

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 27, 2026 Regular School Board Meeting

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- b. Later School Start Times Discussion. Superintendent Hillmann will facilitate a discussion about later school start times. An updated discussion document is attached.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes. Minutes of the special school board meeting held on April 24 and April 25, 2026.
- c. District Youth Council Members (DYC) 2026-27. A revision was made to the list of DYC members for 2026-27. The following students are being recommended to serve on DYC during the 2026-27 school year:
Rising Seniors: Max Beckman*, Mae Bowers*, Leo Hernandez, Genevieve Knutson*, Greta Korteum, Jack Peterson*
Rising Juniors: Cecelia Chapp, Hoang Doan, Glendi Gonzalez Orrego*, Kristen Hafemeyer*, Oliver Heiman, Hailey Kramer, Theo Miller*, Makayah Petricka*, Sidney Reich, Luz Santos Ruiz*, Leo Watts, Luken Weitz
*Denotes a current DYC member.
- e. Personnel Items.
 - i. Appointments
 - 3. Kristen Saxhaug, 1.0 FTE English/Language Arts Teacher at the High School beginning 8/27/2026. MA, Step 6.
 - 4. Jennifer Shea, 1.0 FTE Band Teacher at the Middle School beginning 8/27/2026. MA, Step 6.
 - ii. Increase/Decrease/Changes in Assignment
 - 44. Hudson Ades, 1.0 FTE Long-Term Substitute Grade 8 Science Teacher at the Middle School, change to ongoing Grade 8 Science Teacher effective 8/27/2026.
 - 45. Becki Haar, 1.0 FTE Teacher at Spring Creek, voluntary reduction in contract time to .80 FTE, effective 8/27/2026.
 - 46. Melanie Klein, Special Education Teacher at Spring Creek, add Homebound Instruction for up to 10 hrs/week as needed effective 7/1/2025-6/30/2026. Lane/step.
 - 47. Michelle Murphy, CNA II for 5.5 hrs/day at the High School, change to 7.25 hrs/day effective 5/4/2026.
 - 48. Aidan Wallig, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation, add Lifeguard effective 4/25/2026-5/31/2026. Step 2, \$15.29/hr.
 - iii. Leave of Absences
 - 3. Naomi Golden, Teacher at the High School, unpaid leave of absence for the 2026-27 school year.
 - iv. Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
 - 6. Brent Dunkelberger, Teacher at the Middle School, resignation effective 6/10/2026.

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

8. Items for Information

- b. Superintendent Search Update. Board Clerk Maggie Epstein will give an update on the superintendent search. The update is attached.

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

Updated 04.27.2026

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 discussed the reasons for considering a later start time for the middle and high school academic day. They identified the necessary data and outlined the decision-making process. Professor Kyla Wahlstrom from the University of Minnesota attended remotely to share research on later school start times.
Work session	Jan. 29, 2026	The board discussed 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	The board will discuss relevant data, possible schedule options, and costs associated with changing start times.
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 feedback from the public meeting and continue deliberating about moving forward with a change beginning in 2028-29.
Regular board meeting: decision	June 8, 2026	The board will be asked to take action to provide direction to administration at this board meeting.

Later middle and high school start time board discussion | April 22, 2026

Updated April 27, 2026, with additional costs for afternoon busing and NCEC transportation costs in the “Start elementary schools earlier than middle and high schools” section

Why are we discussing this change?

There is significant research indicating that starting the school day at 8:30 a.m. or later has numerous benefits for high school students. These benefits include improved academic achievement, mental health, and physical health. University of Minnesota professor Kyla Wahlstrom presented the research to the board at a work session in December 2025.

If the board approves a change, when would it start?

Any changes to the daily schedule would not be implemented until at least the 2028-29 school year, providing a long runway for operational changes and family adaptation.

Benjamin Bus Update

Transportation is one of the largest adjustments with this potential change. We are having Benjamin Bus identify two potential pathways for moving middle and high school start times to at least 8:30 a.m.

Move all start times back by 40 minutes

- Gets start times to at least 8:30 a.m. for both middle and high schools.
- Neutral cost impact.
- Simplest from an operational perspective.
- Elementary and NCEC dismissal times will be at 4:00 p.m. or later (if we maintain the current school day length).

Start elementary schools earlier than middle and high schools

- The current modeling (preliminary) would have elementary schools begin at approximately 8:15 a.m., high school at 8:30 a.m., and middle school at 8:37 a.m.
- The morning routes would need limited adjustments. However, afternoon routes would be more complex.
- One after school bus routing model would only add one bus (approximate cost \$43,000 based on current costs). However, this model could have some elementary students on the bus for 90 minutes. There also could be some gaps between times when students are dismissed and the time the buses depart school, creating a supervision need.
- To keep bus rides at approximately 60 minutes, the district would need to add up to 11 additional buses in the afternoon (approximate cost \$537,500 based on current costs).
- NCEC start and dismissal times would be significantly later than usual based on the current transportation model. Separating the NCEC transportation model could be **very** expensive (Benjamin Bus estimates around \$700,000)

Maintain the current model

- Maintaining the current model is also an option for consideration.

Board Questions

- Are the benefits for students worth the increase in transportation costs, given that they would likely be offset by staff reductions?
- If you move forward, what guardrails would you provide administration about operationalizing the decision?

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Minutes

April 24, 2026, and April 25, 2026
District Office Board Room

1. Call to Order

School Board Chair Claudia Gonzalez-George called the special meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 659 to order at 4:00 p.m. Present: Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Miller, Nelson, and Quinnell. Absent: None. This meeting was open to the public.

2. Agenda Approval

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

3. Items for Discussion and Report

- a. Interview semifinalists for superintendent position. The board interviewed the six semifinalists for the district's superintendent position. Three candidates were interviewed on Friday, April 24, 2026, starting at 4:00 p.m.

On a motion by Gonzalez-George, seconded by Butler, the board unanimously approved to recess the meeting at 7:41 p.m. on Friday, April 24, 2026. The meeting reconvened on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. Three candidates were interviewed on Saturday, April 25, 2026.

On a motion by Gonzalez-George, seconded by Butler, the board approved to recess the meeting from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.

4. Items for Individual Action

- a. Select finalists for round two interviews. On a motion by Gonzalez-George, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously approved to extend second round interviews for the position of superintendent to Tim Anderson and Cory McIntyre.
- b. Review round two interview questions and schedule. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously approved instructing Amy Jordan, associate director of leadership development and executive search with MSBA, to finalize the interview questions chosen for round two and the round two interview schedule.

5. Future Meetings

- a. Monday, April 27, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- b. Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Special Board Meeting, superintendent final round interviews, Northfield DO Boardroom
- c. Monday, May 4, 2026, 5:15 p.m., Special Board Meeting, approve superintendent's contract, Northfield DO Boardroom
- d. Monday, May 11, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- e. Thursday, May 14, 2026, 5:30 p.m., Public Input Meeting, Later School Start Times, Northfield DO Gymnasium
- f. *Tuesday, May 26, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
*Note that Monday, May 25, 2026 is Memorial Day

6. Adjournment

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the board approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Maggie Epstein
School Board Clerk

Superintended Search Update #3

First-round interviews were completed this past weekend. On Friday, April 24, the board interviewed three candidates during a special meeting that began at 4:00 p.m., then recessed. The meeting resumed at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 25, when the remaining three candidates were interviewed.

Following the interviews, Amy Jordan from MSBA tabulated board members' responses to each question and provided a summary chart to support deliberations. Board members discussed the strengths of each candidate and shared which candidates they were leaning toward advancing. After discussion, the board unanimously selected two finalists: Tim Anderson and Cory McIntyre.

The board then identified questions for the final interviews and approved a request for MSBA to conduct deep background checks on both finalists.

Board members Amy Goerwitz and Maggie Epstein are currently conducting reference calls with individuals who have worked with the candidates, including board members, employees, colleagues, and community members. A summary of this feedback will be shared on Wednesday.

Final interviews will take place at a special meeting on Wednesday, April 29, beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the District Office Boardroom. These interviews are open to the public. In addition, a group of 15 stakeholders has been identified to provide feedback in order to capture a broad range of perspectives.