

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent
Memorandum

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Matthew Hillmann, Ed.D., Superintendent
RE: Table File Items for the April 13, 2026, Regular School Board Meeting

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

c. Financial Forecast Follow Up.

i. Potential Budget Restorations. Superintendent Hillmann and Director of Finance Mertesdorf will facilitate a discussion about the proposed budget restorations and administrative restructuring for the 2026-27 school year, presented at the April 6 special board meeting. A second option for the special services administrative restructuring is attached. This proposal will be an item for individual action at the April 27, 2026 regular board meeting.

g. Later School Start Times Discussion. The board will review the later school start times discussion timeline and evaluate next steps based on competing board priorities. An updated timeline is attached.

6. Consent Agenda

f. Personnel Items.

i. Appointments

35. Jade Olson, Special Education EA/PCA for 6.75 hours/day and General Education EA for .25 hours/day at the NCEC/Greenvale Park beginning 4/17/2026-6/10/2026. General Education - Step 4, \$21.44/hr. Special Education - Step 4, \$23.51/hr.

ii. Increase/Decrease/Changes in Assignment

29. Natalie Amy, Middle School Fitness Center Coach (3/5 stipend), change to Middle School Fitness Center Coach (2/5 stipend) effective 4/13/2026.

30. Rachael Langer, 1.0 FTE Long-Term Substitute Grade 7 Math Teacher at the Middle School, change to 1.0 FTE Grade 7 Math Teacher effective 8/27/2026.

31. Sarah Wolfe, ECFE EA for 13 hours/week at the NCEC, change to 16.75 hours/week effective 4/10/2026-5/15/2026.

iii. Leave of Absences

8. Rebecca Glassing, K-12 Media Specialist for the District, FMLA leave of absence beginning 4/17/2026 and continuing through 5/29/2026.

iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations

10. Steven Kovach, Educational Assistant at the High School, resignation effective 6/10/2026.

11. Ellen Mucha, Teacher at the High School, retirement effective 6/10/2026.

12. Darrell Sawyer, Assistant Girls Basketball Coach, resignation effective 4/10/2026.

13. Ann Schmidt, Child Nutrition Associate II/III at the High School, resignation effective 5/1/2026.

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

Special Services Administrative Restructuring Proposal - Option 2

TO: Dr. Matt Hillmann, Superintendent

FROM: Caleb Davidson, Special Services Department

DATE: April 13, 2026

Background: With the transition in district leadership, the Special Services Department is taking this opportunity to evaluate and restructure its administrative framework. After receiving significant feedback from stakeholders, this is an additional proposal for the school board to consider as an alternative option to the initial proposal shared at the April 6th board meeting.

- -1.0 FTE Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Coordinator (reduction)
- -0.4 FTE School Psychologist (reduction via purchased services agreement with a neighboring district) - Northfield would still employ 6.0 FTE School Psychologists
- Reduce extra duty days (7 days) for the Instruction & Inclusion Coach, placing them on a flex calendar
- Reduce Special Services administrative PD funds for the 2026-2027 school year by 50% (-\$3,000)
- +1.0 FTE Assistant Director of Special Services (addition)
 - Revised/reduced salary aligned with current market data, and a revised scope of work
 - The current vacant Assistant Director position will also align with the revised/reduced salary

Rationale for Restructuring

- **Growing enrollment in special education** has increased the need for dedicated administrative oversight. In 2020, our total child count was 675 students; in the fall of 2025, our special education child count was 771 students. An additional Assistant Director position would provide more consistent, district-wide leadership than the current Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator structure allows.
- **Cost efficiency:** While offering slightly fewer savings than Option A, Option B preserves greater school psychology capacity while still meaningfully reducing overall expenditures, allowing funds to be reallocated to teacher PD and to retain some Educational Assistant FTE that were added back this school year after previous budget reductions.
- **Declining early childhood enrollment** has reduced the operational justification for a full-time ECSE Coordinator. District early childhood enrollment has fallen, reflecting regional birth rate trends. Preschool at the NCEC had a peak enrollment of 75 special education students in the 2022-2023 school year, compared to the projected enrollment of 30 students for the 2026-2027 school year. An Assistant Director of Special Services would absorb ECSE oversight responsibilities alongside broader departmental duties, maintaining program support without a dedicated coordinator.

- **Preserving school psychology capacity** is a key distinction of Option B. Rather than eliminating a full psychologist position, the district retains 1.0 FTE while recovering costs through a purchased services agreement with a neighboring district. This approach reduces financial exposure while protecting evaluation timelines and student support capacity.
- **Increased legal complexity** of IEP meetings has created greater demand for a licensed administrator to serve as an administrative designee. The additional Assistant Director position would be able to take on a portion of administrative designee responsibilities, allowing school psychologists to focus on evaluations and student supports.

Current Model Cost: \$417,504	Proposal #1	Proposal #2
1.0 FTE School Psychologist	-	\$94,112
Realigned Assistant Director of Special Services	\$172,663	\$172,663
Eliminate ECSE Coordinator, elevate to Assistant Director	\$172,663	\$172,663
Add 25 days for Psychologists	\$13,717	-
Sell 0.4 FTE Psychologist (Purchased services agreement with a neighboring district)	-	\$38,071 savings
Remove extra duty days for the Instruction and Inclusion Coach (7)	-	\$3,567 savings
Reduce Special Services Administrative PD funds by 50%	-	\$3,000 savings
Savings to be reallocated to teacher PD and Educational Assistant FTE	\$58,461	\$22,704

Later middle and high school start time board discussion | 2025-26

Updated 04.13.2026

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to outline a plan for the Northfield School District Board of Education to discuss a potential later start time to the school day for middle and high school students. This conceptual document assumes the change would begin during the 2028-29 school year.

Step	Target Date	Notes
Work session	Dec. 15, 2025	The board will discuss the reasons for considering a later start time for the middle and high school academic day. They will identify the necessary data and outline the decision-making process. Professor Kyla Wahlstrom from the University of Minnesota will attend to share research on later school start times.
Work session	Jan. 29, 2026	The board will evaluate relevant data, possible schedule options, and costs associated with changing start times.
Regular board meeting: update and discussion	April 27, 2026	The board will discuss relevant data, possible schedule options, and costs associated with changing start times.
Regular board meeting: proposal, discussion, and debate	May 11, 2026	If the board has determined to move ahead, the superintendent will present a recommendation at a regular board meeting.
Community meeting: public input	May 14, 2026	This step will give community members an opportunity to learn more at an early stage, much like the meeting that took place before the board decided to proceed with the Reimagine Northfield High School referendum. The meeting will feature a presentation, breakout groups, and a chance for public comments.
Regular board meeting: discussion and debate	May 26, 2026	The board will discuss the recommendation at another regular board meeting.
Regular board meeting: decision	June 8, 2026	The board will be asked to act on the recommendation at a regular board meeting.