

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 659
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants/Speech Language Assistant

JULY 1, 2026 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2028

Approved by the School Board June 8, 2026

ARTICLE I
EMPLOYMENT

Section 1.01 – Introduction

These Personnel Policies and Practices contain information pertaining to your employment with Independent School District No. 659, Northfield (“District”). Please note that the information contained in this document may be changed from time to time. Nothing in this document establishes any form of a contract between you and the District, nor does anything in this document alter your at-will employment relationship with the District. In the same sense that you can resign your employment with the District at any time for any reason or no reason at all, so can the District terminate your employment at any time for any reason or no reason at all, consistent with the concept of at-will employment. When changes occur to the information contained in this document, the revisions will be issued to you. The statements contained in this Section 1.01 are subject to the requirements of any applicable law, such as the Veterans’ Preference Act, granting the employee employment rights.

Section 1.02 – Basic Services

Employees shall faithfully perform the services prescribed by the School Board or designated representative whether or not such services are specifically described in this manual or in a general job description, abide by the rules, regulations and policies as established by the School Board and the State Board of Education, and any additions or amendments thereto, for the annual salary indicated in this contract.

Section 1.03 - Duty Year

The duty year shall be as listed in Appendices A and B. The employee shall perform services on those legal holidays on which the School Board so determines.

ARTICLE II
SALARIES

Section 2.01 - Compensation

The annual salary of positions covered by these policies shall be based upon the salary schedule set forth in Appendices A and B.

While the District reserves the right to set salaries, it may seek and receive input from employees and their supervisor regarding the salary structure. The input may be in the form of written or oral communication.

Section 2.02 – Experience Credit

Individuals employed before January 1st, who are still employed by the District on June 30th, shall for the purposes of salary increases be given credit for (1) year of experience.

ARTICLE III
LEAVES

Section 3.01 - Sick Leave

An employee must work a regular schedule of 20 or more hours per week in order to be eligible for sick leave.

Employees shall receive sick leave at the rates listed below to a maximum accumulation of 228 days:

Employees working a duty year of less than 50 weeks	10 days/year
Employees working a duty year of 50 weeks or more	12 days/year

Sick leave shall be available to the employee at the beginning of the year (July 1st), however, sick leave is considered earned on a monthly basis.

One day of leave allowance may be used by an employee for each day of absence due to illness or injury which precludes the employee from performing the duties of ~~his/her~~ their position. Sick leave with pay shall be allowed whenever an employee's absence is due to illness or injury of the employee or the employee's dependent child, or another individual as allowed by Minnesota Law which prevented the employee's attendance at work on that day or days.

Any employee who has been absent may be required to present a statement from a doctor of medicine verifying an illness and certifying that the employee has recovered sufficiently to return to normal duties. Any employee absent more than five (5) consecutive working days must present such certification.

An employee receiving compensation under the Worker's Compensation Act may elect to use accumulated leave allowance to make up the difference between the worker's compensation payments and the employee's regular basic salary. Deductions from leave allowance will be made on a prorated basis according to the additional payments to the employee. In no event shall the additional compensation paid to the employee result in the payment of total daily, weekly or monthly compensation in excess of such employee's basic salary.

There shall be no payment for unused, earned sick leave balances upon termination or separation of employment, for any reason, with the School District.

The sick leave provided under this Agreement is intended to satisfy the requirements for Earned Sick and Safe Time ("ESST"). Accordingly, the sick leave provided under this Agreement runs concurrently with ESST and is not in addition to ESST.

Section 3.02 – Disaster Leave

The Employer will provide paid disaster leave for employees who have exhausted accumulated sick leave days prior to the commencement of long-term disability insurance benefits. An employee will become eligible for paid disaster leave after the employee has been continuously disabled and unable to work for fifteen (15) consecutive duty days, as certified by a medical doctor. Disaster leave payments shall commence as of the duty day following the last day of sick leave payment, and shall continue only for the period during which the employee remains continuously disabled and unable to work.

Disaster leave payments shall cease in any event after the fortieth (40th) duty day of absence.

Section 3.03 – Bereavement Leave

Employees may be allowed up to ten (10) days per year of leave with pay in case of death. Bereavement leave may be used in the case of a death of family or friends.

Section 3.04 - Personal Leave

The employee shall be allowed five (5) personal business days per year for business that ordinarily cannot be conducted outside the duty day with prior approval of the immediate supervisor. A deduction of these days will be made from sick leave. No more than 3 days of personal leave can be used consecutively.

Section 3.05 - Leave of Absence Without Pay

The employee may apply for a leave of absence without pay in the event of personal extenuating circumstances. The employee, when on medical leave of absence, is eligible to continue to participate in group insurance programs as permitted under the insurance policy provisions, but shall pay the entire premium for such programs as they wish to retain commencing with the beginning of the leave, subject to the requirements of applicable law.

Section 3.06 - Child Care Leave and Adoption Leave

Child care leaves under this section include maternity leave, parental leave and adoption leave. Child care leaves shall be processed under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for those employee's that meet the current eligibility requirements of FMLA as outlined in Policy 410 and Policy 448. Child care leaves for those employees that do not meet the current eligibility requirements of FMLA shall be processed under the District Disability After Childbirth Policy – Policy 411.

- A. A child care leave shall be granted by the school district subject to the provisions of this Section. Child care leave may be granted because of the need to prepare and/or provide parental care for a child or children of the

employee for an extended period of time.

B. An employee making application for child care leave shall inform the District in writing with intention to take the leave as soon as possible and at least one calendar month before commencement of the intended leave, except in unusual circumstances. The district and the employee will attempt to work out a satisfactory plan for the leave.

C. If the reason for the child care leave is occasioned by pregnancy, the employee shall also provide at the time of the leave application, a medical certification indicating the expected date of the delivery.

D. Sick leave under Section 3.02 and long-term disability insurance under Article IV, Section 4.06, is available for the disabilities of pregnancy prior to the commencement of the child care leave. Such use of sick leave days shall run concurrently with parental leave days under paragraph I.

E. In making a determination concerning the commencement and duration of a child care leave, the School Board shall not, unless otherwise agreed, be required to:

(1) Grant any leave more than six (6) months in length or to the beginning of the school year following such six (6) month period.

F. Failure of the employee to return pursuant to the date determined under this Section shall constitute the failure to work without first securing a release which is a ground for immediate discharge unless the school district and the employee mutually agree to an extension in the leave.

G. An employee who returns from child care leave within the provisions of this Section shall retain all previous experience credit and any unused leave time accumulated under the provisions of this Agreement at the commencement of the leave.

H. Up to twenty (20) days leave allowance may be used for adoption purposes such as preparation and legal reasons, necessary travel, and initial adjustment.

I. Up to ten (10) days parental leave may be used within 30 days of the birth of a child, the days used to be deducted from sick leave. Employees that qualify for maternity leave are not eligible for these parental leave days.

J. Time off during the leave period shall not count toward a step advancement on the wage schedule. However, employees will be advanced a step if they worked more than one-half of the duty days in their work year.

Section 3.07 – Religious Observance Leave

Up to three (3) days leave shall be granted to an employee for required religious observance. Such days must be recognized religious holidays and shall not be permitted for circumstances where personal alternative attendance options exist. A deduction of these days will be made from sick leave. Notification must be submitted to their immediate supervisor, in writing, at least three (3) days prior to such absence.

Section 3.08 – Judicial Duty

For any employee who is required to serve as a juror or is subpoenaed to appear as a witness (not as a defendant) in a criminal court case, Northfield Public Schools will make up the difference between such employees basic salary and the fees (but not reimbursed expenses) received by the employee. In order to be eligible for this supplement, the employee must submit to the finance office an itemized certification of fees and expenses for judicial duty.

Section 3.09 – Superintendent’s Discretionary Leave

Any circumstance that arises necessitating the absence of an employee not specifically included in any of the sections above may be granted as discretionary leave. Such leave must be approved in advance by the superintendent or their authorized representative.

Section 3.10 – School Conference and Activities Leave

In accordance with the provisions of MS.181.9412, the District will provide each employee with up to sixteen hours of school conference and activities leave during any twelve month period to attend school conferences or school related activities related to the employee's child, provided the conference, activity or observation cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. In addition to the statutory definition of school conference and activity leave, employees may also use school conference and activity leave for post-secondary college visits for high school age students.

One school day advance written notice shall be provided via the District’s substitute/leave reporting system. The Human Resources Director can waive the advanced written notice requirement in emergency situations under exceptional or unusual circumstances. Such leave will be deducted from the employee's sick leave allowance.

ARTICLE IV
INSURANCE

Section 4.01– Insurance Eligibility

An employee must work a regular schedule of 20 or more hours per week in order to be eligible for group insurance coverage.

Section 4.02 – District Obligation

The District's only obligation is to purchase the group insurance policies addressed below and pay such amounts as stated herein. No claim shall be made against the District as a result of a denial of insurance benefits by an insurance carrier.

Section 4.03 - Health and Hospitalization

The School District shall provide eligible employees an opportunity to enroll for either single or family coverage in the District health and hospitalization insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the amounts listed below toward the monthly premium for single and family coverage. The effective date for employer contributions shall be January 1 each year.

The employer will contribute the same amount toward the monthly health insurance plan premium for single and family coverage as exists in the District's agreement for teachers with the Northfield Education Association if the employee wishes to enroll in the plan.

Section 4.04 - Dental Insurance

The School District shall provide eligible employees with an opportunity to enroll for either single or family coverage in the District dental insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the amounts listed below toward the monthly premium for single or family coverage. The effective date for employer contributions shall be January 1 each year.

The employer will contribute the same amount toward the monthly health insurance plan premium for single and family coverage as exists in the District's agreement for teachers with the Northfield Education Association if the employee wishes to enroll in the plan.

Section 4.05 - Life Insurance

The School District shall provide, at District expense, a group term life insurance plan providing \$35,000 of coverage for each eligible employee. The eligible employees may purchase additional group term life insurance in increments of \$25,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000 at the group rate upon evidence of insurability and acceptance by the carrier. The cost of such additional coverage shall be paid fully by the employee through payroll deduction.

Section 4.06 - Long-Term Disability Insurance

The School District shall pay the full premium for long-term disability insurance for eligible employees. Benefits shall be payable after 60 consecutive days of total disability at 66 2/3% of the basic monthly earnings.

Section 4.07 - Liability Insurance

The School District agrees to insure the employee for loss because of claims brought against them caused by any negligent act, error, omission, or breach of duty while acting within the scope of their employment or any claim against them solely by reason of the holding of their position. The amount and extent of coverage shall be subject to limitations imposed by the insurance carrier and applicable law.

Section 4.08 - Duration of Insurance Contribution

Upon separation of employment, all district participation and contribution toward group insurance benefits shall cease effective at the end of the month of the last working day except as provided under other provisions of this manual. However, the employee may be continued in the group insurance plans at their own expense for a period following separation determined by the insurance carrier and applicable laws.

ARTICLE V
OTHER BENEFITS

Section 5.01 - Travel

Necessary and approved transportation that is required of the employee in the performance of school duty shall be at the expense of the School District. The mileage reimbursement rate and the rate between buildings shall be set by the School Board.

Section 5.02 - Professional Improvement

The employee will participate in professional development activities which are directly related to their areas of responsibility and other areas designated by their immediate supervisor. The School District shall pay for all legally valid travel, lodging, and meal expenses and fees for attendance at professional conferences and meetings with other educational agencies when attendance thereof is required, directed, or permitted by their immediate supervisor.

Section 5.03 - Professional Membership Dues

The School District shall pay the annual membership dues for the employee for relevant professional organizations approved by the district.

APPENDIX A
SALARIES AND DUTY YEAR
2026-27

Position	Duty Year	Salary
COTA/Speech Language Assistant	Student Days	\$32.63/hour

APPENDIX B
SALARIES AND DUTY YEAR
2027-28

Position	Duty Year	Salary
COTA/Speech Language Assistant	Student Days	\$33.28/hour