendent Search

Leadership Profile:

- **Ethical Leadership** – Demonstrates honesty, integrity, professionalism, and ethical leadership in all decision-making and interactions across the district and community.
- **Fiscal Stewardship** – Possesses experience and expertise in school finance, including responsible resource allocation and sound fiscal oversight aligned with the strategic plan.
- **Effective Communication** – Leads through clear, confident, and purposeful communication that informs, aligns, and builds trust with all audiences.
- **Team Leadership** – Develops and supports a collaborative, high-performing leadership team focused on district priorities, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- **Community Engagement** – Builds trust through a visible, approachable, and engaged presence that strengthens relationships within the district and broader community.
- **Labor Relations** – Provides effective, fair, and professional leadership in collective bargaining and labor negotiations.

Northfield Hiring Criteria and Public Input Survey:

Specialized Skills - Board

1. Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
2. Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight
3. Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
4. Develops and directs an effective leadership team
5. Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
6. Knowledge of and experience with negotiations and the collective bargaining process

Specialized Skills – Public Input

1. Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
2. Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight
3. Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
4. Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities
5. Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
6. Develops and directs an effective leadership team

The following areas of expertise rose to the top in the public input survey:

- Budget and Finance
- Collaborative Leadership
- Strategic Planning

Is previous superintendent experience important?

Board: Yes = 71%; No = 29% Public Input: Yes = 47%; No = 53%

All highlights are to show where there is alignment with both the school board and the community.

TOP SIX SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Parent / Guardian (133)	Staff Member (68)	Community Member (22)	Student (14)	Other (6)	Business Owner (4)	District Partner (3)
Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities	Understands the effects of poverty on student learning and achievement	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities	Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills	Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Uses curriculum, data, and other resources to improve test scores	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Develops and directs an effective leadership team
Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities	Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Experience in implementing practices that support student safety and mental health	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight
Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities	Experience in implementing practices that support student safety and mental health	Promotes business and community involvement in schools	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Provides written, understandable administrative procedures that implement school board policy	Uses curriculum, data, and other resources to improve test scores	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities
Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills	Possesses a visionary and creative approach to problem-solving	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Works cooperatively with the school board; provides options and recommendations	Experience in developing and/or implementing a strategic plan (<i>tie with</i>) Works cooperatively with the school board; provides options and recommendations	Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives

Additional comments: Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions in the survey, and on average, 175 of the 251 respondents provided additional commentary. These qualitative results were then reviewed by MSBA representatives, with reappearing ideas identified and grouped into themes. These themes are highlighted below for each of the questions.

The superintendent search survey asked the following four questions:

1. What are some of the good things taking place in Northfield Public Schools today?
2. What challenges do you see ahead for the district over the next five years?
3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?
4. Additional comments.

1. What are some of the good things taking place in Northfield Public Schools today?

<p>Northfield Public Schools are strengthened by high-quality, caring staff and steady leadership, with respondents highlighting a positive, collaborative culture and strong commitment to students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Great teaching staff - our admin know how to hire quality staff.</i> • <i>Dedicated, passionate teachers with strong backgrounds.</i> • <i>There is a lot of good will with staff. The staff cares about kids and goes above and beyond. The staff feels seen by the administration. Morale is high.</i> • <i>Top-notch teachers.</i> • <i>Caring and committed staff.</i> • <i>The fabulous teachers and leaders at their schools.</i> • <i>Strong leadership, excellent teaching staff, competent and compassionate staff.</i> • <i>Northfield has amazing teachers who work hard and deeply care for their students.</i> • <i>Outstanding teachers.</i> • <i>Excellent staff.</i> • <i>Excellent, consistent leadership and low-turnover staff.</i> • <i>Support for all staff. Know staff members by first name.</i> • <i>Staff are passionate about their work.</i> • <i>Collaborative nature with a positive climate overall. Staff and students are proud to be part of NPS.</i> • <i>Leadership team collaborates consistently and has good working relationship interdepartmentally.</i> • <i>High quality education, excellent teaching faculty.</i> • <i>Excellent teachers and academics.</i> • <i>We have good teachers who care about students and their wellbeing.</i> 	<p>70 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The leadership and staff are, overall, amazing! I appreciate the way that the district invests in its people--because the people are who do the job of educating our students.</i> • <i>Committed educators.</i> • <i>I think morale among teachers is pretty good, and that shows in the classroom and communities.</i> • <i>The teachers and staff are phenomenal!</i> • <i>The teachers work extremely hard!</i> • <i>Empathetic and caring teaching staff.</i> • <i>Strong leadership.</i> • <i>Positive staff, collaboration across departments.</i> • <i>With the recent budget cuts and large class sizes, our staff continue to do their best for the students.</i> • <i>Confident teachers building relationships with students.</i> 	
<p>Northfield Public Schools provides students with a wide range of meaningful academic, extracurricular, arts, career, and support opportunities that help students explore their interests, develop their talents, and prepare for future success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community education program is wonderful and provides many different opportunities that can appeal to anyone.</i> • <i>The arts are one of the resounding strengths of the district.</i> • <i>The CTE program is growing, providing opportunities for students exploring career fields outside of an undergraduate program.</i> • <i>Number of HS course options, the excellent extracurricular activities and clubs for students.</i> • <i>Companeros program, music education.</i> • <i>Athletics and activities cultivating well rounded adults for the future who are ready for the real world.</i> • <i>Students have lots of opportunities.</i> • <i>The arts at the high school, including the innovative and high-quality production of Rock'n'Roll revival that is created by students every two years.</i> • <i>Starting and supporting FFA.</i> • <i>The programs that have been put in place to support all students to graduation.</i> • <i>Community based experiences.</i> • <i>I love that there are opportunities for all sorts of students to be part of things.</i> • <i>Excellent music program.</i> • <i>Extracurricular activities & clubs.</i> • <i>Continued support of alternative education programming.</i> • <i>The arts. I am continuously impressed with the level at which our arts community shows up and how the NF schools embrace it.</i> • <i>Good education and extracurriculars.</i> 	<p>69 related responses</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If kids want to be involved in a sport or other activity they can.</i> • <i>Sports and activities (participation rates and competitive standings).</i> • <i>I like how many opportunities there are for getting more involved in the community, such as extracurricular activities, volunteer opportunities, and community events.</i> • <i>Advancement of Career and Technical Education classes/opportunities.</i> • <i>What has always been good about Northfield, the in-class education and out-of-class extracurricular activities.</i> • <i>Music education.</i> • <i>The Spanish Emerson programs.</i> • <i>Some very talented youth are provided with opportunities to use those talents.</i> • <i>Many options for students.</i> • <i>Well-rounded, inclusive curriculum. Broad extracurricular offerings.</i> • <i>Strong special Ed program.</i> • <i>Compañeros program.</i> • <i>Our kids have tremendous talent in music, theatre, paint, pottery, drawing, and everything in between.</i> • <i>Opportunities provided to students, options for those requiring learning aids.</i> • <i>Showcases of students' creativity through art shows (Arts a la Carte), stage productions (RRR), etc., are what really makes this district special.</i> 	
<p>Northfield Public Schools benefits from strong community support and engagement, with families, voters, local organizations, and public partners actively investing in and working alongside the district to support its schools and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strong district and community partnership.</i> • <i>There is drive to have families be involved and come into the school building.</i> • <i>The district has also been well funded and supported by the community.</i> • <i>Voters support school initiatives and bonding requests.</i> • <i>Support from community.</i> • <i>We have great community involvement and school board that pays attention and really tries to listen to stakeholders.</i> • <i>Strong commitment to education and community support.</i> • <i>The history with passing bonds and levy's to support education for your youth.</i> • <i>We also benefit from an engaged and supportive community that values education and works in partnership in our schools.</i> • <i>Overall our community supports our schools and students which is evident through the positive, measurable outcomes our students produce.</i> • <i>A community that's highly invested in public education.</i> • <i>Strong community partnerships.</i> • <i>Putting the community and parents back into the school buildings.</i> 	<p>44 related responses</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Northfield Schools values the community input, regularly provides opportunities for engagement, and maintains high public support for the school system.</i> • <i>An amazing community commitment to education - noted through the participation in budgeting, building planning, referendums, legislative action committee, etc.</i> • <i>The school district is a great partner with the city and the colleges and offers great public education.</i> • <i>We regularly partner with local organizations and both the colleges in a number of ways that are unique to our community.</i> • <i>Support for all student activities from the community, from fine arts to athletics.</i> • <i>Collaboration with the community (art show at the guild for example).</i> 	
<p>Northfield Public Schools is recognized for strong academics, high expectations, and quality teaching and learning, with solid curriculum, student growth, and preparation for future success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Northfield has pretty good academics relative to other districts.</i> • <i>Attendance and test scores improving.</i> • <i>Students are successful and prepared for the next level.</i> • <i>Well-rounded, inclusive curriculum.</i> • <i>NFLD is academically challenging for students.</i> • <i>Student academic achievement.</i> • <i>The educating being done at Prairie Creek Community School is the most inspiring and innovative part of our school district. Their transformative curriculum could really benefit the other elementary schools in our district.</i> • <i>Student achievement is satisfactory.</i> • <i>High Quality Curriculum Implementation across PreK-12.</i> • <i>We have incredibly strong academics across all subject matters.</i> • <i>I feel the district really strives to advocate for their students and gives them the best education and opportunities opposed to other districts in the surrounding area.</i> • <i>Consistent values of inclusion, high expectations, and focus on learning.</i> • <i>Children making gains in their learning.</i> • <i>Students are being supported and learning.</i> • <i>Foremost for me is the high quality of the education our children receive, as measured by our graduates' post-secondary success.</i> 	<p>41 related responses</p>

<p>Northfield Public Schools is marked by a welcoming, inclusive, and caring culture where students feel respected, supported, and connected to their schools.</p>	<p>38 related responses</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The culture feels healthy and inclusive. There is an expectation that we are all pulling on the same oar.</i> • <i>Students are respected and heard.</i> • <i>Friendly, safe place. My children love their school.</i> • <i>Supporting one another and celebrating goals and milestones.</i> • <i>Good sense of community.</i> • <i>The schools are a reason for people to consider moving to the area (it was for us).</i> • <i>Welcoming to students.</i> • <i>Kids like to go to school.</i> • <i>Care and compassion.</i> • <i>The ongoing commitment to ensuring that ever student feels like they belong is important and must continue.</i> • <i>Works together to learn new things, community of learners eager to learn.</i> • <i>Positive learning culture.</i> • <i>Inclusivity.</i> • <i>The community is nice.</i> 	

2. What challenges do you see for the district over the next five years?

<p>Respondents believe a major challenge facing Northfield Public Schools is declining enrollment, which is closely tied to housing, population trends, and families’ decisions about whether to choose the district. This decline creates growing pressure on the district’s budget, staffing, and ability to maintain programs, services, and opportunities for students.</p>	<p>102 related responses</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Declining Enrollment (This phrase was used 13 times)</i> • <i>Declining student registration due to housing costs.</i> • <i>The district has been experiencing incremental declining enrollment.</i> • <i>We need to figure out why families are leaving the school or not choosing to attend school and work with the community to turn around enrollment.</i> • <i>Enrollment (and therefore budget) is a significant concern and does require collaboration with city council/economic development and major employers.</i> • <i>The shrinking student numbers are clearly causing a financial strain for the district.</i> • <i>Decline in enrollment due to the cost of living in Northfield.</i> • <i>Declining Enrollment: We will need to continue to evaluate staffing and programming to meet our changing enrollment.</i> 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Smaller enrollment --> tighter budgets, but please don't stop offering any of the student-oriented services that are currently available.</i> • <i>Declining student enrollment. These realities make it difficult to maintain programs and resources that benefit students.</i> • <i>The effects of declining enrollment will have a big impact on the budget.</i> • <i>Less enrollment with declining birth rates.</i> • <i>Enrollment is certainly a challenge. I'd like to see the city grow more. To do that, we need to have attractive schools, literally and figuratively, to bring more families to the area.</i> • <i>Declining enrollment will be an issue if the community cannot solve the housing issues.</i> • <i>Reduced enrollment and the effects on classrooms and staffing.</i> • <i>Declining enrollments and therefore state funding.</i> • <i>General funding loss due to population decrease will affect the opportunities for kids.</i> • <i>Budget concerns will only continue as costs increase and enrollment declines.</i> • <i>Getting enrollment numbers back up.</i> • <i>Finances due to enrollment continue to be a challenge.</i> • <i>Declining enrollment impacting financial stability.</i> • <i>Remaining financially stable despite declining enrollments.</i> • <i>Budget and enrollment will continue to be challenges over the next five year.</i> • <i>Enrollment challenges will persist, some of those drivers we can try to influence and some others we can't.</i> • <i>Increase enrollment--some houses being built in the district will help.</i> • <i>Decreased funding from a declining enrollment.</i> • <i>Declining enrollment combined with rising costs.</i> 	
<p>Financial stability is a significant challenge for Northfield Public Schools as rising costs, funding uncertainty, and tax pressures continue to strain the district's budget. This pressure may make it harder for the district to maintain staffing, student supports, programs, and the overall quality of educational opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Budget/Budgeting. (These single word descriptors were used 10 times.)</i> • <i>Budget cuts/issues/shortfalls/challenges/concerns. (These phrases were used 10 times.)</i> • <i>Funds/Funding. (These single word descriptors were used 4 times.)</i> • <i>Unfunded mandates that put unnecessary budget restraints on the district and stress on our teachers and staff.</i> • <i>Budget cuts, lack of federal funding which affects students and staff, especially in special services.</i> • <i>Funding: The basic math problem of school finance will continue to be a struggle. Lack of appropriate increases to keep pace with inflation, declining federal resources and expenditures that continue to increase. We need to</i> 	<p>96 related responses</p>

<p><i>rethink how we create the budget to ensure we aren't on a perpetual rollercoaster.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Funding - taxes are TOO high.</i> • <i>Tax burdens are a concern on the community and business owners.</i> • <i>In terms of real challenges, I think school finances will continue to be an issue.</i> • <i>State funding and requirements.</i> • <i>Funding is a constant issue.</i> • <i>Budgetary restrictions.</i> • <i>Budgeting is an ongoing issue for our district. Our town is already heavily taxed, so it will be very hard to convince voters to support future levies.</i> • <i>Cost control.</i> • <i>Financial challenges is probably the largest obstacle due to rising costs of everything and less money from the state.</i> • <i>Special ed requirements and costs.</i> • <i>Under/unfunded mandates.</i> • <i>The costs keep rising. How are you going to manage it?</i> • <i>Overspending and tax increases.</i> • <i>Funding cuts risk jeopardizing the quality of the education students receive.</i> • <i>Worsening economic conditions impacting public funding and the community at large.</i> • <i>Budget concerns will only continue as costs increase and enrollment declines. Eventually, cuts will impact the core things that make Northfield, Northfield.</i> • <i>It is frustrating to see funds decline and teaching positions cut.</i> • <i>Continuing implications of budget reductions.</i> • <i>The increase in demands for special education especially when the true cost is not reimbursed.</i> • <i>Loss of state funding and the rising taxes within the school district that are stretching homeowners.</i> 	
<p>Maintaining strong and relevant learning opportunities is a significant challenge for Northfield Public Schools as academic support, rigor, curriculum quality, and access to a broad range of programs all need continued attention. The district also needs to navigate tensions around inclusion and school culture while ensuring students with different needs, interests, and perspectives feel supported and well served.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continuing to work on supporting those students who need additional academic support without leaving those who are academic high flyers to fend for themselves.</i> • <i>Our elementary school student hasn't had the same pull out high math and reading groups her older siblings had because the staff roles are no longer there.</i> • <i>Students' learning styles and needs continue to change. Many students struggle with engagement and with developing the ability to persevere through productive struggle.</i> 	<p>60 related responses</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Keeping existing staff updated with latest teaching methods.</i> • <i>We have to figure out a way to support Tier 2 academic supports at the MS level.</i> • <i>Keeping focus on acceptance of all and equity.</i> • <i>Offering courses to meet needs of all students in all grades.</i> • <i>Support for the top 10% of a class academically has basically vanished.</i> • <i>Consistently supporting implementation of high quality curriculum and instruction (teachers need training, support, and time to do this well).</i> • <i>Equitable inclusion of all students in programming, both academic and extracurricular, needs more focus.</i> • <i>There is a decrease in services for additional support especially in reading with the Read Act. This means we will really need to strengthen our Tier I.</i> • <i>Better elementary science teaching and curriculum planning.</i> • <i>Keeping challenging classes available.</i> • <i>Prioritizing the fine arts.</i> • <i>Lack of online school options within the district.</i> • <i>Reductions in elective options at the MS and HS.</i> • <i>The ability to keep a strong arts, athletic, and classroom instruction, including advanced classes if cuts continue to be needed.</i> • <i>Kids need education no matter what track. Train for what the world needs.</i> • <i>Continuing to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in the current political climate.</i> • <i>Over the next five years, the district will likely see increasing diversity in its student population. This will require a stronger focus on inclusion and ensuring that all students feel respected and represented.</i> • <i>Keep political views and opinions away from students. Students shouldn't know teachers political stance or fear retribution for differing opinions.</i> 	
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3. What does the next superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?

<p>Northfield is a community with a strong history, a close connection to its schools, and a broad mix of backgrounds, viewpoints, and expectations. Success in the district depends on understanding both the community's commitment to high-quality education and the strong opinions and traditions that continue to shape local expectations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Northfield is a special place. With that come high expectations.</i> • <i>Northfield is a very mixed population in the sense that it's not fully urban nor fully rural.</i> • <i>The values that have run through this town since its founding.</i> • <i>Northfield is a multi-layered community, more complicated than just an education-friendly college town.</i> 	<p>65 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's still a fairly conservative community.</i> • <i>This is an overall progressive community with intelligent, engaged families.</i> • <i>The district benefits immensely by the two colleges and the high education level and socio-economic status of the many of the town's residents.</i> • <i>This is a community that values education and feels strongly about how great our schools are.</i> • <i>That Northfield is not monolithic- there are conservative patches, liberal patches, highly formally-educated folks, and folks who are not formally educated and feel more self made.</i> • <i>This is a great town for education - lean into that.</i> • <i>People's ties to the Midwest tend to be generations deep, so there can be a real suspicion/mistrust of outsiders, new ideas, and breaking from tradition.</i> • <i>The very high expectations in this community.</i> • <i>Northfield is very cliquy and not super welcoming to new families. There is a wide range of political affiliations and a large variance of opinions about what is or is not important for schools to address.</i> • <i>We are a community who cares deeply about people.</i> • <i>Historically Northfield has been a top performing district over many areas.</i> • <i>That we are a multicultural liberal inclusive community.</i> • <i>It has a legacy and traditions.</i> • <i>It's a tricky mix of high intellectual academics and rural practical professionals.</i> • <i>Northfield has a highly educated population with a unique interest in and support of the public schools.</i> • <i>We have pride in the high quality of education provided to our youth and do not want that diminished.</i> • <i>Its a strong, intelligent community.</i> 	
<p>Northfield expects a superintendent who is visible and able to build strong relationships across the district and community. Success in this role depends on leading with integrity, listening carefully, communicating clearly, and balancing collaboration and transparency with the confidence to make difficult decisions when needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Calm presence and know-how are helpful.</i> • <i>Personable, transparent, good communication.</i> • <i>Strong communication skills, both written and verbal, are a must.</i> • <i>We want someone genuine who will do the right things and make the right decisions for the well-being of our students and staff.</i> • <i>Leadership has to provide strong vision and skills, listen to the community but also not be afraid to take action despite opposition at times, and hold all parties accountable.</i> • <i>We work best with collaborative leadership.</i> • <i>The need to lead with Minnesota niceness as well as Minnesota determination and toughness.</i> 	<p>56 related responses</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We want someone genuine who will do the right things and make the right decisions for the well-being of our students and staff.</i> • <i>The next leader needs to be relational, empathetic, and humble.</i> • <i>It will take a strong and empathetic leader to navigate this community.</i> • <i>Communicate with the taxpayers.</i> • <i>Start each day at a school building talking to staff, meeting regularly with the leadership team, and regularly ask the community to provide their input. Maintaining those partnerships is going to be important for both the district and the community.</i> • <i>This community is used to transparency and being invited to the table to contribute to decision-making in multiple areas.</i> • <i>The community on Facebook is a loud minority. Don't listen to them, listen to the people who show up in person to give comments.</i> • <i>Continue to work on being transparent with all stakeholders.</i> • <i>Good communication and transparency will be needed to rebuild trust after being somewhat blindsided with budget deficiencies last year.</i> • <i>We are a tight community and expect partnership and voices being listened to and heard.</i> • <i>Be more involved.</i> • <i>Continuously involve the community by asking for perspective sharing.</i> • <i>Be very transparent and developed open lines of communication with the community.</i> • <i>Community expects to see Sup. at many activities and to remember people that he/she meets--maintain local radio updates too.</i> 	
<p>Northfield's community is deeply invested in its schools and remains an active, supportive partner in the district's success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Keep the community involved and keep the community in the schools or feeling as they are welcome.</i> • <i>The community is invested in education.</i> • <i>The community supports its schools!</i> • <i>This is a community of involved parents, community members and leaders. We want what's best for our kids and our wider community!</i> • <i>They will have the full support of the community.</i> • <i>Community involvement and local traditions play a key role.</i> • <i>We are a highly collaborative community and school district.</i> • <i>The community overall supports the district and there is high engagement in education.</i> • <i>Education is important to community and community members are involved in the schools.</i> • <i>The community is highly involved.</i> • <i>That the district and community work together as partners.</i> • <i>The overwhelming majority of the community there is unwavering support for the school district.</i> 	<p>28 related responses</p>

4. Additional Comments:

<p>Northfield's next superintendent needs to be a strong, ethical, and approachable leader who communicates clearly, listens well, includes others in the process, and can thoughtfully navigate the district's complexity and fiscal realities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I really think that an understanding of legislative processes and the fiscal realities that spring from it are going to be of utmost importance for the new superintendent to succeed for Northfield.</i>• <i>I would love to see a new superintendent that is accessible.</i>• <i>Please find someone the teachers and principals respect and trust</i>• <i>The new person will need grace and the ability to be their own leader.</i>• <i>I am looking forward to working with a superintendent who is a creative thinker and who has a vision about how our schools can work even more diligently to bring 21st century opportunities into our secondary schools.</i>• <i>We need someone that can balance a budget.</i>• <i>I would hope the next superintendent would be approachable and knowledgeable.</i>• <i>Northfield is a complex intersection of communities and needs. Ethical, engaged leadership is the beginning but we need someone who will be visionary in how we can all work together for our children.</i>• <i>Irreproachable ethical standards. Great empathy. Humor and humility. A sense of what's right without a hint of self-righteousness. Careful financial stewardship. A core belief in doing what's best for kids.</i>• <i>We love our quirky little town but it's a complex place that needs a patient person.</i>• <i>Personable, problem solver who communicates well and is visible would be crucial</i>	25 related responses
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Public input during the interview process

MSBA's process offers three options to school boards for including additional groups in their finalist interviews. Below is a short summary of the board's choices:

1. Rely on the Public Survey Summary Report to represent constituent voices throughout the interview process. MSBA reviews this report with the board during interview training, and boards often choose to use this document for reference throughout the search (i.e. when screening applications, developing interview questions, conducting the interviews, and during board deliberations following both Round 1 and Round 2 interviews). No other public input is gathered as part of the interview process.
2. Create interview committee(s) – these groups interview all finalists separately in addition to the school board interviews. It is important that members of the interview committees not be chosen by the board – instead representative groups should be invited to send someone on their behalf. These groups must then be trained by MSBA to ensure adherence to EEOC protocols (interview format, legality of questions, etc.). These committees would report to the board following their interviews, but prior to the board's final deliberations. It's also important not to call these groups "hiring committees," as this creates unfair expectations and potentially deep resentment regarding the hiring process utilized by the school board. Semantics are important.
3. Invite representative groups to send one person to observe school board interviews of the finalists, then those individuals provide feedback through an online Audience Input Form which asks them to share their thoughts on each candidate's top three strengths and top three opportunities for growth. MSBA then provides the board with this data shortly after their interviews, but prior to the board's final deliberations.

There are pros and cons to each of these options, all of which are discussed with the board prior to making a decision regarding public input in the interview process.

NOTE: Over the past three years most boards have selected Option 1, some boards have chosen Option 3, and only two boards have selected Option 2. For MSBA searches this illustrates a shift away from involving members of the public in the interview process, with most boards relying heavily on the Public Survey Summary Report as the voice of constituents throughout the search process. However, regardless of what other districts have done, you should choose whichever option best fits your district.



SCHOOL BOARD INTERVIEW TRAINING AND PREPARATION



MINNESOTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE SEARCH SERVICES

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is seeking an exceptional leader to serve as **Superintendent**

Northfield Public Schools is located just south of the Twin Cities metropolitan area in Minnesota. The district covers 178 square miles and serves the communities of Northfield, Dundas, and the surrounding region. District Points of Pride:

- ◆ Students consistently score above state and national averages on standardized assessments, including the ACT, making NPS one of the top-performing districts in MN.
- ◆ Every district building (except NMS, built in 2004) has been updated since 2018, with the NHS Reimagine Project breaking ground in 2026.
- ◆ Graduation rates exceed the MN average by 15 percentage points, including strong outcomes for our Latino student population.
- ◆ NMS was recognized by MDE in 2026 as both an Exemplary High Performing School and an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School.
- ◆ A Spanish immersion program is offered at all three elementary schools.
- ◆ As the only MN public school district to authorize charter schools, NPS authorizes Arcadia Charter School and Prairie Creek Community School.
- ◆ NPS actively elevates student perspectives in decision-making through youth voice initiatives.
- ◆ A wide range of extracurricular opportunities in athletics and fine arts are offered, with numerous teams and ensembles earning state-level appearances and recognition year after year.
- ◆ NPS has received the MN School Finance Award for 13 consecutive years, as well as had seven consecutive years of clean audits.
- ◆ NPS benefits from an engaged and invested community with strong, sustained partnerships.
- ◆ NPS has a robust community ed program serving learners of all ages, as well as comprehensive early childhood programming.
- ◆ Long-term retention of highly experienced staff, and leadership stability, with only four superintendents since 1989—three of whom served ten or more years.
- ◆ Learn more at northfieldschools.org.

Application Deadline

To be considered for this position, an applicant's completed file must be received by MSBA prior to 11:59 p.m. on April 7, 2026.

About the Community

Northfield is a charming historic community on the banks of the Cannon River, 45 minutes south of the Twin Cities. With a unique mix of being both rural and semi-suburban, and having a population over 20,000, Northfield offers an exceptional quality of life. Additional highlights include:

- ◆ In 2024, Money.com recognized Northfield as one of the Top 50 Places to Live. Country Living has also included Northfield on its list of the 50 Most Beautiful Small Towns in America.
- ◆ Northfield is home to two nationally prestigious colleges, St. Olaf College and Carleton College.
- ◆ Downtown Northfield is a lively destination filled with locally-owned shops, restaurants, breweries, art galleries, and live music.
- ◆ Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy hundreds of acres of parks and trails, canoeing and kayaking, and access to Nerstrand Big Woods State Park.
- ◆ Learn more at visitnorthfield.com.

By the Numbers

- ◆ Student enrollment: 3,676
- ◆ Licensed staff members: 306
- ◆ Non-licensed staff members: 239
- ◆ Principals: 5
- ◆ Asst. Principals & Deans: 3
- ◆ Full-time District Office staff: 25
- ◆ District school buildings maintained: 7

Search Timeline

Announce Vacancy	March 10 2026
Application Deadline	April 7, 2026
Applicant Screening	April 8-16 2026
Announce Finalists	April 16, 2026
First Round Interviews	April 24 & 25, 2026
Second Round Interviews	April 29, 2026
Superintendent Begins	July 1, 2026

Reaching Out, Reaching Up:

THE 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



VISION

We prepare every student for lifelong success by developing critical thinkers who are curious and ready to engage in our society.

BENCHMARKS

1
All children are ready for **kindergarten**.

2
All students are connected to the **community**.

3
All students are at grade level in **reading and mathematics** by the end of third and sixth grades.

4
All students exhibit physical, social and emotional **well-being**.

5
All students have a **connection** with a caring adult beyond their parents as they transition to middle school.

6
All students have interests, goals and a **vision** for the future by the end of eighth grade.

7
All students **graduate** from high school with a plan to reach their full potential.

8
All **employees** report satisfaction in the workplace.

9
All **parents** report satisfaction with their children's educational experience.

10
The district maintains 14% of its annual expenditures in its unassigned fund balance to ensure **financial stability**.

11
Community education provides relevant and accessible learning opportunities for all residents.

Note: The first seven benchmarks are aligned with the language identified by Northfield Promise, a collective impact consortium of 20 community organizations committed to helping Northfield's youth thrive "from cradle to career."

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS



People

We prioritize the engagement, satisfaction, and support of every student, staff member, and family.



Learner Outcomes

We prepare every student to be academically and socially ready to choose their preferred pathway after high school graduation.



Equity

We ensure that every child has a fair opportunity to reach their full potential.



Communication

We communicate effectively and transparently with all stakeholders.



Stewardship

We responsibly manage our personnel, finances, property, time and environmental impact.



Partnerships

We seek community partnerships that accelerate student achievement of district benchmarks.

Leadership Profile

The Northfield Public School Board seeks an accomplished superintendent for a district where academic excellence thrives at the crossroads of tradition and innovation. The ideal leader, in partnership with the school board, will guide the district to advance student well-being, academic excellence, district benchmarks, and strategic commitments through igniting a culture of trust, teamwork, and continuous growth. Key attributes of the successful candidate include:

- ◆ **Ethical Leadership** – Demonstrates honesty, integrity, professionalism, and ethical leadership in all decision-making and interactions across the district and community.
- ◆ **Fiscal Stewardship** – Possesses experience and expertise in school finance, including responsible resource allocation and sound fiscal oversight aligned with the strategic plan.
- ◆ **Effective Communication** – Leads through clear, confident, and purposeful communication that informs, aligns, and builds trust with all audiences.
- ◆ **Team Leadership** – Develops and supports a collaborative, high-performing leadership team focused on district priorities, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- ◆ **Community Engagement** – Builds trust through a visible, approachable, and engaged presence that strengthens relationships within the district and broader community.
- ◆ **Labor Relations** – Provides effective, fair, and professional leadership in collective bargaining and labor negotiations.

Previous superintendent experience is preferred.

Salary and Benefits

A competitive compensation and benefits package, with a starting salary range of \$200,000 - \$230,000, will be negotiated commensurate with experience and qualifications. Contract length is negotiable as provided in Minnesota statute. Additional benefits available may include Health, Life, and LTD insurances, 403(b) match, and more.

2025-26 District Financial Highlights

◆ General Fund Revenue:	\$ 70,171,484
◆ General Fund Expenditures:	\$ 68,208,704
◆ Unassigned Fund Balance:	\$ 11,656,909
◆ Total General Fund Balance:	\$ 19,152,044

School District Vision

We prepare every student for lifelong success by developing critical thinkers who are curious and ready to engage in our society.

Screening Team

A team from the Minnesota School Boards Association's Executive Search Service (MSBA) has been selected to assist the School Board with the search process and in securing and screening applicants. The search team will be led by Amy Jordan, MSBA Associate Director of Leadership Development and Executive Search.

Deadline and Selection

MSBA's Executive Search Service uses an online application process. Applicants begin the application process at mnmsba.myrevelus.com. To be considered for this position, an applicant's completed file must be received by MSBA prior to 11:59 p.m. on April 7, 2026.

Contact Amy Jordan at 507-479-9984 (ajordan@mnmsba.org) with questions.

Applicants are requested to not contact school board members.

Northfield Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer. The MSBA Executive Search Service is an equal opportunity search agency.

Deadline to apply: April 7, 2026

Northfield Public Schools – Superintendent Search Timeline

March 6, 2026 <i>(6:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Planning meeting – Board adopts search timeline, reviews hiring criteria and search procedures
March 10 – March 22, 2026	Public Input survey open online and in hard copy
March 10, 2026 – April 7, 2026	MSBA posts opening on local, regional, and national websites, advertises position vacancy, receives applications, and responds to applicants' inquiries
March 11, 2026	MSBA holds Search Preview mtgs w/ district leadership
March 13, 2026 <i>(4:00 pm – will be recorded)</i>	MSBA hosts informational Q&A session on Zoom – will be recorded for viewing throughout the search
April 6, 2026 <i>(6:15 pm, Special Meeting) MSBA attends virtually</i>	Board meets for interview training, and to discuss public input report, interview questions and procedures
April 7, 2026	Application Deadline
April 8 – 16, 2026	MSBA conducts screening, preliminary verification of references, pre-interviews of recommended applicants
April 9 – 16, 2026	Board members review applications
April 16, 2026 <i>(6:00 pm, Special Meeting) MSBA attends virtually</i>	Board meets to determine finalists, interview questions and procedures; MSBA reviews interview training
April 24 & 25, 2026 <i>(4:00 pm and 3:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board conducts first round of interviews
April 29, 2026 <i>(4:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board conducts reference checks and holds second round of interviews; Board selects lone finalist and sets negotiations process
April 29, 2026	Board designee begins negotiations of employment contract
May 4, 2026 <i>(5:15 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board meets to approve employment contract
July 1, 2026	New superintendent reports to work
August 1 – December 31, 2026	New Board Team attends MSBA Transition Workshop

March 6, 2026



Relevant Law

All school board meetings related to the superintendent search must be open meetings. Applicants' materials contain data that are classified as private data. The law provides that the names of applicants for employment are private, but the names of finalists are public (M.S. 13.43, Subd. 3.). Once the finalists are named, the school board can only release the following information on applicants for a position: name (only finalists), veteran status, relevant test scores, rank on eligible list, job history, education and training, and work availability. All other information about applicants is private, as are the names and information of all other applicants who are not finalists.

Don't Ask

Both state and federal law prohibit questions regarding "protected categories." Indirect questions regarding protected categories are also a violation of the law. Some of the protected categories are listed below.

Protected Categories	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Race or color• National origin• Religion or creed• Age• Status with regard to public assistance• Familial status• Marital status• Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual orientation• Disability• Sex• Membership or activity in a local commission• Veteran status• Genetic information• U.S. Citizenship

What is an indirect question that may violate one or more protected categories? Some examples are provided below.

- How much longer do you plan to work before you retire? (The answer to this question may reveal information that discriminates with regard to age.)
- Do you own a home? Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? (The answers to these questions may reveal information that discriminates with regard to public assistance or disability.)
- How will you make dependent care arrangements? (The answer to this question may reveal information that discriminates with regard to marital and familial status.)

School boards should be particularly careful during follow-up questions. The school board should be cautious and agree beforehand how follow-up questions will be handled. Going "off script" increases the risk of an inappropriate question being asked. When in doubt, check with an attorney or contact MSBA.

Interview Questions: Non-Discrimination Laws

Anti-discrimination laws affect all steps of the employee hiring process. Knowledge of the characteristics on which these laws prohibit inquiry is especially critical when conducting interviews. Sloppy interview practices can result in the appearance of discrimination or even actual discrimination.

Interviewers should avoid seeking information that is not job related. The school board should assume that a rejected applicant may believe that all information acquired during an interview will be used in the hiring decision. The school district will have the burden to explain that not all information elicited during the interview process was used – a very difficult burden when the information involves race, sex, religion, age, disability, etc. Information needed for insurance, tax, social security, or similar purposes should be obtained after employment.

The following list of protected characteristics may not be complete because of the rapidly changing nature of discrimination laws.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Race and color	What race are your parents?	
Alienage, ancestry, national origin, nationality, and citizen status (provided the individual is authorized to work in the U.S.)	In what country were you born? In what country were your parents born? Are you a naturalized citizen? What is your native language?	Are you legally authorized to work in the United States? What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently? (if related to the job requirements)
Marital status	Are you married? Single? Divorced? Engaged? Are you living with someone? Would your spouse move with you if you got this position? What is your maiden name?	
Gender, including parental and pregnancy status	What are your future family plans? Are you pregnant? Do you have children? What are their ages?	Are you available to work overtime? (if related to the job requirements)
Sexual orientation, including actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or gender-related identity	Do you have a spouse or partner – which?	What kinds of experiences have you had working with others with different backgrounds than your own?

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Religion or creed	What religious holidays do you celebrate?	Are you available to work "X" to "X"?
Age	When do you plan to retire? What year did you graduate? How would you feel about working for someone younger than you?	What are your long-term career goals?
Military status	Will you miss work because you are a member of a U.S. Reserve unit, such as, Army Reserve or Marine Corps Reserve, or a member of a National Guard unit?	How does your military training or experience prepare you for this job?*
Unfavorable discharge from military service	Under what circumstances were you discharged from the service?	*This question is permissible only if information about military status is provided by the applicant, otherwise it is not permissible to ask any military status-related questions.
Arrest record	Have you ever been arrested? Spent time in jail?	
Use of lawful products during non-working hours	Do you smoke or use tobacco products during non-working hours? Do you consume alcoholic beverages during non-working hours?	
Genetic information	What were the results of any diagnostic, predictive, or pre-symptomatic genetic testing that you've had?	See section on <i>disability</i> below.
Credit history/report, unless the Employee Credit Privacy Act permits a satisfactory credit history to be a job requirement, such as, the position's duties include custody of or unsupervised access to cash or marketable assets valued at \$2,500 or more	Unless the Employee Credit Privacy Act permits a satisfactory credit history to be a job requirement for a specific position, do not ask: Do you have a good credit score? Have you been denied a credit card within the last 5 years? Have you ever filed bankruptcy?	
Salary history or current pay	What is/was your salary at your current/previous employment?	

Disability

Inquiries that are likely to elicit information about a disability, before a bona fide job offer is made, are prohibited. Inquiries about the ability to perform job functions that do not ask about disabilities are permissible.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Disability	<p>Have you had any recent illnesses or operations?</p> <p>Do you have AIDS?</p> <p>Do you have asthma?</p> <p>Do you have a disability which would interfere with your ability to perform the job?</p> <p>How many days were you sick last year?</p> <p>Have you ever filed for workers' compensation?</p> <p>Have you ever been injured on the job?</p> <p>How much alcohol do you drink each week?</p> <p>Have you ever been treated for alcohol problems?</p> <p>Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?</p> <p>What prescription drugs are you currently taking?</p>	<p>Can you perform the functions of this job (essential and/or marginal), with or without reasonable accommodation?</p> <p>Please describe/demonstrate how you would perform these functions (essential and/or marginal).</p> <p>Have you ever been disciplined (oral or written reprimand, suspension, or termination) for attendance violations or problems?</p> <p>Do you have the required licenses to perform this job?</p>

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 401

Orig. 1995

Revised: _____

Rev. 2022

401 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

[Note: School districts are not required by statute to have a policy addressing these issues. However, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission strongly encourages the adoption of a policy and will look for such a policy during accreditation visits, audits, or investigations.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants for school district employment and for all school district employees.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The policy of the school district is to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. The school district does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, or veteran status. The school district also makes reasonable accommodations for disabled employees.

[Note: The Minnesota Human Rights Act defines "sexual orientation" to include "having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness." Minnesota Statutes section 363A.03, subdivision 44.]

B. The school district prohibits the harassment of any individual for any of the categories listed above. For information about the types of conduct that constitute impermissible harassment and the school district's internal procedures for addressing complaints of harassment, please refer to the school district's policy on harassment and violence.

C. This policy applies to all areas of employment, including hiring, discharge, promotion, compensation, facilities, or privileges of employment.

D. Every school district employee shall be responsible for following this policy.

E. Any person having a question regarding this policy should discuss it with _____ (specify, e.g., the Personnel Manager).

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)
29 U.S.C. § 621 *et seq.* (Age Discrimination in Employment Act)
29 U.S.C. § 2615 (Family and Medical Leave Act)
38 U.S.C. § 4211 *et seq.* (Employment and Training of Veterans)
38 U.S.C. § 4301 *et seq.* (Employment and Reemployment Rights of Members of the Uniformed Services)
42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.* (Equal Employment Opportunities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act)
42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.* (Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 402 (Disability Nondiscrimination)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 405 (Veteran's Preference)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406

Orig. 1995

Revised: _____

Rev. 2023

406 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PERSONNEL DATA

[Note: The provisions of this policy accurately reflect the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and are not discretionary in nature.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to school district employees as to the data the school district collects and maintains regarding its employees, volunteers, independent contractors, and applicants ("personnel").

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. All data on individuals collected, created, received, maintained, or disseminated by the school district, which is classified by statute or federal law as public, shall be accessible to the public pursuant to the procedures established by the school district.
- B. All other data on individuals is private or confidential.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Public" means that the data is available to anyone who requests it.
- B. "Private" means the data is not public and is accessible only to the following: the subject of the data, as limited by any applicable state or federal law; individuals within the school district whose work assignments reasonably require access; entities and agencies as determined by the responsible authority who are authorized by law to gain access to that specific data; and entities or individuals given access by the express written direction of the data subject.
- C. "Confidential" means the data are not public and are not accessible to the subject.
- D. "Parking space leasing data" means the following government data on an applicant for, or lessee of, a parking space: residence address, home telephone number, beginning and ending work hours, place of employment, location of parking space, and work telephone number.
- E. "Personnel data" means government data on individuals maintained because they are or were employees, applicants for employment, volunteers or independent contractors for the school district. Personnel data include data submitted by an employee to the school district as part of an organized self-evaluation effort by the school district to request suggestions from all employees on ways to cut costs, make the school district more efficient, or to improve school district operations.
- F. "Finalist" means an individual who is selected to be interviewed by the school board for a position.
- G. "Protected health information" means individually identifiable health information as defined in 45 Code of Federal Regulations, section 160.103, that is transmitted by electronic media, maintained in electronic media, or transmitted or maintained in any

other form or medium by a health care provider, in connection with a transaction covered by 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 160, 162 and 164. "Protected health information" excludes individually identifiable health information in education records covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, employment records held by a school district in its role as employer; and records regarding a person who has been deceased for more than fifty (50) years.

- H. "Public officials" means business managers; human resource directors; athletic directors whose duties include at least fifty (50) percent of their time spent in administration, personnel, supervision, and evaluation; chief financial officers; directors; and individuals defined as superintendents and principals and in a charter school, individuals employed in comparable positions.

IV. PUBLIC PERSONNEL DATA

- A. The following information on current and former employees, volunteers and independent contractors of the school district, is public:
 - 1. name;
 - 2. employee identification number, which may not be the employee's Social Security number;
 - 3. actual gross salary;
 - 4. salary range;
 - 5. terms and conditions of employment relationship;
 - 6. contract fees;
 - 7. actual gross pension;
 - 8. the value and nature of employer-paid fringe benefits;
 - 9. the basis for and the amount of any added remuneration, including expense reimbursement, in addition to salary;
 - 10. job title;
 - 11. bargaining unit;
 - 12. job description;
 - 13. education and training background;
 - 14. previous work experience;
 - 15. date of first and last employment;
 - 16. the existence and status of any complaints or charges against the employee, regardless of whether the complaint or charge resulted in a disciplinary action;
 - 17. the final disposition of any disciplinary action, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subdivision. 2(b), together with the specific reasons for the action

and data documenting the basis of the action, excluding data that would identify confidential sources who are employees of the school district;

18. the complete terms of any agreement settling any dispute arising out of the employment relationship, including superintendent buyout agreements, except that the agreement must include specific reasons for the agreement if it involves the payment of more than \$10,000 of public money, and such agreement may not have the purpose or effect of limiting access to or disclosure of personnel data or limiting the discussion of information or opinions related to personnel data;
 19. work location;
 20. work telephone number;
 21. badge number;
 22. work-related continuing education;
 23. honors and awards received; and
 24. payroll time sheets or other comparable data that are used only to account for employee's work time for payroll purposes, except to the extent that release of time sheet data would reveal the employee's reasons for the use of sick or other medical leave or other not public data.
- B. The following information on current and former applicants for employment by the school district is public:
1. veteran status;
 2. relevant test scores;
 3. rank on eligible list;
 4. job history;
 5. education and training; and
 6. work availability.
- C. Names of applicants are private data except when certified as eligible for appointment to a vacancy or when applicants are considered by the school board to be finalists for public employment.
- D. Applicants for appointment to a public body.
1. Data about applicants for appointment to a public body collected by the school district as a result of the applicant's application for employment are private data on individuals except that the following are public:
 - a. name;
 - b. city of residence, except when the appointment has a residency requirement that requires the entire address to be public;

- c. education and training;
 - d. employment history;
 - e. volunteer work;
 - f. awards and honors;
 - g. prior government service;
 - h. any data required to be provided or that are voluntarily provided in an application for appointment to a multimember agency pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 15.0597; and
 - i. veteran status.
2. Once an individual is appointed to a public body, the following additional items of data are public:
- a. residential address;
 - b. either a telephone number or electronic mail address where the appointee can be reached, or both at the request of the appointee;
 - c. first and last dates of service on the public body;
 - d. the existence and status of any complaints or charges against an appointee; and
 - e. upon completion of an investigation of a complaint or charge against an appointee, the final investigative report is public, unless access to the data would jeopardize an active investigation.
3. Notwithstanding paragraph 2., any electronic mail address or telephone number provided by a public body for use by an appointee shall be public. An appointee may use an electronic mail address or telephone number provided by the public body as the designated electronic mail address or telephone number at which the appointee can be reached.
- E. Regardless of whether there has been a final disposition as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subdivision 2(b), upon completion of an investigation of a complaint or charge against a public official, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subdivision 2(e), or if a public official resigns or is terminated from employment while the complaint or charge is pending, all data relating to the complaint or charge are public, unless access to the data would jeopardize an active investigation or reveal confidential sources. Data relating to a complaint or charge against a public official is public only if:
- 1. the complaint or charge results in disciplinary action or the employee resigns or is terminated from employment while the complaint or charge is pending; or
 - 2. potential legal claims arising out of the conduct that is the subject of the complaint or charge are released as part of a settlement agreement

Data that is classified as private under another law is not made public by this provision.

V. PRIVATE PERSONNEL DATA

- A. All other personnel data not listed in Section IV are private data will not be otherwise released unless authorized by law.

- B. Data pertaining to an employee's dependents are private data on individuals.
- C. Data created, collected, or maintained by the school district to administer employee assistance programs are private.
- D. Parking space leasing data with regard to data on individuals are private.
- E. An individual's checking account number is private when submitted to a government entity.
- F. Personnel data must be disseminated to labor organizations to the extent necessary to conduct elections, investigate and process grievances, and implement the provisions of Minnesota Statutes chapters 179 and 179A. Personnel data shall be disseminated to labor organizations and the Bureau of Mediation Services ("BMS") to the extent the dissemination is ordered or authorized by the Commissioner of the BMS. Employee Social Security numbers are not necessary to implement the provisions of Chapter 179 and 179A.

The home addresses, nonemployer issued phone numbers and email addresses, dates of birth, and emails or other communications between exclusive representatives and their members, prospective members, and nonmembers are private data on individuals.

Dissemination of personnel data to a labor organization pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subdivision 6, shall not subject the school district to liability under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.08.

Personnel data described under Minnesota Statutes, section 179A.07, subdivision 8, must be disseminated to an exclusive representative under the terms of that subdivision.

- G. The school district may display a photograph of a current or former employee to prospective witnesses as part of the school district's investigation of any complaint or charge against the employee.
- H. The school district may, if its responsible authority or designee reasonably determines that the release of personnel data is necessary to protect an employee from harm to self or to protect another person who may be harmed by the employee, release data that are relevant to the concerns for safety to:
 1. the person who may be harmed and to the attorney representing the person when the data are relevant to obtaining a restraining order;
 2. a prepetition screening team conducting an investigation of the employee under Minnesota Statutes, section 253B.07, subdivision 1; or
 3. a court, law enforcement agency, or prosecuting authority.
- I. Private personnel data or confidential investigative data on employees may be disseminated to a law enforcement agency for the purpose of reporting a crime or alleged crime committed by an employee, or for the purpose of assisting law enforcement in the investigation of a crime or alleged crime committed by an employee.
- J. A complainant has access to a statement provided by the complainant to the school district in connection with a complaint or charge against an employee.

- K. When allegations of sexual or other types of harassment are made against an employee, the employee does not have access to data that would identify the complainant or other witnesses if the responsible authority determines that the employee's access to that data would:
1. threaten the personal safety of the complainant or a witness; or
 2. subject the complainant or witness to harassment.

If a disciplinary proceeding is initiated against the employee, data on the complainant or witness shall be available to the employee as may be necessary for the employee to prepare for the proceeding.

- L. The school district must report to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board ("PELSB") or the Board of School Administrators ("BOSA"), whichever has jurisdiction over the teacher's or administrator's license, as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.20, subdivision. 2, and shall, upon written request from the licensing board having jurisdiction over the license, provide the licensing board with information about the teacher or administrator from the school district's files, any termination or disciplinary proceeding, and settlement or compromise, or any investigative file in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.20, subdivision 2.

[Note: The obligation to make a report set forth in this section applies equally to charter school boards and their executive directors and charter school authorizers.]

- M. Private personnel data shall be disclosed to the Department of Employment and Economic Development for the purpose of administration of the unemployment insurance program under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 268.

- N. When a report of alleged maltreatment of a student in an elementary, middle school, high school or charter school is made to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education ("MDE") under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 260E, data that are relevant and collected by the school facility about the person alleged to have committed maltreatment must be provided to the Commissioner on request for purposes of an assessment or investigation of the maltreatment report. Additionally, personnel data may be released for purposes of providing information to a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child in accordance with MDE Screening Guidelines.

- O. The school district shall release to a requesting school district or charter school private personnel data on a current or former employee related to acts of violence toward or sexual contact with a student, if
1. an investigation conducted by or on behalf of the school district or law enforcement affirmed the allegations in writing prior to release and the investigation resulted in the resignation of the subject of the data; or
 2. the employee resigned while a complaint or charge involving the allegations was pending, the allegations involved acts of sexual contact with a student, and the employer informed the employee in writing, before the employee resigned, that if the employee resigns while the complaint or charge is still pending, the employer must release private personnel data about the employee's alleged sexual contact with a student to a school district or charter school requesting the data after the employee applies for employment with that school district or charter school and the data remain classified as provided in Minnesota Statutes,

chapter 13.

Data that are released under this paragraph must not include data on the student.

- P. Data submitted by an employee to the school district as part of an organized self-evaluation effort by the school district to request suggestions from all employees on ways to cut costs, make the school district more efficient, or improve the school district operations is private data. An employee who is identified in a suggestion, however, shall have access to all data in the suggestion except the identity of the employee making the suggestion.
- Q. Protected health information, as defined in 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 160 and 164, on employees is private and will not be disclosed except as permitted or required by law.
- R. Personal home contact information for employees may be used by the school district to ensure that an employee can be reached in the event of an emergency or other disruption affecting continuity of school district operations and may be shared with another government entity in the event of an emergency or other disruption to ensure continuity of operation for the school district or government entity.
- S. The personal telephone number, home address, and electronic mail address of a current or former employee of a contractor or subcontractor maintained as a result of a contractual relationship between the school district and a contractor or subcontractor entered on or after August 1, 2012, are private data. These data must be shared with another government entity to perform a function authorized by law. The data also must be disclosed to a government entity or any person for prevailing wage purposes.
- T. When a continuing contract teacher is discharged immediately because the teacher's license has been revoked due to a conviction for child abuse or sexual offenses involving a child as set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.40, subdivision 13(b), or when the Commissioner of the MDE makes a final determination of child maltreatment involving a teacher under Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.21, subdivision 4, or 260E.35, the school principal or other person having administrative control of the school must include in the teacher's employment record the information contained in the record of the disciplinary action or the final maltreatment determination, consistent with the definition of public data under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.41, subdivision. 5, and must provide PELSB and the licensing division at MDE with the necessary and relevant information to enable PELSB and MDE's licensing division to fulfill their statutory and administrative duties related to issuing, renewing, suspending, or revoking a teacher's license. In addition to the background check required under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.03, a school board or other school hiring authority must contact PELSB and MDE to determine whether the teacher's license has been suspended or revoked, consistent with the discharge and final maltreatment determinations. Unless restricted by federal or state data practices law or by the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, the responsible authority for a school district must disseminate to another school district private personnel data on a current or former teacher (employee or contractor) of the district, including the results of background investigations, if the requesting school district seeks the information because the subject of the data has applied for employment with the requesting school district.

VI. MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATIONS

If data on individuals are classified as both private and confidential by Minnesota Statutes chapter 13, or any other state or federal law, the data are private.

VII. CHANGE IN CLASSIFICATIONS

The school district shall change the classification of data in its possession if it is required to do

so to comply with either judicial or administrative rules pertaining to the conduct of legal actions or with a specific statute applicable to the data in the possession of the disseminating or receiving agency.

VIII. RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

The school district has designated [*name and title, telephone*] as the authority responsible for personnel data.

The responsible authority, or a school district employee if so designated, shall serve as the school district's data practices compliance official and, as such, shall be the employee to whom persons may direct questions or concerns regarding problems in obtaining access to data or other data practices problems.

IX. EMPLOYEE AUTHORIZATION/RELEASE FORM

An employee authorization form is included as an addendum to this policy.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)
Minn. Stat. § 13.02 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 13.03 (Access to Government Data)
Minn. Stat. § 13.05 (Duties of Responsible Authority)
Minn. Stat. § 13.37 (General Nonpublic Data)
Minn. Stat. § 13.39 (Civil Investigation)
Minn. Stat. § 13.41 (Licensing Data)
Minn. Stat. § 13.43 (Personnel Data)
Minn. Stat. § 13.601, subd. 3 (Elected and Appointed Officials)
Minn. Stat. § 15.0597 (Appointment to Multimember Agencies)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2 (Mandatory Reporting)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subds. 13 and 16 (Employment; Contracts; Termination)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.03 (Background Check)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, subd. 2 (Disclose Past Buyouts)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 179 (Minnesota Labor Relations Act)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 179A (Minnesota Public Labor Relations Act)
Minn. Stat. § 253B.07 (Judicial Commitment: Preliminary Procedures)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 260E (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 268 (Unemployment Insurance)
Minn. R. Pt. 1205 (Data Practices)
P.L. 104-191 (HIPAA)
45 C.F.R. Parts 160, 162, and 164 (HIPAA Regulations)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 206 (Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 722 (Public Data Requests)
MSBA Law Bulletin "I" (School Records – Privacy – Access to Data)

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 205

Orig. 1995

Revised: _____

Rev. 2022

205 OPEN MEETINGS AND CLOSED MEETINGS

[Note: The provisions of this policy accurately reflect Minnesota’s Open Meeting Law statutes and are not discretionary in nature.]

I. PURPOSE

- A. The school board embraces accountability and transparency in the conduct of its business, in the belief that openness produces better programs, more efficient administration of programs, and an organization more responsive to public interest and less susceptible to private interest. The school board shall conduct its business under a presumption of openness. At the same time, the school board recognizes and respects the privacy rights of individuals as provided by law. The school board also recognizes that there are certain exceptions to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law as recognized in statute where it has been determined that, in limited circumstances, the public interest is best served by closing a meeting of the school board.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assure the rights of the public to be present at school board meetings, while also protecting an individual’s rights to privacy under law, and to close meetings when the public interest so requires as recognized by law.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Except as otherwise expressly provided by statute, all meetings of the school board, including executive sessions, shall be open to the public.
- B. Meetings shall be closed only when expressly authorized by law.

III. DEFINITION

“Meeting” means a gathering of at least a quorum of school board members—or quorum of a committee or subcommittee of school board members, at which members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the school board. The term does not include a chance or social gathering or the use of social media by members of a public body so long as the social media use is limited to exchanges with all members of the general public. For purposes of the Open Meeting Law, social media does not include e-mail.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Meetings
 - 1. Regular Meetings

A schedule of the regular meetings of the school board shall be kept on file at the school district office. If the school board decides to hold a regular meeting at a time or place different from the time or place stated in its regular meeting schedule, it shall give the same notice of the meeting as for a special meeting.

2. Special Meetings

- a. For a special meeting, the school board shall post written notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting on the principal bulletin board of the school district or on the door of the school board's usual meeting room if there is no principal bulletin board. The school board's actions at the special meeting are limited to those topics included in the notice.
- b. The notice shall also be mailed or otherwise delivered to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings. This notice shall be posted and mailed or delivered at least three days before the date of the meeting.
- c. As an alternative to mailing or otherwise delivering notice to persons who have filed a written request, the school board may publish the notice once, at least three days before the meeting, in the official newspaper of the school district or, if none, in a qualified newspaper of general circulation within the area of the school district.
- d. A person filing a request for notice of special meetings may limit the request to particular subjects, in which case the school board is required to send notice to that person only concerning those particular subjects.
- e. The school board will establish an expiration date on requests for notice of special meetings and require refiling once each year. Not more than sixty (60) days before the expiration date of request for notice, the school board shall send notice of the refiling requirement to each person who filed during the preceding year.

3. Emergency Meetings

- a. An emergency meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the school board's judgment, require immediate consideration.

[Note: While the statute leaves the question to the board of whether the circumstances require immediate consideration at an emergency meeting, advisory opinions of the Minnesota Commissioner of Administration would limit such meetings to responding to natural disasters or health epidemics caused by an event such as an accident or terrorist attack.]

- b. If matters not directly related to the emergency are discussed or acted upon, the minutes of the meeting shall include a specific description of those matters.
- c. The school board shall make good faith efforts to provide notice of the emergency meeting to each news medium that has filed a written request for notice if the request includes the news medium's telephone number.
- d. Notice of the emergency meeting shall be given by telephone or any other method used to notify the members of the school board.

- e. Notice shall be provided to each news medium which has filed a written request for notice as soon as reasonably practicable after notice has been given to the school board members.
- f. Notice shall include the subject of the meeting.
- g. Posted or published notice of an emergency meeting shall not be required.
- h. The notice requirements for an emergency meeting as set forth in this policy shall supersede any other statutory notice requirement for a special meeting that is an emergency meeting.

4. Recessed or Continued Meetings

If a meeting is a recessed or continued session of a previous meeting, and the time and place of the meeting was established during the previous meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting, then no further published or mailed notice is necessary.

5. Closed Meetings

The notice requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law apply to closed meetings.

6. Actual Notice

If a person receives actual notice of a meeting of the school board at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting, all notice requirements are satisfied with respect to that person, regardless of the method of receipt of notice.

7. Meetings during Pandemic or Chapter 12 Emergency

In the event of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Minnesota Statutes chapter 12, a meeting may be conducted by telephone or interactive technology in compliance with Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021.

8. Meetings by Interactive Technology

A meeting may be conducted by interactive technology, Zoom, Skype, or other similar electronic means in compliance with Minnesota Statutes section 13D.02.

B. Votes

The votes of school board members shall be recorded in a journal or minutes kept for that purpose. The journal or any minutes used to record votes of a meeting must be open to the public during all normal business hours at the school district's administrative offices.

C. Written Materials

- 1. In any open meeting, a copy of any printed materials, including electronic communications, relating to the agenda items of the meeting prepared or distributed by or at the direction of the school board or its employees and distributed to or available to all school board members shall be available in the

meeting room for inspection by the public while the school board considers their subject matter.

2. This provision does not apply to materials not classified by law as public, or to materials relating to the agenda items of a closed meeting.

D. Open Meetings and Data

1. Meetings may not be closed to discuss data that are not public data, except as provided under Minnesota law.
2. Data that are not public data may be discussed at an open meeting if the disclosure relates to a matter within the scope of the school board's authority and is reasonably necessary to conduct the business or agenda item before the school board.
3. Data discussed at an open meeting retain the data's original classification; however, a record of the meeting, regardless of form, shall be public.

E. Closed Meetings

1. Labor Negotiations Strategy

- a. The school board may, by a majority vote in a public meeting, decide to hold a closed meeting to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals, conducted pursuant to Minnesota's Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA)
- b. The time and place of the closed meeting shall be announced at the public meeting. A written roll of school board members and all other persons present at the closed meeting shall be made available to the public after the closed meeting. The proceedings of a closed meeting to discuss negotiation strategies shall be tape recorded, and the tape recording shall be preserved for two years after the contract discussed at the meeting is signed. The recording shall be made available to the public after all labor contracts are signed by the school board for the current budget period.

2. Sessions Closed by Bureau of Mediation Services

All negotiations, mediation meetings, and hearings between the school board and its employees or their respective representatives are public meetings. Mediation meetings may be closed only by the Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS). The use of recording devices, stenographic records, or other recording methods is prohibited in mediation meetings closed by the BMS.

3. Preliminary Consideration of Allegations or Charges

The school board shall close one or more meetings for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority. If the school board members conclude that discipline of any nature may be warranted as a result of those specific charges or allegations, further meetings or hearings relating to those specific charges or allegations held after that conclusion is

reached must be open. A meeting must also be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting. A closed meeting for this purpose must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

4. Performance Evaluations

The school board may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The school board shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the school board shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting. A closed meeting for this purpose must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

5. Attorney-Client Privilege Meeting

A meeting may be closed if permitted by the attorney-client privilege. Attorney-client privilege applies when litigation is imminent or threatened, or when the school board needs advice above the level of general legal advice, for example, regarding specific acts and their legal consequences. A meeting may be closed to seek legal advice concerning litigation strategy, but the mere threat that litigation might be a consequence of deciding a matter one way or another does not, by itself, justify closing the meeting. The motion to close the meeting must specifically describe the matter to be discussed at the closed meeting, subject to relevant privacy and confidentiality considerations under state and federal law. The law does not require that such a meeting be recorded.

6. Dismissal Hearing

- a. A hearing on dismissal of a licensed teacher shall be public or private at the teacher's discretion. A hearing regarding placement of teachers on unrequested leave of absence shall be public.
- b. A hearing on dismissal of a student pursuant to the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act shall be closed unless the pupil, parent, or guardian requests an open hearing.
- c. To the extent a teacher or student dismissal hearing is held before the school board and is closed, the closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

7. Coaches; Opportunity to Respond

- a. If the school board has declined to renew the coaching contract of a licensed or nonlicensed head varsity coach, it must notify the coach within fourteen (14) days of that decision.
- b. If the coach requests the reasons for the nonrenewal, the school board must give the coach its reasons in writing within ten (10) days of

receiving the request. The existence of parent complaints must not be the sole reason for the school board not to renew a coaching contract.

- c. On the request of the coach, the school board must provide the coach with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the reasons at a school board meeting.
- d. The meeting may be open or closed at the election of the coach unless the meeting is closed as required by Minnesota Statutes section 13D.05 to discuss educational or certain other nonpublic data.
- e. A meeting closed for this purpose must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

8. Meetings to Discuss Certain Not Public Data

- a. Any portion of a meeting must be closed if the following types of data are discussed:
 - (1) data that would identify alleged victims or reporters of criminal sexual conduct, domestic abuse, or maltreatment of minors or vulnerable adults;
 - (2) active investigative data collected or created by a law enforcement agency;
 - (3) educational data, health data, medical data, welfare data, or mental health data that are not public data; or
 - (4) an individual's personal medical records.
- b. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

9. Purchase and Sale of Property

- a. The school board may close a meeting:
 - (1) to determine the asking price for real or personal property to be sold by the school district;
 - (2) to review confidential or nonpublic appraisal data; and
 - (3) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real or personal property.
- b. Before closing the meeting, the school board must identify on the record the particular real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting.

- c. The closed meeting must be tape recorded at the expense of the school district. The tape must be preserved for eight years after the date of the meeting and be made available to the public after all real or personal property discussed at the meeting has been purchased or sold or the school board has abandoned the purchase or sale. The real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting must be specifically identified on the tape. A list of school board members and all other persons present at the closed meeting must be made available to the public after the closed meeting.
- d. An agreement reached that is based on an offer considered at a closed meeting is contingent on its approval by the school board at an open meeting. The actual purchase or sale must be approved at an open meeting and the purchase price or sale price is public data.

10. Security Matters

- a. The school board may close a meeting to receive security briefings and reports, to discuss issues related to security systems, to discuss emergency response procedures, and to discuss security deficiencies in or recommendations regarding public services, infrastructure, and facilities, if disclosure of the information discussed would pose a danger to public safety or compromise security procedures or responses.
- b. Financial issues related to security matters must be discussed and all related financial decisions must be made at an open meeting.
- c. Before closing a meeting, the school board must refer to the facilities, systems, procedures, services, or infrastructures to be considered during the closed meeting.
- d. The closed meeting must be tape recorded at the expense of the school district and the recording must be preserved for at least four years.

11. Other Meetings

Other meetings shall be closed as provided by law, except as provided above. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

F. Procedures for Closing a Meeting

The school board shall provide notice of a closed meeting just as for an open meeting. A school board meeting may be closed only after a majority vote at a public meeting. Before closing a meeting, the school board shall state on the record the specific authority permitting the meeting to be closed and shall describe the subject to be discussed.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D (Open Meeting Law)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, Subd. 5 (Exclusion and Expulsion Procedures)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.33, Subd. 3 (License and Degree Exemption for Head Coach)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subd. 14 (Employment; Contracts; Termination)
Minn. Stat. § 179A.14, Subd. 3 (Negotiation Procedures)

Minn. Rules Part 5510.2810 (Petition for Mediation)
Brown v. Cannon Falls Township, 723 N.W.2d 31 (Minn. App. 2006)
Brainerd Daily Dispatch v. Dehen, 693 N.W.2d 435 (Minn. App. 2005)
The Free Press v. County of Blue Earth, 677 N.W.2d 471 (Minn. App. 2004)
Prior Lake American v. Mader, 642 N.W.2d 729 (Minn. 2002)
Star Tribune v. Board of Education, Special School District No. 1, 507 N.W.2d 869 (Minn. App. 1993)
Minnesota Daily v. University of Minnesota, 432 N.W.2d 189 (Minn. App. 1988)
Moberg v. Independent School District No. 281, 336 N.W.2d 510 (Minn. 1983)
Sovereign v. Dunn, 498 N.W.2d 62 (Minn. App. 1993), *rev. denied.* (Minn. 1993)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 21-003 (April 19, 2021)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 21-002 (January 13, 2021)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 19-012 (October 24, 2019)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 19-008 (May 22, 2019)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 19-006 (April 9, 2019)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 18-019 (December 28, 2018)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 17-005 (June 22, 2017)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 13-009 (March 19, 2013)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 12-004 (March 8, 2012)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 11-004 (April 18, 2011)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 10-020 (September 23, 2010)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 09-020 (September 8, 2009)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 08-015 (July 9, 2008)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 06-027 (September 28, 2006)
Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 04-004 (February 3, 2004)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 204 (School Board Meeting Minutes)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 206 (Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 207 (Public Hearings)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
MSBA Law Bulletin "C" (Minnesota's Open Meeting Law)

Other search considerations based upon statute

Minnesota Statute 122A.40 (excerpt provided below) addresses two areas school boards must also be aware of during the superintendent search process:

1. Residency
2. Candidates who may be related to a board member (additional information on following page)

122A.40 EMPLOYMENT; CONTRACTS; TERMINATION.

Subdivision 1. Teacher defined.

A principal, supervisor, and classroom teacher and any other professional employee required to hold a license from the state department shall be deemed to be a "teacher" within the meaning of this section. A superintendent is a "teacher" only for purposes of subdivisions 3 and 19.

Subd. 3. Hiring, dismissing.

School boards must hire or dismiss teachers at duly called meetings. Where a husband and wife, brother and sister, or two brothers or sisters, constitute a quorum, no contract employing a teacher shall be made or authorized except upon the unanimous vote of the full board. A teacher related by blood or marriage, within the fourth degree, computed by the civil law, to a board member shall not be employed except by a unanimous vote of the full board. The initial employment of the teacher in the district must be by written contract, signed by the teacher and by the chair and clerk. All subsequent employment of the teacher in the district must be by written contract, signed by the teacher and by the chair and clerk, except where there is a master agreement covering the employment of the teacher. Contracts for teaching or supervision of teaching can be made only with qualified teachers. A teacher shall not be required to reside within the employing district as a condition to teaching employment or continued teaching employment.

In addition, Minnesota Statute 123B.143 (excerpt provided below) addresses the role of a superintendent and the board's contractual parameters.

123B.143 SUPERINTENDENT.

Subdivision 1. Contract; duties.

All districts maintaining a classified secondary school must employ a superintendent who shall be an ex officio nonvoting member of the school board. The authority for selection and employment of a superintendent must be vested in the board in all cases. An individual employed by a board as a superintendent shall have an initial employment contract for a period of time no longer than three years from the date of employment. Any subsequent employment contract must not exceed a period of three years. A board, at its discretion, may or may not renew an employment contract. A board must not, by action or inaction, extend the duration of an existing employment contract. Beginning 365 days prior to the expiration date of an existing employment contract, a board may negotiate and enter into a subsequent employment contract to take effect upon the expiration of the existing contract.



School Board Member Special Voting

Subject	Vote	Minnesota Statutes
Individual Board Member Remote Participation	All votes must be conducted by roll call	<u>13D.02</u>
Remote Meeting during Pandemic or Chapter 12 Emergency	All votes must be conducted by roll call	<u>13D.021</u>
Initial hire of a teacher related to a board member	Unanimous vote of the full board	<u>122A.40, Subd. 3</u>
Termination of continuing contract teacher Placement of a teacher on unrequested leave of absence	Majority roll call vote of the full board	<u>122A.40, Subd. 7</u>
District may reimburse employee for legal expenses	Majority vote Board member who is a witness or alleged victim in the case may not vote on reimbursement	<u>123B.02, Subd. 20</u>
School board member's right to employment	Majority approval at a meeting at which all board members are present	<u>123B.195</u>
School district general obligation bonds not exceeding 5-1/10 percent of the net tax capacity	2/3 majority vote of all the members of the board	<u>128D.11, Subd. 3</u>
Removal of board member for cause and fill vacancy	Concurrent vote of at least four board members	<u>123B.09, Subd. 9</u>
Designation of newspaper <u>other than a 'qualified newspaper'</u>	Unanimous vote	<u>331A.04, Subd. 6(a)(4)</u>

School Board Member Special Voting

Subject	Vote	Minnesota Statutes
Donation or gift to the school district	2/3 majority vote	<u>465.03</u>
Contract with employee class and a board member's spouse is in the class (spouse cannot receive a special benefit)	Majority of disinterested board members vote to approve the contract School board member-spouse must be directed to abstain from voting; essential facts of contract must be set forth at the meeting	<u>471.88, Subd. 21</u>
Designation of district bank/savings association School board member who is 'interested' shall disclose that the member is a director or employee; disclosure is entered in minutes; disclosure shall be made when bank or savings association is first designated as depository or source of borrowing or when member is elected (whichever is later)	Unanimous vote	<u>471.88, Subd. 2</u>
Official newspaper with an interested board member and the paper is the only newspaper complying with legal requirements on designation or publication	Unanimous vote	<u>471.88, Subd. 3</u>
District contract with a cooperative association that has an interested board member as shareholder or stockholder	Unanimous vote	<u>471.88, Subd. 4</u>
A contract that does not require bids and the contract involves an interested board member	Unanimous vote	<u>471.88, Subd. 5</u>
Contract to provide construction materials/services contract with interested board member when the school district population is equal to or less than 1,000	Unanimous vote Interested board member may not vote	<u>471.88, Subd. 12</u>

School Board Member Special Voting

Application for federal or state grant for housing, community, or economic development and a board member may benefit	Unanimous vote Interested board member must abstain on voting on measures related to the grant	<u>471.88, Subd. 17</u>
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Common Interview Mistakes

Below are ten common interview mistakes. School board members are wise to review the list prior to the interviews.

- 1. Poor or incomplete selection criteria.** If the school board hasn't carefully considered the skills and qualities needed for the position, the school board's interview questions won't get to the key issues.
- 2. Making a bad impression.** Plan ahead so the school board appears cohesive and organized. Start the interview on time and give the candidates your undivided attention. Avoid talking too much – whether it's in the formal interview or informal chitchat – the candidates should be the ones doing most of the talking. School boards don't want the best candidates to have an unfavorable opinion of the school board or school district.
- 3. Violations of the "Don't Ask" list.** Asking "Don't Ask" questions during an interview – intentionally or unintentionally – could subject the school district to a lawsuit. Remember, the "Don't Ask" questions pertain to every step of the process.
- 4. Vague questions, vague answers.** School board members shouldn't be left to interpret what a candidate said or meant. Interview questions should be open-ended but should not invite vague answers. Rather, when possible, ask the candidate to provide current and/or previous examples (i.e., How did you ...).
- 5. Forgetting the whole picture.** When the school board spends too much time on a particular topic, or the questions keep returning to a single topic, the "whole picture" is lost and important areas don't get covered. School board members also sometimes cling to one important characteristic – such as good communication skills – at the expense of considering other weaknesses. The reverse is also true.
- 6. Failure to probe motivation.** School board members certainly want to focus on a candidate's skills. However, the school board should also learn about the candidate's motivation and passion for the job. If the candidate isn't supportive of the school board's goals, the lack of support will be evident in his or her performance. Finding the right candidate is more than learning if a candidate can do the job; the issue is will he or she do it and do it well?
- 7. Treating the interview like a one-way street.** The school board must make sure the interview is a two-way conversation – the school board asks the candidates questions, yet ensures the candidates have time to ask their own questions.
- 8. Incomplete notes.** Without notes, school board members are unlikely to remember key points of each interview – especially after talking to several candidates. Good notes help ensure equal consideration of all candidates; otherwise, the first and last candidates tend to stand out and gain an unfair advantage.
- 9. Quick decisions.** Individuals without a great deal of interview experience may find it difficult to avoid first impressions and assign characteristics based on their own personal interpretations. However, school board members should take their time and make confident, measured decisions based on the pre-established selection criteria.
- 10. Accepting the wrong fit.** Being without a full-time, permanent superintendent for long is neither easy nor desirable. However, lowering the school board's standards to fill the position quickly is worse. When dealing with a high-profile job in a public institution, the process counts. Take your time.
- 11. Not checking your bias at the door.** See the following page for more information on the role Implicit Bias plays in candidate interviews.

WHAT IS BIAS?

First, it's important to understand what bias is and why we all have biases.

Bias is often regarded negatively. For the purpose of this discussion, we consider bias in the context of partiality, preconceived notion and predisposition. The reality is that biases naturally come from our brains' use of schemas. A schema can be described as a template of knowledge. We use schemas to process the information that bombards our senses every moment of every day. This is simply a way for us to sort information into categories that make sense to us. We have schemas about objects, processes and other human beings.

For example, our brain uses a schema to assign the category of "chair" to an object based on its flat seat, back and legs, even though the chair might be plain wood or lavishly upholstered. We may have a negative bias about plain wood chairs because we have had the uncomfortable experience of sitting in one for an extended period of time. We have a schema for the process of ordering food at a restaurant. We know what it means when a smiling person hands us a laminated document with descriptions of various dishes and prices. And, by observing assorted traits, we use schemas to naturally assign people into categories such as age, gender, race and role.

There are two types of bias, explicit and implicit. Both types of bias include stereotypes and attitudes.

STEREOTYPES are traits that we associate with a category. These associations may arise from direct personal experience or they might be relayed to us through stories, media and culture. "Elderly people are frail" is an example of a stereotype.

ATTITUDES are overall evaluative feelings that are positive or negative. If we meet someone who graduated from the same university, we tend to feel more at ease with that person.

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

Implicit biases are those we carry without awareness or conscious direction. It is the result of our human brains using schemas to organize information into categories. Most of the work our brains do occurs on the unconscious level. Implicit bias does not mean that we hide our prejudices. We are unaware of these biases and they are generally not an indication of our beliefs and values.

This is important for interviewers to understand because without awareness we cannot know if we are acting on hidden biases. Implicit bias is also referred to as hidden or unconscious bias.

WHAT IS EXPLICIT BIAS?

In contrast, explicit bias means that we are aware that we have a particular thought or feeling. It sometimes means we understand the source of that thought or feeling. If you have an explicitly positive attitude toward chocolate, you consciously endorse and celebrate that preference.



Deliberation Scenarios

In preparation for deliberating in public, it can be helpful to discuss possible scenarios and plan in advance how the board might handle them. Below are some examples of what can occur during the deliberation process. Although these types of situations are rare, please discuss how your board might manage these scenarios in order to conduct open, honest, and positive deliberations regarding your district's candidates.

1. The Board is deadlocked regarding two finalists. As each side digs in, they drill deeper and deeper into the reasons they want their candidate. These reasons could be because they think the candidate will move to the area, or are young and vital and will therefore be visible and energetic, or because the candidate "looks like a superintendent." In remembering our conversation about the role that bias plays in the interview process, how could your board manage that discussion?
2. The debate regarding who should be offered the job is heated and begins to unravel. It reaches a point where comments are becoming personal from board member to board member, or even questioning the chair's intentions and character. What could you do, or how could you respond to keep the discussion collaborative and professional?
3. During deliberations on the final candidates, one board member states they have information from "credible sources" that one candidate has issues in their background that the rest of the board does not know about and that is why they won't support their candidacy. Do you ask them to share this information publicly, and if not, how else could you respond instead?

Again, these situations are rare; however, should they arise what can your board agree upon as fundamental principles to help keep the deliberations as respectful as possible? Please list them below.

Sample Interview Questions

Professional Information

1. Why are you interested in this position?
2. What do you consider to be your proudest accomplishment as an educator?
3. How do you systematically improve your knowledge and skills as an administrator?
4. In which professional area of expertise would you most like to improve?

Biographical and Self-Assessment

5. What administrative strengths will you bring to this school district?
6. If we visited with your staff, what would they say is your most obvious strength?
Weakness?
7. How does this position fit in with your long-term goals?
8. Do you consider yourself an "out front" leader or a "behind-the-scenes" leader?
9. Why are you seriously interested in becoming our superintendent?
10. What aspects of your education and experience would be especially helpful in this position?
11. How do you respond and personally deal with criticism?
12. What would you like to accomplish in your present position but doubt that you will be able to accomplish? Why?
13. Assume for the moment that you have completed a long successful career in the school district. What would you hope to be the three most significant achievements you will be remembered for?
14. What are your long-term career objectives?
15. What has been the most unpopular decision you have had to make and how did you handle the reaction to this decision?
16. What qualities do you possess that you believe make you an outstanding administrator?

School Board/Superintendent Relations

17. What is your responsibility if the school board proposes something that you think is educationally unsound?
18. What role do you think the school board should play in the hiring process for various categories of personnel, such as secretaries, teachers, and building administrators?
19. What would you do if you believed one or more school board members were exceeding the proper exercise of their office in the day-to-day operations of the school district?
20. How should a school board member respond to a constituent's complaint concerning a teacher in an elementary school?
21. What is your definition of an ideal school board/superintendent relationship?
22. How would you help the school board maintain its leadership role in this world of educational change?

23. What would be your reaction if the school board opposes something which you thought was sound? What if the school board proposes something which you think is unsound or inappropriate?
24. How would you expect to be evaluated?
25. How would you work with a chronically "split board?"
26. What kind of understanding would you hope to establish between the school board and yourself in order to administer this school district effectively?
27. How would you keep the school board informed about what is happening in the school district?
28. How would you expect the school board to help you as a superintendent?
29. Describe your vision of the perfect relationship between the school board and the superintendent. What have you done in your past assignments to help achieve that relationship?
30. What types of events or behaviors have caused you to feel at odds with your school board and how have you resolved those situations?
31. Describe how you keep your school board fully informed between meetings.
32. Describe how you would prepare an agenda for the next school board meeting. What is your procedure for determining how items get on the agenda?
33. How would you prepare the school board to make a decision on a politically sensitive or controversial issue?
34. How do you feel the annual evaluation of superintendent performance should be handled? What elements should be included in the evaluation?
35. What is your role in developing school board policy?
36. What role should the superintendent play in orienting new school board members? How should this be accomplished?
37. How would you propose to have your performance evaluated? By whom? On what criteria? How often?
38. Tell us about your past relations with your school board.
39. How do you balance conflicting interests between school board and school district support groups?

Personnel, Management, and Administration

40. Describe your philosophy of effective delegation.
41. What do you consider to be the most important duties of a CEO?
42. How would you set up an accountability system for personnel?
43. How would you motivate the teaching, administrative, and support staff to achieve new levels of excellence in education for children of all abilities?
44. What do you understand to be your responsibility in providing professional educational leadership?
45. How have you shared decision making with staff and citizens?
46. How aggressive would you be in creating change within the school district?
47. How would you build trust and collaboration within the school district?
48. How would you describe your management style? Would your subordinates describe it the same way?

49. What is your understanding of the administrative team concept? How would you implement that concept?
50. How do you delegate responsibility to others?
51. How would you improve the abilities of the professional staff?
52. Is there a difference between management and leadership? If so, what might that be? Can an individual be a manager and a leader?
53. How would you describe your management philosophy? Your managerial strengths and weaknesses?
54. How would you go about evaluating the effectiveness of our current administrative team? If you were to feel some re-alignment were necessary, how would you go about making a change?
55. How do you make decisions? Please relate the process you used in making your last important decision.
56. What process do you use (or would you use) to hire staff? At the school district level? At the building level?
57. How do you handle a conflict between parents and a building principal over school rules?
58. What is your philosophy concerning the recruitment of personnel?
59. What procedures do you find most useful in recruiting administrators and teachers?
60. Describe your experience with negotiations. What role do you prefer to play? How much has your school board been involved?
61. How do you maintain a collaborative relationship with the staff and/or teachers' association?
62. What kind of authority do you give to principals, and how do you hold them accountable?
63. If a teacher expresses concern to you about a principal's written evaluation of his/her performance, what would you do?
64. What is your philosophy concerning human resource development?
65. Tell us about your training in conflict management and consensus building.

Finance and Building Programs

66. What is your procedure in developing a school district-wide budget?
67. What are some of the techniques you would recommend the school district use to cut the budget if that becomes necessary?
68. How would you suggest this school district handle long-range financial planning?
69. What is your experience in organizing and successfully passing bond issues?
70. Explain how you achieved success in past assignments that required coping with flat or minimally increasing revenues in the face of substantially increasing student enrollments.
71. Explain how you have achieved the appropriate balance between the need to protect the taxpayer's wallet and the need to have an outstanding program for students.
72. How would you develop a budget for the school district?
73. What is the school board's role in the budget process?
74. How would you involve the school board, staff, and the community in the budget process?

75. What is your experience in passing referendums?
76. How would you describe your understanding of school district finance? What do you know of finance issues?
77. Describe the budget-making process you have used.
78. What has been your experience with budget management, budgetary controls, and budget reduction?
79. What financial responsibilities have been assigned to others in your school district?
80. How would you suggest establishing a reasonable balance between budgeting for needed school district improvements and maintaining the fiscal integrity of the school district?
81. What financial difficulties have you encountered? What did you do?
82. How involved are you in the budgeting process and financial planning of your school district or do you leave those decisions to a business manager? (Superintendents from large school districts usually have a business manager.)

Community Relations

83. Describe ways you would help build public confidence in this school district.
84. How would you be involved in the community?
85. How have you effectively kept the public involved with the school district?
86. As CEO, how would you establish partnerships with the business community to support the school district?
87. What is the role of the superintendent and the school board in developing community support for the schools?
88. How would you involve the business community in the schools?
89. How would you involve the community in the schools?
90. Describe what you believe is an effective public information program.
91. How would you, as superintendent, be involved in the civic affairs of the community?
92. How do you make yourself available to community members/groups who have need of information, questions, concerns?
93. Give some specific examples of ways you have successfully communicated to your shareholders accomplishments and problems.
94. How is the content of regular reports to the community determined?
95. What evidence can you cite which indicates your success in gaining school board and community support for educational programs?
96. How important do you feel it is for the superintendent to be visible throughout the community? How would you decide what activities/organizations are worth the time and effort of active participation?
97. How would you inform the staff of action taken at the last school board meeting?
98. How would you handle parent complaints about teacher performance?
99. What role do you believe you should play in community organizations?
100. How do you maintain visibility in the school district where you work now?
101. Describe your relations with your business community.
102. How have you succeeded in maintaining connection with and support from families who no longer have children in the schools?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

103. How will you lead to ensure that the diverse and rich backgrounds of all members in our school community will be heard and included?
104. Please provide an example of how you have intentionally sought out diverse perspectives to reach a more just and equitable outcome.
105. Please share your understanding of how diversity, equity, and inclusion are interconnected.
106. How will you work to improve educational experiences and outcomes for our students who have been historically underserved and underrepresented?
107. Please describe your approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining more educators of color? (Or Please describe your approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining more Black and Indigenous educators and educators of color?)
108. What does educational equity mean to you?
109. How has your racial identity and culture shaped and informed your world view? How are you actively working to increase and grow your own racial and cultural critical consciousness?
110. How will you develop authentic and enduring partnerships with various district stakeholder groups to support the achievement of all students?
111. Describe how you would handle the inevitable opposition that often accompanies the courageous work of educational equity.
112. School districts are responsible for providing a high quality, equitable education for each and every student. What does an equitable education look like to you and how will you lead with an equity lens?
113. Share examples of systemic and institutional racism in our education system. How will you work toward dismantling those barriers?
114. Provide an example of the strategies you have used to create an inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of ability, race, or life experiences.
115. How would you advocate for equity and diversity initiatives with both staff and community members that don't see its value?
116. Why do you think it's important to address diversity and equity issues in this position, and what are some ways you might do that?
117. As a member of district administration, what does it mean to you to use an "equity lens" in your decision-making processes?
118. Has the pandemic changed your perceptions of equity issues in public education, and if so, in what ways?

Negotiations

119. Do you prefer to use traditional or collegial process for bargaining? Why?
120. If we talked to a union representative in your school district, how would he or she describe your relationships?
121. Have you worked with outside consultants in the area of collective bargaining? How do you choose and work with outside consultants?
122. Describe your experience in working with employee unions.

Curriculum and Instruction

123. How have you been involved in using technology in administration and instructional programs?
124. Describe how you would evaluate the instructional programs of this school district.
125. What have you found to be effective in increasing the achievement of low socio-economic and minority students?
126. How would you determine the educational strengths and weaknesses of the school district?
127. How would you achieve and maintain the proper balance between academics and extracurricular programs?
128. Describe the techniques you have found most successful to maintain and improve the quality of instruction in classrooms with a stable and long-tenured staff.
129. Describe the educational change in your previous school district of which you are most proud.
130. What criteria do you use in evaluating an instructional program?
131. What, if any, new educational programs are available which are likely to improve schooling for pre-kindergarten students? Elementary students? Middle school students? High school students?
132. What have you done to upgrade the educational programs in schools under your supervision? How have you evaluated the results?
133. During your first year as our superintendent, how might you go about determining the strengths and weaknesses of this school district?
134. What educational programs at the federal level do you consider most significant at this time?
135. Describe your most successful efforts to use the influence of the superintendency to increase student achievement at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.
136. How would you determine whether an excellent school system needs to be improved?
137. How would you conduct an assessment of the school district's current curriculum and its instructional programs?
138. Describe an appropriate role for the school board in curriculum development.
139. Discuss how you would ensure the relevance of a school district's educational program for students in the next century.
140. What do you see as the emerging role of technology as used in education?
141. What curricular innovations have you implemented in your school district?
142. What worthwhile educational trends do you see as having a significant impact on education in the immediate future?
143. What process do you use to bring about curriculum changes in your school district?
144. What are your thoughts on "inclusion" for multi-needs special education students?

Accountability

145. What do you view as your major responsibilities in helping our school district meet the requirements of the accountability system?
146. What were some of your previous successes in meeting the state standards?
147. What else should be included in a local accountability system beyond those required by the state?
148. Describe your involvement and successes in the establishment or revision of legislation favorable to schools in general and your past school districts in particular.

Grant Writing and Administration

149. What are some examples that demonstrate your background in grant writing and administration?
150. How should a school district implement a successful grant writing and administration program?
151. Who are some of the key people involved in a successful grant program?
152. What is your basic philosophy regarding the use of grants to fund public education?
153. What grants have you written and how have they impacted student learning?

Leadership

154. What are the strongest leadership characteristics you bring to the position of superintendent?
155. What would your former subordinates say about your leadership style?
156. Give us a couple of examples of tough leadership situations you've faced in the past and how you handled them.
157. What's your approach for dealing with the different leadership styles among those leaders who work for you?
158. What would your school board/administration say are your strengths/weaknesses?
159. In considering your last one or two positions, describe a few accomplishments which you would attribute to your leadership.

Dealing with Change

160. How do you intend to deal with the significant number of changes occurring in education today?
161. What are some examples of significant changes you instituted in your past organizations?
162. How do you build the support needed throughout the organization for needed changes?
163. How do you motivate those in the school district who tend to resist needed changes?

Planning

164. How are the school board's role and the superintendent's role in school district planning different?

165. How should the community be involved in school district planning?
166. How would you lead the school district in developing long-range strategic and short-range operational plans?
167. What type of information about school district operations should the superintendent supply to school board members?
168. How would you determine long-range and short-range goals for the school district? Whom would you involve in the planning process? Have you worked on a strategic plan for your school district?
169. How would you implement short- and long-range school district goals? How would you monitor and evaluate their implementation?
170. When, if ever, do you feel the use of staff or community advisory committees is appropriate? How would you use them?
171. How do you delegate to others? How do you monitor the performance of those who are responsible?

Technology

172. Give an example of how your school district now uses technology.
173. Explain how your present school district uses technology in the classroom.
174. Describe how you have been involved in implementing technology in your school district.
175. What does the research tell you about the use of technology in the classroom?

Summary

176. If selected, when would you be able to assume this position?
177. Upon review of the school district's hiring criteria, is there anything about your past work experience that you would like to share with us?
178. Do you have any questions you would like to ask school board members?

The Candidate's Turn

The school board has its questions answered; now it's the candidate's turn. The school board plans time in the interviews so candidates can ask questions about the school board's expectations and the school district. If the school board-superintendent relationship is akin to "marriage," then both parties need to understand the other before making a commitment. The superintendent wants the school district to be a good fit for him/her as much as the school board wants the superintendent to be a good fit for the school district.

With a small pool of qualified candidates and a highly competitive environment, school board members should be prepared to explain why their school district is a good place to work, while acknowledging the challenges they face.

School board members should be aware that candidates, especially those who consider themselves finalists, are asking tougher and tougher questions.

Sample Candidate Questions

- How do you evaluate your superintendent?
- What are the strengths of the school district?
- What are the school board's short- and long-term goals? What is the school district's vision?
- What are the school district's biggest challenges?
- How would you describe the relationship between the administration and teachers?
- What is the school district's financial condition?
- What does the school board see as its role? What about the superintendent's role?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a school board?
- Does the school district have any problems of which I should be aware?
- What does your community expect in terms of my involvement in the community?
- How will key administrators be selected?
- What are the most important skills you expect a superintendent to possess?
- How does the school board involve itself in the operation of the school district?

Sample Reference Check Questions

Remember, the reference check questions asked should relate both to the candidate's work and the school board's established hiring criteria. Some sample questions to ask references are provided below.

Questions to Ask School Board Members

- How often and under what circumstances did XXX contact you?
- What is XXX's role in building the agenda for the school board meeting?
- What is XXX's role at a school board meeting?
- How does XXX deal with school board members who have different agendas or points of view?
- Has XXX shown the ability to hold employees accountable for results?

Questions to Ask School District Employees

- Does XXX know your name?
- How do representatives of your employee group discuss work-related issues with XXX?
- Does XXX formally or informally recognize employees for good work?
- Can you identify a situation that has caused XXX to terminate the employment of, or to reprimand, an employee? How was it handled?

Questions to Ask Citizens

- What is the community's perception of the quality of education in your school district?
- What is the community's impression of XXX's fiscal responsibility?
- How has XXX developed support from businesses and other stakeholders?
- What is most needed in your school district?

Tips for Conducting Reference Checks

- *Always* check references.
- Do not ask "Don't Ask" questions.
- Avoid asking "yes/no" questions.
- Ask about the candidate's working relationship with other administrators and staff.
- Ask follow-up questions to get specifics. "Can you provide me a specific example?"
- Ask in what areas the candidate could use additional training or experience.
- Ask the critical questions: "Would you rehire the individual? If no, why?"
- Call past employers as well. The current employer may have reasons for wanting the candidate to leave, and this may distort the answers you received.

Deliberating in Public

The most difficult part of the superintendent search typically involves the final step: debating which finalist best meets the school district's needs.

The debate is public. Many school board members struggle to balance meeting the spirit of the Open Meeting Law with the logistics of an open, honest discussion about the candidates' attributes. How can school board members ensure they don't offend any of the candidates? After all, what will happen if the top candidate declines the position and the school board has alienated its second or third choice?

While these concerns are legitimate, the school board must remember that it is analyzing the candidates because the candidates "voluntarily" sought the position. Candidates for a high-profile public position, such as the superintendency, know they will be judged on criteria set by the school board and/or community and that they will be judged against other candidates. As professionals, they willingly put themselves in that position in order to seek out opportunities in other school districts.

However, school board members should not launch into the process until they are prepared. School board members are reminded to treat the candidates fairly and with respect by emphasizing the candidates' positive attributes instead of pointing out negative ones. This approach will call attention to a school board's professionalism. If questions arise, school board members should seek advice from an MSBA search consultant.

If the school board has determined the qualifications it wants and carefully constructs the interview questions, the debate will follow logically. Do not, as individuals, go off on "fact-finding" missions. Do not entertain the demands of one self-interest group while ignoring others. Remember, the school board is trying to find someone to lead the entire school district, and the school board must try to match that individual's skills with the individuals already employed by the school district.

School boards that plan ahead, abide by the law, and treat people with respect seldom have difficulty in finding new leadership for their school districts. By conducting a quality search, school boards will help usher in new leadership and elevate their stature as quality school boards with a quality educational product.

Do:	Don't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on the positive attributes of candidates during public discussion rather than negative ones.• Judge candidates based on the school board's pre-established criteria.• Treat the candidates the way you would want to be treated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go on individual fact-finding missions.• Let a special interest group shape the process.• Alienate any of the finalists.• Discuss the candidates in between interviews – save that discussion until you've completed the interviews for that round.

SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACTARTICLE I
PURPOSE

This Contract is entered into between Independent School District No. _____, _____, Minnesota, hereinafter referred to as the School District, and _____ hereinafter referred to as the Superintendent, a legally qualified and licensed superintendent who agrees to perform the duties of the Superintendent of the School District.

ARTICLE II
APPLICABLE STATUTE

This Contract for Superintendent Services is entered into between the School District and the Superintendent in conformance with and governed by Minnesota Statutes 123B.143.

For Combined Positions: This Contract for [Superintendent/continuing contract position] services between the School District and the [continuing contract position] is in conformance with and governed by Minnesota Statutes 122A.40 and nothing in this Contract waives statutory continuing contract and other statutory rights related to [continuing contract position]. The [continuing contract position] constitutes ____% of the Superintendent's employment position with the District.

NOTE to Article II: The second paragraph governs situations in which the Administrator is serving a combined position as a Superintendent and continuing contract position, such as a principal, and the parties agree that the continuing contract position continues to be governed by Minnesota Statutes 122A.40. The provision will need to be consistent with the current Teacher Master Contract and Principal Master Contract right to return provisions.

ARTICLE III
LICENSE

The Superintendent shall furnish the School Board, throughout the life of this Contract, a valid and appropriate license to act as superintendent in the State of Minnesota as provided by applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

ARTICLE IV
DURATION, EXPIRATION, TERMINATION
DURING THE TERM, MUTUAL CONSENT, AND CONTINGENCY

Section 1. Duration: This Contract is for a term of _____ years commencing on July 1, 20_, and ending on June 30, 20 __ . It shall remain in full force and effect unless modified by mutual consent of the School Board and the Superintendent or unless terminated as provided in this Contract.

NOTE to Article IV, Section 1: Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 123B.143, Subd. 1., a School Board may enter into a Contract with a Superintendent for a period of time no longer than three (3) years. The Contract must provide that the School Board, at its discretion, may or may not enter into a subsequent Contract. Such a Contract may not be extended during its term. However, during the last three hundred sixty-five (365) days of such a Contract, a School Board may negotiate and enter into a subsequent Contract to take effect upon the expiration of the existing Contract. Such subsequent Contract must be contingent upon the Superintendent completing the terms of the existing Contract.

Section 2. Expiration: This Contract shall expire at the end of the term specified in Section 1 above. At the conclusion of its term, neither party shall have any further claim against the other, and the School District's employment of the Superintendent shall cease, unless a subsequent Contract is entered into in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 123B.143, Subd. 1.

NOTE to Article IV, Section 2: See "NOTE to Article IV, Section 1."

Section 3. Termination During the Term: The Superintendent's employment may be terminated during the term of this Contract only for cause as defined in Minnesota Statutes 122A.40, Subd. 9 and Subd. 13, but, except for purposes of describing grounds for discharge, the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 122A.40 shall not be applicable. If the School Board proposes to terminate the Superintendent during the term of this Contract for cause as described in Minnesota Statutes 122A.40, Subd. 9 or Subd. 13, it shall notify the Superintendent in writing of the proposed grounds for termination. The Superintendent shall be entitled to a hearing before an arbitrator provided the Superintendent makes such a request in writing to the School Board Chair within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the written notice of the proposed termination. In such event, the parties shall jointly petition the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) for a list of five (5) arbitrators. The arbitrator shall be selected by the parties through the striking process as provided by BMS rules. The arbitrator shall conduct a hearing under arbitration procedure rules and issue a written decision. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding on the parties, subject to judicial review of arbitration decisions as provided by law. The Superintendent may be suspended with pay pending final determination by the arbitrator. If the Superintendent fails to request a hearing as provided in this section within the fifteen (15)-day calendar period, the Superintendent shall be deemed to have acquiesced to the School Board's proposed action, and the proposed

action shall become final on such date as determined by the School Board, and the Superintendent shall have no further claim or recourse.

Section 4. Notice of Intent: If the Superintendent intends to pursue a subsequent contract, the Superintendent must reasonably notify the School Board in writing of the notice requirement in order for it to be binding and effective. Failure of the School Board to take action authorizing the negotiation of a subsequent Contract in the first six months of the final year of this Contract, will serve as notice to the Superintendent that the School Board will not enter into a subsequent Contract.

Section 5. Subsequent Contract: If the School Board takes action authorizing the negotiation of a subsequent Contract, the parties will act in good faith to complete negotiations and enter the subsequent Contract within 90 calendar days prior to the end of this Contract. This written School Board action authorizing subsequent Contract negotiations must include a provision that, in the event that negotiations for a subsequent Contract have not been completed by the end of this Contract's term, the parties agree to enter into a subsequent Contract for the term set forth in the School Board's action and that the new subsequent Contract's compensation and benefits level in the last year of this Contract is the same as in the current Contract pending final negotiations of compensation and benefit terms for the new Contract.

NOTE to Article IV, Section 5: This addresses situations in which the Superintendent's employment Contract passed June 30th while negotiations continue. This acknowledgment includes a provision consistent with Minnesota Statutes 123B.143 by which continued negotiations after June 30th of the last year of a Contract result in a subsequent Contract for the term set forth in the Resolution and at the Superintendent's current salary and benefits, pending final negotiation of terms. This is not an extension of the current Contract by School Board action or inaction as prohibited by Minnesota Statutes 123B.143. This will be reflected in the adopting action for the current Contract.

Notice to start Contract negotiations can be by default, i.e., the School Board not acting to start negotiations within a set period (as drafted above) or by affirmative notice such as a notice of intent not to renew. But reasonable notice to start or not start Contract negotiations, whether by default or affirmative action, should be given and the six-month period suggested above for such notice fits within the standard hiring cycle.

Section 6. Mutual Consent: This Contract may be terminated at any time by mutual consent of the School Board and the Superintendent.

Section 7. Contingency: If this Contract is a subsequent Contract entered into prior to the completion of an existing Contract, this subsequent Contract is contingent upon the Superintendent completing the terms of the existing Contract.

ARTICLE V DUTIES

The Superintendent shall have charge of the administration of the schools under the direction of the School Board. The Superintendent shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the School District; shall direct and assign teachers and other School District employees under the Superintendent's supervision; shall organize, reorganize, and arrange the administrative and supervisory staff, including instruction and business affairs, as best serves the School District subject to the approval of the School Board; shall select all personnel subject to the approval of the School Board; shall, from time to time, suggest policies, regulations, rules, and procedures deemed necessary for the School District; and, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of the Superintendent and such other duties as may be prescribed by the School Board from time to time. The Superintendent shall abide by the policies, regulations, rules, and procedures established by the School Board and the State of Minnesota. The Superintendent shall have the right to attend all School Board meetings and all School Board and citizen committee meetings, serve as an ex-officio member of the School Board and all School Board committees, and provide administrative recommendations on each item of business considered by each of these groups.

NOTE to Article V: School districts should consult TRA to determine if a proposed administrative leave will be eligible for TRA service credit.

ARTICLE VI DUTY YEAR AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Section 1. Basic Work Year: The Superintendent's duty year shall be for the entire twelve (12)-month Contract year, and the Superintendent shall perform duties on those legal holidays on which the School Board is authorized to conduct school if the School Board so determines. The Superintendent shall be on duty during any emergency, natural or unnatural, unless otherwise excused in accordance with School Board administrative policy.

Section 2. Vacation: The Superintendent shall earn ____ working days of annual paid vacation each Contract year. Unused vacation must be taken within six (6) months after the end of the Contract year in which it is earned. [or other greater accumulation provision such as "vacation leave may accumulate to a maximum of ___ days during the course of this Contract."]. Upon voluntary termination of employment or expiration of the Contract, if not offered a subsequent Contract, the Superintendent shall be entitled to payment for any unused vacation days earned and accrued pursuant to the provisions of this section; however, if the Superintendent is involuntarily terminated, the Superintendent shall not be entitled to unused earned and accrued vacation days.

Section 3. Holidays: The Superintendent shall be entitled to ___ paid holidays as designated by the School Board each Contract year.

NOTE to Article VI, Section 3: The specific holidays should be listed.

Section 4. Sick Leave: Sick leave will not be earned during the term of this contract. Any unused sick leave accumulation earned prior to January 1, 2024, will be available for the Superintendent to use in conformance with Minnesota Statutes 181.9445 – 181.9448. Any unused sick leave accumulation earned after January 1, 2024, as provided for in a previous contract, will be added to the ESST accumulation, subject to the maximum accumulation, defined in Article VI, Section 5. Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST). Upon voluntary termination of employment or expiration of the Contract, if not offered a subsequent Contract, the Superintendent shall be entitled to payment for any unused sick leave days earned and accrued prior to January 1, 2024; however, if the Superintendent is involuntarily terminated, the Superintendent shall not be entitled to unused sick leave days earned and accrued prior to January 1, 2024.

NOTE to Article VI, Section 4, Subd. 1.: The following optional language can be used if the school district wishes to use past documentation and notice requirements for sick leave accrued prior to January 1, 2024.

Subd. 1. Documentation and Notice: Documentation and notice requirements as defined in the School District's Employment Policies as of December 31, 2023, are applicable to usage of the pre-January 1, 2024, earned sick leave so long as the Policies are compliant under Minn. Stat. 181.9447.

Section 5. Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST): Earning, accumulation, usage, documentation, and notification will be in conformance with Minnesota Statutes 181.9445 – 181.9448. The Superintendent shall earn ESST at the rate of ___ day(s) each working month and earned ESST may accumulate to a maximum of ___ days.

NOTE to Article VI, Sections 4 and 5: These sections must be modified to reflect the current implementation of Sick Leave/ESST within the School District. For example: the School District may have implemented Paid Time Off (PTO) to address sick leave and all other leaves, or the School District may have converted all sick leave to ESST. The School District's policy may also front load all leave versus accrue it on a defined period basis. When determining accumulation amounts, the parties should consider the forthcoming implementation of Minnesota's Paid Leave Law. This mandated leave will protect employees' compensation during extended health absences from work and removes the need for large negotiated sick leave/ESST accumulated balances.

Section 6. Workers' Compensation: Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 176, the Superintendent injured on the job in the service of the School District and collecting workers' compensation insurance may draw accrued leave and receive full salary from the School District, the salary to be reduced by an amount equal to the insurance payments, and only that fraction of the days not covered by insurance will be deducted from accrued leave.

Section 7. Bereavement Leave and Grieving Time:

Subd. 1. Bereavement Leave: ESST can be used for bereavement leave to make arrangements for or attend funeral services or a memorial, or address financial or legal matters that arise after the death of a family member. For the purposes of bereavement leave, "family member" is defined in Minnesota Statute, section 181.9445, subdivision 7.

Subd. 2. Grieving Time: The Superintendent shall be granted grieving leave following the death in the Superintendent's immediate family. "Immediate family" is defined as the Superintendent's child, adult child, spouse or registered domestic partner, sibling, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, and all similar relationships that are preceded with "step" or "foster." The amount of time shall be determined after conferring with the School Board Chairperson.

NOTE to Article VI, Section 7: Time to make arrangements for or attend funeral services or a memorial, or address financial or legal matters that arise after the death of a family member are now included as an acceptable use of ESST by the 2024 legislature and codified in Minnesota Statute 181.9447. Separate grieving time is not included as an acceptable use of ESST and this bereavement section is intended to address that.

Section 8. Emergency Leave: The Superintendent may be granted paid emergency leave at the discretion of the School Board.

Section 9. Jury Service: The Superintendent who serves on jury duty shall be granted the day or days necessary as stipulated by the court to discharge this responsibility without any salary deduction or loss of basic leave allowance. The compensation received for jury duty service shall be remitted to the School District.

Section 10. Military Leave: Military leave shall be granted pursuant to applicable law.

Section 11. Disability: If the Superintendent is unable to perform their regular duties because of personal illness or disability and has exhausted all accumulated leave, the School Board shall provide additional paid leave at a salary equal to ___ percent of the

Superintendent's regular salary until the expiration of the waiting period for long-term disability insurance.

Section 12. Medical Leave: The Superintendent may be placed on a leave of absence for health reasons pursuant to the procedures outlined in Minnesota Statutes 122A.40, Subd. 12.

Section 13. Minnesota Paid Leave:

Subd. 1. Use: Effective January 1, 2026, Minnesota Paid Leave will provide partial wage replacement, job protection, benefit continuation, non-interference, non-retaliation to eligible Superintendents, as prescribed in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 268B.

Subd 2. Request: When this program is implemented, Superintendents shall follow the process prescribed by the State of Minnesota to request leave.

Subd. 3. Premiums: The School District shall deduct _____ percent (___%) of the Superintendent's MN Paid Leave premium from wages and shall submit the wage deductions to the State of Minnesota as required by law.

Subd. 4. Supplemental Benefits: Superintendents may opt to use available leave to supplement the partial wage replacement benefits received from the Minnesota Paid Leave program so long as: (1) District policy permits District employees to do so; and (2) such policy is in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 268B.06. Total compensation received may not exceed the employee's regular wages.

Section 14. Insurance Application: A Superintendent on unpaid leave is eligible to continue to participate in group insurance programs if permitted under the insurance policy provisions. If the leave is not covered under the Minnesota Paid Leave law, the Superintendent shall pay the entire premium for such insurance commencing with the beginning of the leave and shall pay to the School District the monthly premium in advance. In the event the Superintendent is on paid leave from the School District, the School District will continue insurance contributions as provided in this Contract until paid leave is exhausted. Thereafter, the Superintendent must pay the entire premium for any insurance retained.

NOTE to Article VI, Section 13, Subd. 3: If the School Board decides to deduct a portion of the MN Paid Leave premium each pay period, the School Board should add the applicable percentage of premium deducted to Subdivision 3. Minnesota law allows employers to deduct up to fifty percent (50%) of the premium from employees' taxable wages. If no portion of the premium is deducted, Subdivision 3 can be removed.

ARTICLE VII
INSURANCE

Section 1. Health and Hospitalization and Dental Insurance: The School District shall provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with health and hospitalization and dental insurance coverage under the School District's group health and hospitalization and dental insurance plans at the expense of the School District.

[or]

The School District shall provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with health and hospitalization insurance coverage under the School District's group health and hospitalization insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the sum of \$__per month toward the premium for such insurance. The balance of the premium shall be paid by the Superintendent through payroll deduction. The School District shall also provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with dental insurance coverage under the School District's group dental insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the sum of \$___ per month toward the premium for such insurance. The balance of the premium shall be paid by the Superintendent through payroll deduction.

NOTE to Article VII, Section 1: In the event this Contract will cause or does cause penalties, fees, or fines to be assessed against the School District, the parties agree to reopen negotiations that result in a revised Contract between the parties that eliminates or reduces penalties, fees, or fines to be assessed against the School District. The amount of any reduction in the School District's contribution toward the Superintendent's healthcare benefits as a result of addressing the "highly compensated employee" component of the ACA will be placed into another School District provided benefit) (i. e., a retirement HRA, salary, etc.) as agreed upon between the parties.

Section 2. Life Insurance: The School District shall provide, at its own expense, term life insurance for the Superintendent under the School District's group term life insurance plan in the amount of \$__payable to the Superintendent's named beneficiary(ies).

NOTE to Article VII, Section 2: According to the Internal Revenue Service rules, the amount of School District premium contribution that pays for life insurance coverage in excess of \$50,000 is considered taxable income, so the School District should be certain that it is reporting that contribution as such, and the Superintendent needs to know why that amount is being reported.

Section 3. Long-Term Disability Insurance: The School District shall provide, at its own expense, long-term disability insurance for the Superintendent under the School District's group long-term disability insurance plan.

Section 4. Eligibility: The eligibility of the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependent(s) and beneficiary(ies) for insurance benefits shall be governed by the terms of the insurance policies purchased by the School District pursuant to this article.

Section 5. Claims Against the School District: The School District's only obligation is to purchase the insurance policies described in this article, and no claim shall be made against the School District as a result of denial of insurance benefits by an insurer if the School District has purchased the policies and paid the premiums described in this article.

ARTICLE VIII OTHER BENEFITS

Section 1. Tax-Sheltered Annuities: The Superintendent is eligible to participate in a tax-sheltered annuity plan through payroll deduction established pursuant to Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, Minnesota Statutes 123B.02, Subd. 15., School District policy, and as otherwise provided by law.

Section 2. Vehicle: The School District shall compensate the Superintendent for business use of the Superintendent's private vehicle at the rate of ___ cents per mile pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 471.665, Subd. 1 as allowed by Internal Revenue Service guidelines.

[or]

The School District shall provide the Superintendent with a monthly allowance of \$___ for business use of the Superintendent's private vehicle pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 471.665, Subd. 3 as allowed by Internal Revenue Service guidelines.

NOTE to Article VIII: Prohibition Against Combination of Options. One of the two options above should be selected, and the other option deleted. Some School Districts have been utilizing a combination of Minnesota Statutes 471.665, Subd. 1 and Subd. 3 — i.e., in-district travel and out-of-district travel. However, an opinion by the Minnesota Attorney General indicates that using the combination is improper (see Op. Atty. Gen. 11/20/95).

NOTE 2 to Article VIII: Prohibition Against Personal Use of School District Vehicle. Two opinions by the Minnesota Attorney General conclude that a School District may not provide a school district-owned vehicle which the Superintendent utilizes for personal use even if the Superintendent pays for such personal use (see Op. Atty. Gen. 161b-12 1/24/89 and Op. Atty. Gen. 395b- 10/24/89).

NOTE 3 to Article VIII: Statutory Restrictions on Personal Use of District-Owned Vehicles. Minnesota Statutes 471.666 prohibits personal use of a vehicle owned, leased by, or loaned to a School District, except for incidental use related to School District business. Such a vehicle may not be used for transportation to or from the residence of the School District employee except for narrow, incidental use related to the School District's business. The effect of this restriction is so limiting that a School District's provision of District-owned, leased, or loaned vehicles for any personal use by the Superintendent is impractical (see Minnesota Statutes 471.666).

Section 3. Conferences and Meetings: The School District shall pay all legally valid expenses and fees for the Superintendent's attendance at professional conferences and meetings with other educational agencies when such attendance is required, directed, or permitted by the School Board. The Superintendent shall periodically report to the School Board relative to all meetings and conferences attended. The Superintendent shall file itemized expense statements to be processed and approved as provided by School Board policy and law.

ARTICLE IX SALARY

The Superintendent shall be paid an annual salary of \$___ for the 20__-20__ Contract year, \$___ for the 20__ - 20__ Contract year, and \$___ for the 20__-20__ Contract year. During the term of this Contract, the annual salary may be modified but shall not be reduced. The annual salary shall be paid in _____ equal installments during the Contract year.

[or]

The Superintendent shall be paid an annual salary of \$___ for the 20__ - 20__ Contract year. The parties shall endeavor to agree by April 1 of each subsequent year as to the amount of the salary for the following year. During the term of this Contract, the annual salary may be modified but shall not be reduced. The annual salary shall be paid in _____ installments during the Contract year.

NOTE to Article IX: Options. School Boards should use only one of the paragraphs above. The first paragraph fixes a salary for more than one year, while the second paragraph fixes the salary for one year and requires mutual agreement for the subsequent year(s). Practices vary from School District to School District.

ARTICLE X EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

The School Board and Superintendent shall mutually agree to an annual evaluation process consistent with the Minnesota Data Practices Act that includes, at a minimum, the

following components: the establishment of goals and priorities, and selection of an evaluation tool which includes: timelines, responsibilities and steps. The content within the process of establishing goals and priorities is a School Board responsibility with consultation of the Superintendent on an annual basis.

ARTICLE XI OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 1. Outside Activities: While the Superintendent shall devote full time and due diligence to the affairs and the activities of the School District, the Superintendent may also serve as a consultant to other school districts or educational agencies, lecture, engage in writing and speaking activities, and engage in other activities if, as solely determined by the School Board, such activities do not impede the Superintendent's ability to perform the duties of the superintendency. However, the Superintendent may not engage in other employment, consultant service, or other activity for which a salary, fee, or honorarium is paid without the prior approval of the School Board.

Section 2. Indemnification and Provision of Counsel: In the event that an action is brought or a claim is made against the Superintendent arising out of or in connection with their employment and the Superintendent is acting within the scope of employment or official duties, the School District shall defend and indemnify the Superintendent to the extent provided by law. Indemnification, as provided in this section, shall not apply in the case of malfeasance in office or willful or wanton neglect of duty, and the obligation of the School District in this regard shall be subject to the limitations as provided in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 466. This indemnification and defense obligation extends to all costs and fees incurred by the Superintendent in any internal investigation of a claim against the Superintendent that does not result or would not have resulted in substantial disciplinary action against the Superintendent (defined as sufficient to create public data under the final disposition of a disciplinary action provisions of Minnesota Statutes 13.43, Subd. 2). Payment of legal fees includes when the Superintendent incurs individual legal costs in serving as a witness in a claim against the School District. Nothing herein affects the Superintendent's right to legal counsel of the Superintendent's choice. Nothing herein affects the parties' right to negotiate payment of legal fees as part of a separation agreement.

Section 3. Dues: The Superintendent is encouraged to belong to and participate in appropriate professional, educational, economic development, community, and civic organizations when such membership will serve the best interests of the School District. Accordingly, the School District will pay the membership dues for such organizations as are required, directed, or permitted by the School Board. The Superintendent shall present appropriate statements for approval as provided by law.

NOTE to Article XI, Section 3: Until 2007, school districts were restricted to paying dues for their superintendents to belong to professional and educational organizations, but the 2007 Minnesota Legislature enacted Minnesota Statutes 123B.02, Subd. 24, allowing school districts to pay dues for other organizations if their school boards deemed such membership to be appropriate.

Section 4. [Other Applicable Provisions: In this section, other terms and conditions of employment as agreed on between the parties should be included. Items such as severance pay, payment for unused leaves, and extended leaves of absence, if provided to the Superintendent, are examples of what could be included. Since superintendents' contracts vary greatly in the manner in which they address such provisions, no attempt has been made to develop specific model Contract language. However, if the parties are considering the inclusion of such provisions, both MSBA and MASA may be able to provide sample language upon request.]

NOTE to Article XI, Section 4: A "highly compensated employee" is an employee with estimated annual wages that are greater than sixty percent (60%) of the governor's salary and are equal to, or greater than, eighty percent (80%) of the estimated annual wages of the second highest paid employee of the School District. Severance pay for highly compensated employees is restricted to an amount equivalent to six (6) months of wages. For purposes of this restriction, payments for accumulated designated types of leave liquidated to cover the cost of group term insurance may be paid in addition to the six (6) months of severance pay. For exceptions to the six (6)-month restriction, see Minnesota Statutes 465.722, Subd. 3.

ARTICLE XII
SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this Contract shall be severable, and if any such provision or the application of any such provision under any circumstances is held invalid, it shall not affect any other provisions of this Contract or the application of any provision thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
subscribed my signature this ____ day of
_____, 20__.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed
my signature this ____ day of _____,
20__.

Superintendent

School Board Chair

School Board Clerk

Northfield Public Schools – Superintendent Search Round 1 Interview Schedule

1. Call meeting to order
2. Approve agenda
3. Interview semi-finalists for superintendent position
4. Select finalists for Round 2 interviews
5. Review Round 2 interview questions and schedule
6. Adjourn

Note: The below order is subject to change.

Friday, April 24, 2026

4:00 pm	Call School Board meeting to order
4:05 pm *	CANDIDATE 1
5:15 pm *	CANDIDATE 2
6:30 pm *	CANDIDATE 3
7:30 pm *	Recess meeting until Saturday, April 25, at 3:00 pm

Saturday, April 25, 2026

3:00 pm *	Reconvene School Board meeting
3:05 pm *	CANDIDATE 4
4:15 pm *	CANDIDATE 5
5:30 pm *	CANDIDATE 6
6:30 pm *	Break
7:00 pm *	School Board deliberates and decides on Round 2 finalists, questions, schedule, and reference checks

**Times are approximate.*

All interviews will be held at _____ and are open to the public. To ensure a level playing field for all candidates the interviews will not be livestreamed.

