



## **2025-2027 AGREEMENT**

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**Independent School District No. 659  
Northfield, Minnesota**

and the

**Northfield Education Association**

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**AGREEMENT EXTENDS FROM  
July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027**

**2025-2027 AGREEMENT**  
**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 659**  
**and the**  
**NORTHFIELD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

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**Independent School District No. 659**  
**Northfield, Minnesota**  
**and the**  
**Northfield Education Association**  
**2025-2027**

**ARTICLE I**  
**PURPOSE**

1. THIS AGREEMENT, entered into between the School Board of Independent School District No. 659, Northfield, Minnesota, hereinafter referred to as the School Board, District, or Employer, and the Northfield Education Association, hereinafter referred to as the NEA, pursuant to and in compliance with the Public Employment Labor Relations Act of 1971, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the PELRA, to provide the terms and conditions of employment for teachers during the duration of this Agreement. Any term used in this Agreement that is also defined in the PELRA is intended to have the same definition as used in the PELRA.

Statutory references in the Agreement are for informational purposes only and do not bring any statutes within the scope of the grievance process.

**ARTICLE II**  
**RECOGNITION OF EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE**

1. In accordance with the PELRA, the School Board recognizes the Northfield Education Association as the exclusive representative of teachers employed by the School Board. The NEA, as exclusive representative, shall have those rights and duties as prescribed by the PELRA and as described in the provisions of this Agreement.
2. **Appropriate Unit.** The exclusive representative shall represent all the teachers of the District including those on approved leave of absence as defined in this Agreement and the PELRA.
3. **Teacher.** The word “teacher” shall mean all persons employed by the District in a position for which the person must be licensed or certified by PELSB, including in a position providing instruction to children in a prekindergarten or early learning program pursuant to [M.S.179A.03](#), or are otherwise defined as teachers in [M.S.179A.03](#).
4. **Notification.** The word “notification” or “notify” shall mean in writing via email or US Mail unless otherwise noted.

### **ARTICLE III** **RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD**

1. The School Board is not required to meet and negotiate on matters of inherent managerial policy, which include, but are not limited to, such areas of discretion or policy as the functions, educational policies, and programs of the School Board, its overall budget, utilization of technology, the organizational structure and selection and direction and number of personnel.
2. The School Board has an obligation to meet and negotiate in good faith with the exclusive representative of the teachers in an appropriate unit regarding grievance procedures and the terms and conditions of employment, but such obligation does not compel the School Board or its representative to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession.
3. The School Board has the obligation to meet and confer with teachers to discuss policies and those matters relating to their employment not included under the PELRA.
4. The School Board shall not meet and negotiate or meet and confer with any teacher or group of teachers who are at the time designated as a member or part of an appropriate teacher unit except through the exclusive representative if one is certified for that unit or as provided for in the PELRA.
5. The School Board shall have the right to petition the director for arbitration under the PELRA; provided the exclusive representative or the School Board has first petitioned the director for mediation services as are available under the PELRA.
6. The School Board may hire and pay for arbitrators desired by the provisions of the PELRA.
7. All provisions of this Agreement are subject to the laws of the State of Minnesota, Federal laws, and rules, regulations and orders of State and Federal governmental agencies. Any provisions of this Agreement herein found to be in violation of any such laws, rules, regulations or orders shall be null and void and without force and effect. This section does not incorporate federal and Minnesota law or applicable federal and state agency rules by reference into this Agreement.
8. The School Board has the duty to efficiently manage the District. The primary obligation of the District is to provide students with the opportunity for an education. The enumeration of rights and duties in this Article do not exclude the inherent managerial rights and functions not expressly reserved herein.

## ARTICLE IV

### RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF TEACHERS

1. Nothing contained in the PELRA shall be construed to limit, impair or affect the right of any teacher or their representative to the expression or communication of a view, grievance, complaint or opinion on any matter related to the conditions or compensation of teachers or their betterment, so long as the same is not designed to and does not interfere with the full faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment or circumvent the rights of the exclusive representative if there be one; nor shall it be construed to require any teacher to perform labor or services against their will.
2. Teachers shall have the right to form and join labor or teacher organizations, and shall have the right not to form and join such organizations. Teachers in an appropriate unit shall have the right by secret ballot to designate an exclusive representative for the purpose of negotiating grievance procedures and the terms and conditions of employment for such teachers with the School Board of such unit.
3. Teachers who are professional employees as defined by the PELRA have the right to meet and confer with the School Board regarding policies and matters not included under the PELRA.
4. Teachers through their certified exclusive representative have the right and obligation to meet and negotiate in good faith with their School Board regarding grievance procedures and the terms and conditions of employment, but such obligation does not compel the exclusive representative to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession.
5. Teachers shall have the right to request and be allowed dues check off for the exclusive representative, provided that dues check off and the proceeds thereof shall not be allowed any teacher organization that has lost its right to dues check off pursuant to the PELRA.
6. An exclusive representative shall have the right to petition the director for arbitration under the PELRA; provided the exclusive representative has first petitioned the director for mediation services as are available under the PELRA.
7. **Personnel Files.** Every teacher has a permanent file in the District Office. Pursuant to [M.S. 122A.40, subd. 19](#), as amended, all evaluations and official files, wherever generated, relating to each individual teacher shall be available during regular school business hours to each individual teacher upon the teacher's written request. The teacher shall have the right to reproduce any of the contents of the files and may include in the file written information in response to any material contained therein. When material involving evaluation or any performance related material or notice of reprimand or deficiency is to be placed in a teacher's file, a copy will be provided to the teacher. The school district may destroy such files as provided by law, after first giving the teacher the opportunity to keep any items scheduled to be destroyed. Any teacher may submit items to their immediate supervisor for inclusion in the file.

8. **Association Release Time.** During the term of this Agreement, the exclusive representative will have available 480 hours of release time. This time shall include all time spent away from teaching duties on behalf of the exclusive representative as designated by the Northfield Education Association President including any negotiation or grievance activities. Association leave shall not be used for activities in support of any other exclusive representative of employees, nor to run for elective office of any kind.
9. **Full-Time Teachers.** Teachers regularly scheduled to work the full teacher duty day as described in Section 1, Article IX, shall be deemed to be “full-time” teachers.
10. **Association Member List.** The District shall provide in electronic form to the NEA the names, work email address, full-time equivalency (FTE) status, worksite location and assignment of all bargaining unit members employed, upon request. Such requests shall be filled within five business days.
11. **Reasonable Access.** Representatives of the NEA shall have reasonable access to worksites and school facilities to communicate with members, hold meetings, and conduct other business. Upon arrival at the worksite, NEA representatives shall make their presence known to the worksite supervisor or their designee. Such visits shall not interrupt normal work responsibilities.

## **ARTICLE V** **BASIC SCHEDULES AND RATES OF PAY**

1. **Salary Schedules.** The salary schedules of teachers covered by this Agreement are set forth in Schedule A and B attached herewith, and are hereby incorporated as part of this Agreement.
  - 1.1. **Eligibility for Increments.**
    - 1.1.1. Each teacher who worked more than one-half of the teacher duty days for the 2024-2025 school year will be advanced one step on the salary schedule for the 2025-2026 school year. Increments contained in the 2026-2027 salary schedule will not be paid in the 2027-2028 school year in the absence of an agreement between the parties covering the period from July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2029.
  - 1.2. **Recognition of Prior Experience.** Full credit for teaching experience in other school systems shall be given for up to six years when placing newly hired teachers on the salary schedule. At the discretion of the School Board, more than six years of teaching experience may be credited at the time of hire for salary schedule placement, especially in difficult to fill licensure areas.
  - 1.3. **National Certification.** Any teacher who has achieved one of the following national certifications shall be paid an annual stipend of five hundred (\$500) dollars. This stipend shall not be considered part of the teacher’s annual salary. The teacher shall

provide a copy of current certification to the Human Resources Office prior to September 15 of each school year.

1.3.1. The following certifications shall apply:

- 1.3.1.1. Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
- 1.3.1.2. National Board of Professional Teaching
- 1.3.1.3. Guidance Counselors: LPC (Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy-Licensed Professional Counselor).
- 1.3.1.4. Occupational Therapists: NBCOT (National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy).
- 1.3.1.5. Physical Therapists: ABPTS-PCS (American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties-Pediatric Certified Specialist).
- 1.3.1.6. Psychologists: NASP-NCSP (National Association of School Psychologists-National Certified School Psychologist).
- 1.3.1.7. Social Workers: LSW, LGSW, LISW, or LICSW (Minnesota Board of Social Work-Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Graduate Social Worker, Licensed Independent Social Worker, or Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker).
- 1.3.1.8. Speech Language Pathologists: ASHA-CCC-SLP (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology).

1.4. **Recognition of outstanding performance or extraordinary contribution to the School District.** Any teacher who achieves the following recognition may receive a one-time stipend not to exceed the amounts identified below:

- 1.4.1. State Teacher of the Year Finalist (\$500.00)
- 1.4.2. State Teacher of the Year (\$1,000)
- 1.4.3. National Teacher of the Year (\$1,000)

## 2. **Lane Freezing.**

2.1. The following lanes will have steps frozen as listed:

<u>Lane</u>	
B.A.	9
All other lanes	10

No teacher may advance beyond the maximum step on a lane set forth above.

- 2.2. Negotiated raises in steps during subsequent years shall, however, be paid.
- 2.3. A teacher changing lanes from a frozen step shall receive credit toward step increments in the new lane for service while on the frozen step, up to the maximum step on the new lane set forth above.
3. **Rehired Retired Teachers.** The District may rehire retired teachers for positions, including long-term substitute positions according to the following provisions:
  - 3.1. The exclusive representative recognizes voluntary waiver of continuing contract rights by retirees who want to return to teaching.
  - 3.2. The salary placement shall be on the teacher's proper lane and step at the time of retirement. No longevity payments will be made.
  - 3.3. All benefits and leave time will be provided according to the Agreement, except 403b contributions, accumulation of leave time, and retirement provisions. Retirees receiving retirement insurance benefits from the District when rehired will continue with those benefits as if retired.
  - 3.4. Insurance benefits may be waived by mutual consent.

## **ARTICLE VI EXTRA COMPENSATION**

1. Individual teachers may enter into separate contracts with the School Board for the performance of assignments in addition to or differing from the performance of basic teaching duties. Such separate extra assignment contracts shall not be part of a teacher's continuing contract. Non-bargaining unit individuals hired for Schedule C or D assignments are not subject to this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE VII INSURANCE**

### **1. Group Insurance.**

- 1.1. **Governance.** During the term of this Contract, the Employer will purchase group insurance policies described in this Article as provided by law. The eligibility of an enrolled teacher for benefits shall be governed by the terms of the insurance contracts in force between the Employer and the insurers providing such coverage. It is further agreed that the Employer's only obligation under this Article is to make the premium payments as provided in this Contract, and no claim shall be made against the Employer in the event of a denial of insurance benefits by an insurance carrier.

1.2. **Prorated Premium Contributions.** Teachers regularly scheduled to work 20 or more hours per week shall be eligible for benefits described in this insurance article. Teachers regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week shall not be eligible for benefits described in this article. The employer shall contribute toward the premiums for health and hospitalization and dental insurances on a pro-rata basis of the amounts listed in Sections 2 and 3 of Article VII for teachers regularly scheduled to work 20 to less than 30 hours per week (0.5 FTE to less than 0.75 FTE). The contribution shall be prorated commensurate with the amount of time the teacher is regularly scheduled to work.

1.3. **Benefit Duration.** All insurance benefits shall commence on the first day of scheduled service and continue through the following August unless modified by a leave of absence or severance of employment prior to the close of the school year. The District shall continue its contribution toward the premium for health and hospitalization insurance for dependents of a deceased teacher for a period of six (6) months after the teacher's death or until the contribution would have otherwise ceased, whichever is sooner, provided the deceased teacher was enrolled in family coverage at the time of death.

1.4. **Substitute Teachers.** Substitute teachers working less than sixty (60) consecutive working days shall not be eligible for benefits described in this Article. When it is known in advance that a substitute teacher will be employed for sixty (60) consecutive working days or more, the teacher will receive a substitute contract and shall be eligible for insurance benefits as provided in this Agreement. Participation in the district's insurance benefits plans will cease effective on the last day of the month in which the last day was worked.

2. **Health and Hospitalization Insurance.** During the term of this agreement, the Employer will contribute for single or family coverage toward the monthly premium for each teacher regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week (0.75 FTE or more) who qualifies for and is enrolled in coverage under the district medical and hospitalization insurance plan. The contribution amounts are as follows:

	<u>Single Coverage</u>	<u>Family Coverage</u>
January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026	\$714.19/month	\$2,171.84/month
January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2027	\$785.61/month	\$2,389.02/month

Participation in the insurance program will be voluntary. Coverage shall be effective only upon enrollment of the individual teacher and the teacher's family. Each teacher enrolled under the plan shall contribute, through payroll deduction, any excess of the monthly premium under the plan over the maximum School Board contribution toward the type of coverage for which such teacher is enrolled.

3. **Dental Insurance.** During the term of this agreement, the Employer will contribute the following toward the monthly premium for each full-time teacher who qualifies for and is enrolled in coverage under the district dental insurance plan:

	<u>Single Coverage</u>	<u>Family Coverage</u>
January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026	\$28.20/month	\$64.34/month
January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2027	\$28.20/month	\$64.34/month

4. **Income Protection.** The Employer will pay the full premium for each teacher who qualifies for and is enrolled in coverage under the district's long-term disability insurance plan. Benefits shall be payable after sixty (60) consecutive days of total disability at 66 2/3% of the basic monthly earnings, including longevity.

Up to thirty (30) accumulated sick leave days may be used on a pro-rata basis while receiving disability income; however, the total income generated from using sick leave with disability benefits may not exceed the teacher's basic earnings. The District shall continue its contribution for health and hospitalization insurance for up to six (6) months (180 consecutive days) after the last day worked for absence due to total disability. Thereafter, teachers receiving long-term disability insurance benefits may continue in the district's group insurance plans at the teacher's expense. Benefit payments shall continue in accordance with federal regulations.

5. **Life Insurance.** The Employer will provide group term life insurance coverage for each teacher who enrolls in the insurance plan in the amount of \$50,000.00. Each teacher 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 teacher through payroll deduction.

6. **Tax Deferred Accounts.** All eligible teachers may participate in an IRS approved tax-deferred plan established pursuant to Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code (as amended by Public Law No. 98-370).

7. **Retirement Insurance.** Teachers shall notify the District of their intent to retire by February

7.1. **A teacher whose seniority date is prior July 1, 2009.**

7.1.1. Any teacher whose seniority date is prior to July 1, 2009 and has at least ten (10) years experience in Independent School District No. 659 and retires upon attaining age fifty-five (55) or thereafter may elect to be covered under the group health and hospitalization, dental plans and life insurance plans provided by the District as provided by law.

7.1.2. Once a retired employee becomes eligible for Medicare the retired employee's coverage will convert to a Medicare supplement policy. Such policy (when combined with Medicare) will at a minimum be equivalent

coverage to the group health and hospitalization plan offered to active employees and retired employees who are not eligible for Medicare.

- 7.1.3. In the event a retired employee and their dependent(s) become eligible for Medicare at different times, the individual insured will be converted to the Medicare supplement policy upon becoming eligible. At such time as there is only one other insured remaining on the family group health plan, they will be converted to a single policy under the group health plan until they become eligible for Medicare. If dependent children are covered under the group health plan they will be eligible to continue coverage until such time that the last parent covered on the group health plan becomes eligible for Medicare.
- 7.1.4. District Contribution. The teacher may continue participation in the district's group term life insurance plan according to provisions of Section 5 above at the teacher's own expense until the teacher is eligible for Medicare.
- 7.1.5. Prior to becoming Medicare eligible, the District shall contribute toward the premium for health and hospitalization and dental coverage under the same conditions as an employed teacher but not more than eighty percent (80%) of the health and hospitalization insurance premium as follows:
  - 7.1.5.1. Nine (9) years for those teachers whose most recent date of hire was on or before September 1, 1987.
  - 7.1.5.2. Six (6) years for those teachers who were employed September 1, 1987 through June 30, 2009.

Once the retired employee or their dependent(s) obtain Medicare eligibility, the District shall contribute up to \$350.00 toward the monthly premium of the Medicare supplement plan for the remainder of the contribution period as defined above.

When the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare, the retiree must be in compliance with [M.S. 471.611](#).

## 7.2. **A teacher whose seniority date is on or after July 1, 2009.**

- 7.2.1. The benefits outlined in this section shall be available to teachers that work 0.50 FTE or more whose seniority date is on or after July 1, 2009 for the full school year. These teachers are not eligible for other benefits provided under Article VII, Section 7.1: Retirement Insurance.
- 7.2.2. Teachers must be actively working for the full school year to be eligible for the Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) contribution.

- 7.2.3. Teachers on leave of absence during a school year will not be eligible for HRA contributions for that school year.
- 7.2.4. The HRA contribution will not be prorated for partial school years worked with the following exception: teachers who retire prior to the end of the school year will receive a prorated contribution based on the number of days worked divided by the total number of teacher duty days in the school year during which they retire.
- 7.2.5. The district will set aside \$1,000.00 annually for all newly hired full-time teachers.
- 7.2.6. Regular part-time teachers that work 0.50 FTE or more will receive a prorated portion of the contribution.
- 7.2.7. The district contribution will be made in July following the preceding full school year of service.
- 7.2.8. The district contribution will be deposited into a district reserved account on behalf of all eligible employees as outlined in this article; however, all district contributions will remain district assets until eligible employees meet the district's vesting requirements.
- 7.2.9. Teachers will become vested when they have at least ten (10) years of continuous service to the District, including District-approved leaves of absence.
- 7.2.10. For each year of service thereafter, the District will continue to deposit \$1,000.00 annually in the HRA account of all eligible full-time employees as outlined in this article.
- 7.2.11. The deposit for part-time teachers will be prorated to the FTE for which they are contracted. The district contributions will be made in July following the preceding full school year of service. The vested teacher will have access to their HRA account balance upon separation of employment.

- 7.3. **Other Employer Insurance.** Coverage will be available to a retired teacher who has group medical insurance available to them from another employer; however, such other employer's coverage shall be considered primary.

## ARTICLE VIII LEAVES

### 1. Leave Allowance.

- 1.1. **Eligibility.** At the beginning of each school year each teacher employed half time or more will be granted a leave allowance the hourly equivalent of ten (10) days, prorated to the FTE portion of the teacher's individual contract, for absences without deduction from pay during such school year. Such leave allowance may only be used under the terms and conditions set forth in this Article. All sick leave, bereavement leave, emergency leave, school conference and activity leave, and personal leave will be charged against the teacher's leave allowance. All leave allowance shall be based on a teacher's current workday.
- 1.2. **Accumulated Leave.** Unused portions of a teacher's leave allowance may accumulate from one basic school year to the next to a maximum of two hundred (200) days. The number of days accumulated shall be available to all teachers via the employee self-serve system. Leave allowance will not apply, nor may it be earned or accumulated during any leave of absence, paid or unpaid, except as expressly provided in this Agreement.

### 2. Sick and Safe Leave.

- 2.1. **Eligibility.** Leave allowance may be used by a teacher for a necessary absence on a work day during the school year because of illness or injury of the employee or the employee's dependent child. Leave allowances are available for other individuals to the extent provided by [MS. 181.9445](#) or FMLA, and are not subject to the grievance procedure. This includes medically necessary appointments.
- 2.2. **Verification.** An individual teacher may be notified in writing that, in order to qualify for future sick leave pay, a statement from a physician of the teacher's choice may be required.
- 2.3. **Worker's Compensation Act.** A teacher 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 teacher's regular basic salary. Deductions from leave allowance will be made on a prorated basis according to the additional payments to the teacher. In no event shall the additional compensation paid to the teacher result in the payment of total daily, weekly or monthly compensation in excess of such teacher's basic salary.
- 2.4. **Sick Leave for Part-time Teachers.** Leave allowances for teachers working less than 0.50 FTE are available to the extent provided by Minnesota law, are not eligible to be used for personal leave, and are not subject to the grievance procedure.

### **3. Bereavement Leave.**

3.1. Up to a total of ten (10) days leave allowance per year may be used in case of bereavement leave.

Bereavement leave may be used in the case of a death of family members or friends.

Exceptions to the above restrictions may be granted at the discretion of the Superintendent, or their designee, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the leave.

### **4. Emergency Leave.**

4.1. Up to two (2) days of leave allowance may be used in the event of emergencies after a teacher's personal leave account has been exhausted. Teachers are eligible to use emergency leave when there are daycare closings that result in a teacher's dependent child not being cared for as planned, damage to a teacher's property, assisting another in an emergency, or to provide information about an emergency to law enforcement or other public safety personnel. Emergency leave will be deducted from an individual's sick leave allowance. The Leave Allowance Bank will not cover the use of Emergency Leave.

### **5. School Conference and Activities Leave.**

5.1. In accordance with the provisions of [MS.181.9412](#), the District will provide each teacher with up to sixteen (16) hours of school conference and activities leave during any twelve (12) 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. Such leave will be deducted from the teacher's leave allowance.

5.2. 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.

### **6. Personal Leave and Short-term Leave of Absence.**

6.1. **Personal Leave.** Teachers will be allowed five (5) days per year of personal leave, non-accumulative, without the necessity of prior administrative approval, but with at least three (3) days written notice via the District's substitute/leave reporting system except for emergencies. These five (5) days will be deducted from the leave allowance. No more than three (3) consecutive personal leave days can be used for

the same absence.

With the exception of teacher preparation days where no cap will be in effect, personal leave for a particular day will be granted on the basis of the order such requests are received. The following chart indicates the number of teachers eligible for personal leave by building for each eligible workday:

Northfield High School	5
Northfield Middle School	4
Bridgewater Elementary	3
Greenvale Park Elementary	3
Spring Creek Elementary	3
Northfield Community Education Center	2
ALC	1

Personal leave will not be granted during the first week or the last week of instructional days, or on an open house as referred to on the school calendar, staff development, or conference days, except in exceptional and unusual cases at the discretion of the Director of Human Resources. Requests need not include reasons for the leave day except when the teacher is requesting an exception to the above regulations. Any unused personal leave will remain in the employee's sick leave account.

6.2. **Short Term Leave of Absence.** The Director of Human Resources may approve a short term leave of absence beyond that specified herein for exceptional and unusual circumstances, which shall result in the withholding of pay as computed against the total number of teacher duty days in the contract year.

## 7. General Leave of Absence.

7.1. **Eligibility.** The District, at its discretion, can grant a request for partial or full unpaid leaves of absence up to one year in duration for those who taught at least two (2) years in the District.

7.2. **Requests.** Leave requests are required to be submitted to Human Resources by February 1. Requests received after February 1 may be considered on an individual basis. Requests shall be subject to District approval, whose decision is binding. The School Board's decision may not be grieved.

7.3. **Reinstatement.** A teacher has a right to be reinstated to a position for which the teacher is licensed (the teacher is not reinstated to a specific position or a specific site) at the beginning of any school year immediately following a year of general leave, if the teacher notifies the District of their intent to return by February 1 preceding the school year in which the teacher is scheduled to return. Written notification of intent to return shall be delivered in person or by mail (US Mail or Interschool) or as an attachment to an electronic mail message to the Director of

Human Resources.

- 7.4. **Benefits.** While on a general leave of absence, or while on an extended leave of absence granted pursuant to [M.S. 122A.46](#), a teacher may continue participation in the insurance plans of the school district at the teacher's own expense.
- 7.5. **Seniority.** Any teacher who is reinstated to a teaching position in the District shall retain seniority and continuing contract rights as though the teacher had been teaching in the District during the period of general leave of absence. The teacher is not reinstated to a specific position or a specific site and the time spent on leave does not determine steps taken on the matrix for the teacher's salary upon return.

8. **Child Care Leaves.** 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 teachers that meet the current eligibility requirements of FMLA as outlined in [Policy 410](#) and [Policy 448](#). Child care leaves for those teachers that do not meet the current eligibility requirements of FMLA shall be processed under the District Disability After Childbirth Policy – [Policy 411](#).

- 8.1. **Eligibility.** 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 teacher for an extended period of time.
- 8.2. **Notification.** A teacher making application for child care leave shall inform the Director of Human Resources in writing with intention to take the leave as soon as possible and at least one (1) calendar month before commencement of the intended leave, except in unusual circumstances. The district and the teacher will attempt to work out a satisfactory plan for the leave.
- 8.3. **Certification.** If the reason for the child care leave is occasioned by pregnancy, the teacher shall also provide at the time of the leave application, a medical certification indicating the expected date of the delivery.
- 8.4. **Sick Leave and Long-Term Disability Insurance.** Sick leave under Article VIII, Section 2 and long-term disability insurance under Article VII, Section 4, 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 Article VIII, Section 8.12.
- 8.5. **Calendar Alignment.** The school district, upon meeting in person and discussing the teacher's return date preferences, may make moderate adjustments in the proposed beginning or ending date of a child care leave so that the dates of the leave coincide with some natural break in the school year - e.g., winter vacation, spring vacation, semester break or quarter break, end of reporting period, end of the school year, or the

like.

- 8.6. **Duration.** 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:
  - 8.6.1. Grant any leave more than six (6) months in length or to the beginning of the school year following such six (6) month period.
  - 8.6.2. Permit the teacher to return to their employment prior to the date designated in the request for child care leave.
- 8.7. **Return Rights.** A teacher returning from child care leave shall have a right to return to the teacher's original position as specified in the teacher's child care leave plan if the teacher's leave is commenced and concluded within the same school year or concluded prior to the first teacher duty day of the following school year. If a teacher's child care leave plan does not call for the teacher's return within the year it is commenced, a teacher shall have the right to be returned to an equivalent contractual position, subject to the unrequested leave of absence procedure of Article XIV and transfer procedures in Article XV.
- 8.8. **Failure to Return.** Failure of the teacher to return pursuant to the date determined under this Section shall constitute the failure to teach without first securing a release which is a ground for immediate discharge unless the school district and the teacher mutually agree to an extension in the leave.
- 8.9. **Experience Credit.** A teacher 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. The teacher shall accrue additional experience credit or leave time during the period of absence for child care leave, if the leave commences and ends within the same school year. Experience credit for any subsequent leaves for the same child shall be in accordance with Article V, Section 1.1.
- 8.10. **Insurance Contribution.** The school district shall continue its contribution for group insurance as specified in Article VII for a teacher on child care leave through the following August. Thereafter, a teacher may continue participation for the remainder of the leave, or subsequent child care leaves for the same child, in the insurance plans of the District at the teacher's own expense.
- 8.11. **Adoption.** Up to twenty (20) days leave allowance may be used for adoption purposes such as preparation and legal reasons, necessary travel, and initial adjustment.
- 8.12. **Parental Leave.** Up to ten (10) days parental leave may be used within thirty (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.

9. **Judicial Duty.** For any teacher 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 teacher's 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. Advance notice to the building administrator is required to permit the scheduling of a substitute, if required. An employee is also required to notify the building administrator upon being excused from judicial duty.

## **ARTICLE IX** **HOURS OF SERVICE**

### **1. Basic Day.**

- 1.1. Except as modified pursuant to Article X, Section 2, the basic teacher's day, inclusive of a twenty-five (25) minute "duty free" lunch, shall be eight hours.
- 1.2. Part-time teachers shall have responsibilities in proportion to their contracts: e.g., a teacher with a 3/5 contract is responsible for up to twenty-four (24) hours of service per week. Part-time teachers working half-time or more will receive a twenty-five (25) minute duty free lunch period. All part-time teachers will receive prorated prep time and non-instruction time within their duty time calculation.

### **2. Building Hours.**

- 2.1. **Regular Hours.** Under normal circumstances, the building hours for the basic day shall be from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with a duty free lunch and a preparation period. The specific hours at any individual building may vary according to the needs of the educational program of the school district.
- 2.2. **Changing Building Hours.** The School Board retains the right to set different hours for each building after conferring with the exclusive representative, and has, after such a conference, specifically retained the ability to alter the starting and ending times of the basic work day by up to sixty (60) minutes, not to exceed eight (8) hours per day. Any change to building hours greater than thirty (30) minutes will require a ninety (90) day notice to the exclusive representative.
- 2.3. **Flex Time.** Teacher requests for flex time of up to sixty (60) minutes may be approved at the discretion of the building principal.
- 2.4. **Fridays.** Teachers may leave the building on Friday afternoon after the students have left the buildings. The building principal may extend dismissal of staff on Friday for good and sufficient reason after conferring with the NEA building representative and

consistent with the provisions of Article IX, Section 3.3.

2.5. **Non-Student Contact Days.** On scheduled non-student contact days, all buildings will have common building hours and lunch periods in order to facilitate collaborative activities between buildings and maximize effective use of presenters and consultants.

3. **Preparation Time.**

3.1. The School Board recognizes that the teachers use part of their time at home as additional preparation time.

3.2. Each full-time secondary teacher shall have one uninterrupted period during the school day for preparation. Each full-time elementary teacher shall have sixty (60) minutes for preparation time during the school day. Such preparation time shall be scheduled in one or two uninterrupted time blocks during the student contact day, except when scheduled differently by mutual agreement between the individual teacher and school administration. The District continues its strong commitment to provide full-time elementary teachers with one uninterrupted time block for preparation. Preparation time for part-time teachers shall be prorated. The word “uninterrupted” shall not prevent ordinary professional communications.

3.3. In addition to Section 3.2 above, any unscheduled time between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. shall be considered preparation time.

3.3.1. Principals, building administrators, or district administrators may require teachers to attend one meeting each week. Additionally, teachers may also be required to attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

3.3.2. If no such meeting is scheduled during a given week, teachers may use the time between the start of their duty day and the beginning of the student day, as well as the time between the end of the student day and the conclusion of their duty day, to complete their professional responsibilities.

3.4. A teacher who attends an IEP meeting during scheduled prep time will be paid at the rate in Schedule D, prorated at fifteen (15) minute intervals, for the length of their attendance at the meeting.

3.5. District procedures for attendance in the classroom while a special teacher has charge of the class shall be clearly defined in District policies. In the absence of such a policy, classroom attendance shall be up to the discretion of the classroom teacher. This policy shall be subject to the grievance procedure.

4. **Specialists Schedules.** The maximum number of thirty (30) minute sections that a 1.0 FTE elementary specialist teacher shall teach per week is fifty (50) sections unless mutually agreed upon by administration and representative of the NEA.

5. **Supervisory Duties Equitable Distribution.** Any required supervisory duties shall be distributed equitably among available staff members at each building, to the extent possible. Assignments may be rotated in a reasonable and transparent basis in consultation with the staff at each building.

## **ARTICLE X** **LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**

### **1. Teacher Duty Days.**

- 1.1. **Determination.** Pursuant to [M.S. 120A.40](#), the School Board shall, prior to April 1 of each school year, determine the number of school days and teacher duty days for the next school year. Each teacher shall perform services on those days as determined by the School Board, including those legal holidays on which the school district is authorized to conduct school.
- 1.2. **Total Days.** The school year shall include not more than 187 teacher duty days (exclusive of holidays and Education Minnesota Professional Conference Days). The School Board shall consider the recommendation of the Meet and Confer committee concerning the placement of student days and additional teacher duty days, including parent teacher conferences, and/or family engagement events, and shall adopt the school calendar for the succeeding school year indicating the placement of the above days prior to April 1.
- 1.3. **Calendar Variations.** Recognition is given to the difference in ECFE/PreK/School Readiness, elementary and secondary school operations. Calendar variations may occur between education levels that may not be mandated for all teachers in the district. Any calendar variations would be adopted in consultation with the Meet and Confer committee.
- 1.4. **Teacher Preparation Days.** When scheduled by the District, a teacher preparation day is intended to allow teachers to complete necessary work away from the presence of students. Teacher preparation days may be worked on campus or remotely. Required building-wide and district-wide meetings will not be scheduled during this time. Teacher preparation days cannot be converted to staff development days or student contact days. A total of seven (7) teacher preparation days will be included in each school calendar. The Meet and Confer committee will recommend placement of teacher preparation days on the calendar that correlate to teacher preparation time needed for such tasks as preparing for conferences, family engagement events, grading or changing courses. The placement of the remaining teacher preparation day on the calendar will be at the discretion of the School Board with input from the Meet and Confer committee.

2. **Emergency Closings and Rescheduling of Teacher Duty Days and Hours.** In the event of any emergency, school may be closed at the discretion of the Superintendent. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and approval by the School Board, teacher duty days and school days may be rescheduled, building hours may be changed, the length of the basic teacher's day may be adjusted, and instructional days may be conducted remotely per the District's e-Learning Day Program; provided, however, that the School Board shall not increase the total duty time per week required of a teacher. Such changes shall be discussed with the exclusive representative prior to final action by the School Board. For the purpose of this section an "emergency" shall include, but shall not be limited to, unusually severe weather, mechanical failure of essential equipment affecting the comfort and safety of pupils and teachers, epidemic or widespread illness, severe energy shortages, or damage to building by fire or water, etc., work stoppages by other employee groups. The first student day lost because of emergency closings will not be rescheduled. After the first student day closure, the District may implement an e-Learning day in accordance with the e-Learning day plan instead of rescheduling the student day or, reschedule student day closures, with the approval of the School Board. Staff development days can be shifted to a remote format at the discretion of the Superintendent or may be made up upon recommendation by the Superintendent and approval by the School Board. All leaves scheduled for a day cancelled by the District will be returned to the employee's corresponding leave account.

## **ARTICLE XI** **DUES DEDUCTIONS**

1. **Dues Deductions.** The School Board agrees to deduct dues for membership in the Association and such other deductions as are mutually agreed by the NEA and the District for any individual teacher who has authorized such deductions.
  - 1.1. Dues deductions will be made in equal amounts from each regular salary check of the teacher for eight months, or sixteen (16) paychecks, beginning in October and ending with May.
  - 1.2. The dues deductions authorization shall continue in effect until revoked in writing as specified therein.
  - 1.3. One week prior to the October payroll cut-off, the NEA shall furnish the finance office with a list of the appropriate deductions for each member. Deductions for teachers employed after the commencement of the school year shall be appropriately prorated to complete payments by the following May.
2. **Deduction Transmittal.** The School Board shall remit to the NEA, within ten (10) calendar days following each pay period, the total amount deducted for membership dues. The School Board will provide the NEA with an alphabetical list of teachers for whom deductions have been made from the first paycheck in October, and will notify the NEA of any changes to this list for subsequent paychecks.

## **ARTICLE XII** **EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION**

1. **Evaluation.** The School Board and the NEA mutually agree that timely evaluation of all professional staff for the improvement of instruction is a major responsibility of the teaching profession. The District policy regarding the evaluation of professional staff shall be used for evaluation purposes. Any changes in the District policy regarding the evaluation of the professional staff shall be subject to either party placing the topic on an agenda for discussions through the Meet and Confer procedures.
2. **Improvement of Instruction.** The NEA and the District agree that a program of incentives for excellence will be cooperatively developed. Any recommended changes in existing compensation arrangements would be implemented through amendment to this Agreement, ratified by the NEA and the School Board.

## **ARTICLE XIII** **TRAVEL**

1. **Mileage.** Necessary and approved transportation required of any teacher in the performance of school duties shall be at the expense of the District. The mileage reimbursement rate for affected employees shall be the rate established by the IRS, and any change in rate will be effective the first of the month following the announcement of the new rate.
2. **Attendance at Meetings Outside the District.** Attendance of teachers at national and state meetings outside the district will be subject to the availability of funds in the teacher travel budget as may be set by the School Board, which shall be separately stated from the travel budget for administrators. Such travel must be approved in advance by the appropriate building principal. Priority for the use of such funds should go to teachers who are officers in their respective professional groups or who must participate actively in a meeting.

## **ARTICLE XIV** **UNREQUESTED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Article is to set forth a procedure for unrequested leave of absence without pay or benefits for as many non-probationary teachers as defined in [M.S. 122A.40](#) as may be necessary because of discontinuance of position, lack of pupils, financial limitations, or merger of classes caused by consolidation of districts. This Article has been agreed upon by the School Board and the NEA pursuant to the provisions of [M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 10](#). Case law stemming from [M.S. 122A.40, subd. 10](#) shall not be applicable to any teacher included in the appropriate unit. Nothing in this Article shall be construed to limit or impair the rights of any individual who is not included in the appropriate unit represented by the NEA.

2. **Definitions.** For purposes of this Article, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- 2.1. **Teacher:** means a non-probationary "teacher" as defined in [M.S. 122A.40](#) who has a valid license to teach in Minnesota and is a member of the appropriate unit as defined in this agreement.
- 2.2. **Subject matter or field:** "Subject matter or field" means a specific subject area and grade level licensed by the State of Minnesota for which specific licensing criteria have been set.
- 2.3. **License:** When used in this Article "license" means a regular license issued by the State of Minnesota, and shall include only licenses actually on file in the District Office as of November 1. The term "license" does not include a Tier 1, Tier 2, provisional, limited or temporary license.
- 2.4. **Qualified:** To be "qualified," a teacher must hold a license from the State of Minnesota for the position in question and must have taught in the District within the past ten (10) years in an assignment requiring the specific license supporting the teacher's seniority claim.
- 2.5. **Days:** When used in this Article, "days" means calendar days.

3. **Seniority Date.** Seniority shall be based upon continuous and unbroken employment with the District from the most recent date of contracted service, including periods of employment with the District outside the appropriate unit and periods of authorized leave of absence. Upon completion of the probationary period, each teacher employed will be assigned a seniority date retroactive to the first day of actual service for the District during the regular school year pursuant to such individual contract. Services performed outside the regular school year for additional compensation (except for regular teaching service performed for extra weeks) shall not be considered in the establishment of a teacher's seniority date. The original seniority date shall be retained by any teacher whose employment has been legally terminated by resignation or termination, but whose employment was subsequently reinstated without actual interruption of regular service.

4. **Seniority List.**

- 4.1. **Bargaining unit members covered under M.S. 122A.40.** On or before November 15 of each year, the district shall prepare from its records a seniority list, in order of seniority date, which shall contain the seniority date, name and area(s) of licensing for each teacher as shown by licenses on file in the district office as of November 1 of said year, and current employment status (i.e., whether on leave, including specification of type and length of leave). Teachers with identical seniority dates will be listed in the order of their lane placement approved by the School Board as of the date of preparation of the seniority list: the teacher approved for the highest lane placement as of the date of preparation of the seniority list, will be listed first. In the event of a continuing tie, the teacher with the lower license number will be senior.

The School Board will provide one (1) copy of the seniority list to the NEA and will post one (1) copy of the seniority list in each school building on or before November 15 of each year. Any teacher may challenge the correctness of the information contained in the posted seniority list. The teacher should first try to resolve the issue informally with the Director of Human Resources or their designee. If it is not resolved, the teacher must file a written grievance with the Superintendent. In the absence of a grievance filed within twenty (20) calendar days from the date of posting, the posted seniority list will be conclusively deemed to be correct.

5. **Unrequested Leave of Absence.** The School Board may place on unrequested leave of absence as many teachers as may be necessary because of discontinuance of position, lack of pupils, financial limitations, or merger of classes caused by consolidation of districts.
6. **Placement on Unrequested Leave.** Teachers shall be placed on unrequested leave in inverse order of seniority in the field and subject matter currently employed or taught within the past ten (10) years. Teachers shall not be permitted to apply or exercise their seniority in any other subject matter or field than the one in which they are currently employed or have taught within the past ten (10) years with the exception of teachers on special assignments such as a coordinator, instructional or behavior coach, dean or other special assignments within the bargaining unit. The teachers on special assignment shall also have the right to apply or exercise seniority rights to the subject matter or field held immediately prior to taking the special assignment. Any teacher placed on unrequested leave of absence pursuant to this Section shall be notified in writing of such unrequested leave of absence. When completing the process of proposing teachers for unrequested leave, the District will automatically apply bumping rights subject to the following conditions:
  - 6.1. The teacher exercising bumping rights must be higher on the seniority list than a teacher being displaced.
  - 6.2. Prior to exercising bumping rights in any department or grade level, the district may remove any probationary or less senior teacher who had been part of the Northfield Teaching Fellows (Grow Your Own) grant program and meets performance standards. Teachers who are removed from the process by the district for that reason will not be subject to unrequested leave of absence/non-renewal as outlined in this Article for the affected fiscal year.
  - 6.3. A teacher with a temporary, limited or provisional license may not bump into a position held by any teacher who holds a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license for the position.
  - 6.4. A full-time teacher who has been placed on unrequested leave shall have recall rights to a lesser position but acceptance of a lesser position shall not jeopardize rights to a full-time position equivalent to that previously held.

7. **Notification.** The District will notify teachers of their placement on unrequested leave of absence before July 1 of the school year in which the unrequested leave will begin. The notice must state the grounds for the unrequested leave of absence and must inform the teacher of the right to request a hearing within fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving the notice. If a hearing is requested within fourteen (14) calendar days, which requires that the District receive the notice within the fourteen (14) calendar day period, the hearing will be held before an independent hearing officer selected by the District. The scope of the hearing will be limited to determining whether the teacher's placement on unrequested leave was in the inverse order of seniority, as required by this Article. The District may consolidate hearings if more than one teacher requests a hearing. If the teacher does not request a hearing within fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving the notice of placement on an unrequested leave of absence, the teacher will be deemed to have acquiesced to unrequested leave of absence.
8. **Status While on Leave.** An unrequested leave of absence shall be effective as of the last duty day of the regular school year as per the school calendar, or at such earlier time as mutually agreed between the School Board and the individual teacher even though the date for final notice of placement on unrequested leave of absence is June 30. A teacher on such leave may engage in teaching or any other occupation during the period of such leave, and may be eligible for unemployment compensation pursuant to the criteria for eligibility under the Unemployment Compensation Act.
9. **Recall.**
  - 9.1. **Notice.** The School Board may send out multiple letters of recall for a single vacancy, inquiring whether the teachers notified are willing to accept recall to the vacant position if those teachers with superior recall rights do not accept recall to a position. Notice of recall by the School Board shall be complete upon mailing such notice by certified mail addressed to the last known address provided by the teacher or by personal delivery by an administrator if the teacher is in a district building.
  - 9.2. **Recall Before New Hires.** No new teacher shall be employed by the School Board in any position while there is available, on unrequested leave of absence, a teacher who is properly qualified to fill the vacant position. A teacher placed on unrequested leave of absence shall be recalled, as positions become available, to the position from which such teacher was placed on leave, or if not available, to any other position for which such teacher is qualified.
  - 9.3. **Recall Order.** Recall shall be in the inverse order of placement on leave: the last teacher placed on unrequested leave of absence who is qualified for the position shall be the first recalled.
  - 9.4. **Recall to Lesser Positions.** If a teacher is offered recall to a vacant position that is less than the teacher's unrequested leave of absence FTE, the employee shall not be required to accept the position and refusal shall not jeopardize the teacher's right of recall to the teacher's original FTE status. The teacher will not be offered the position

again unless, after being filled, it again becomes vacant, or if it remains vacant and its FTE amount changes. A teacher accepting a recall to a lesser position retains recall rights to the original unrequested leave of absence FTE.

**9.5. Required Response.**

**9.5.1. Prior to August 1.** A teacher accepting or rejecting recall shall respond, in writing to the Human Resources Director, within ten (10) calendar days of notice. Failure to give written notification of willingness to accept recall to a position equivalent to that which the teacher is on unrequested leave of absence within a ten (10) calendar day period shall constitute a waiver on the part of such teacher regarding the position(s) offered and shall constitute waiver on the part of that teacher to any further rights of employment or recall and shall forfeit any further recall or reemployment rights under this Article. However, in the event that a teacher has signed a teaching contract with another school district prior to recall, and the school board of that district notifies the Northfield School District in writing of its refusal to release the teacher from the contract, the teacher will be allowed to defer recall for the next school year or the remainder of the school year without termination of rights under this section.

Likewise, failure to reply within a ten (10) calendar day period to accept or decline a recall to lesser positions shall constitute a waiver on the part of such teacher regarding the position(s) offered and shall constitute waiver on the part of that teacher to any further rights of employment or recall and shall forfeit any further recall or reemployment rights under this article.

**9.5.2. Beginning August 1.** If notice of any available position is given to any teacher on or after August 1 of any school year, a teacher accepting or rejecting recall shall respond in writing to the Human Resources Director within seven (7) calendar days and may decline the recall without waiving recall rights to further employment or reinstatement and shall maintain their seniority date without interruption. Failure to reply within such seven (7) calendar day period shall constitute a waiver on the part of such teacher regarding the position(s) offered and shall constitute waiver on the part of that teacher to any further rights of employment or recall and shall forfeit any further recall or reemployment rights under this Article.

**10. Termination of Rights.** A teacher's seniority rights, unrequested leave of absence, and recall rights, if any, shall terminate upon the earliest of the following events:

- 10.1. Resignation;
- 10.2. Retirement;

- 10.3. Discharge or termination of contract;
- 10.4. Failure to return at the expiration of a leave of absence;
- 10.5. Failure to give written notification within the time limits established under Section 9. In the event that a teacher has signed a teaching contract with another school district prior to recall and the School Board of that district notifies the Northfield School District in writing of its refusal to release the teacher from the contract, the teacher will be allowed to defer recall for the next school year or the remainder of the school year without termination of rights under this section.
- 10.6. The expiration of five (5) years from the effective date of an unrequested leave of absence without recall.

11. **Doctrine of Strand.** The holding of the Strand case, and other case law stemming from [M.S. 122A.40, subd. 10](#), as enunciated by the Minnesota Court of Appeals and the Minnesota Supreme Court shall not be applied in the administration of this Article. The District shall not be required to perform any type of realignment or to transfer a senior teacher to a different assignment involving another area of licensure in order to accommodate the seniority claim of a less senior teacher during the process of layoff or recall.
12. **Continuation of Insurance.** The District shall continue to make health insurance premium contributions as provided in Article VII until the following August 31 for all teachers who are placed on unrequested leave of absence according to the provisions of this Article. A teacher shall not be eligible for benefits while on unrequested leave of absence except as provided by law.
13. **Concurrent Leaves.** An unrequested leave of absence may run concurrently with any other leave granted in accordance with this contract or in accordance with Minnesota Law.

## **ARTICLE XV** **VACANCIES AND TRANSFERS**

1. **Requests for Transfer.** On an annual basis, the School Board will provide an opportunity for teachers to formally request a transfer to any teaching position(s) in the District for which they are properly licensed. The School Board reserves its management right of selection and direction of employees, but shall give written notice to each teacher whose request for transfer is denied.
2. **Vacancies.** The School Board will post notices for vacant teaching positions. Any teacher may apply for transfer to any posted position for which such teacher is licensed by completing the District's internal application process within five (5) working days from the date of posting. The School Board shall consider all timely applications for voluntary transfer before permanently filling any vacant teaching position. The School Board reserves its management right of selection and direction of employees, but shall give written notice to

each teacher whose application for voluntary transfer to a posted position is denied.

3. **Involuntary Transfers.** The School Board shall give written notice to a teacher being involuntarily transferred to another school building.
4. **Assignments.** The School District will make an effort to post all teaching assignments for the following school year ten (10) working days before the last teacher duty day. When reassessments involving moving are initiated by the District, the teacher shall be paid a moving reimbursement as outlined in Schedule D of this agreement.
5. **Grievances.** A teacher who desires a written statement of reasons for their involuntary transfer or denial of their application for voluntary transfer to a posted position shall make a written request for such statement of reasons to the Director of Human Resources within five (5) working days after receiving notice of the denial or transfer. Such written statement of reasons shall be given to the teacher within five (5) working days following a timely request. Any teacher may file a formal policy grievance over the statement of reasons given to such teacher for an involuntary transfer or denial of a voluntary transfer within twenty (20) working days after receipt of the statement of reasons, but such grievance shall not be subject to arbitration.

## **ARTICLE XVI** **LONGEVITY**

1. **20 Years.** After twenty (20) years of employment as a teacher, ten (10) of which must be in the Northfield School District, a teacher shall receive a career increment totaling \$3,000.00 for the 2025-2026 school year and \$3,000.00 beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.
2. **25 Years.** After twenty-five (25) years of employment as a teacher, ten (10) of which must be in the Northfield School District, a teacher shall receive a career increment totaling \$6,000.00 for the 2025-2026 school year and \$6,000.00 beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.
3. **30 Years.** After thirty (30) years of employment as a teacher, ten (10) of which must be in the Northfield School District, a teacher shall receive a career increment totaling \$8,000 for the 2025-2026 school year and \$8,000 beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.
4. **Determination.** School years during which a teacher has been on any type of leave of absence for which step increments are not granted shall not be counted as a year of employment for the purposes of determining longevity eligibility. Longevity amounts shall be prorated to the FTE portion of the teacher's individual contract.

## **ARTICLE XVII** **SEVERANCE**

1. **Eligibility.** Teachers shall notify the District of their intent to retire by February 1. Teachers must have been employed prior to July 1, 2002, in order to receive severance pay. Teachers hired between March 1, 1997 and June 30, 2002 had the opportunity to make an irrevocable decision to forfeit severance pay and thereafter be eligible to receive matching contributions in accordance with Article XVIII. Provisions for severance pay are listed in 1.1 through 1.5 below.

1.1. Teachers who meet the conditions of either paragraph 1.1.1 or 1.1.2 below shall be eligible for severance pay pursuant to the provisions of this Article upon retirement.

1.1.1. **30 years as a licensed teacher, 25 years in Northfield.**

<b>2011-12 and Beyond</b>		
<b>30 Year Provision</b>		<b>Proration</b>
Total Years	Years in Northfield	Percentage
30	25	100%
29	24	90%
28	23	80%
27	22	70%

1.1.2. **25 years as a licensed teacher, 15 years in Northfield, and age 59.** Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, the requirement of this section reverts eligibility for the full severance package under paragraph 1.2 to those who have worked twenty-five (25) years as a licensed teacher and served fifteen (15) of those years in Northfield. No additional proration will be made for paragraph 1.2.

<b>2012-13 and Beyond</b>		
<b>Age 59 Provision</b>		
Total Years	Years in Northfield	Percentage
25	15	100%

- 1.2. School years during which a teacher has been on a leave of absence shall not be counted as a year of employment for the purposes of determining the number of years of service.
- 1.3. A teacher shall be eligible to receive severance pay upon their retirement in the amount of 100 days, times the teacher's daily rate at the time of retirement.
- 1.4. The teacher's daily rate of pay shall be based on the basic annual salary at the time of retirement, as provided in the basic salary scheduled for the basic school year and shall include longevity. The rate shall not include an additional compensation for co-curricular activities, extended employment or other extra compensation.
- 1.5. Severance pay shall be paid by the District in one lump sum within a month after the effective date of retirement and shall not be granted to any teacher who is discharged from the district.

## **ARTICLE XVIII** **MATCHING 403(b) TAX DEFERRED PLAN**

1. **Eligibility.** Teachers hired on or after July 1, 2002, and those teachers making an irrevocable severance forfeiture decision as provided for in Article XVII, shall be eligible for a matching contribution by the District to a 403(b) tax-deferred plan and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.
  - 1.1. **Authorized Changes.** Each year by October 1, eligible teachers who wish to participate in the plan shall be responsible to complete and file a salary deduction authorization for their annual contribution to a matching 403(b) tax-deferred plan. In a year in which a teacher makes no contribution, the District shall likewise make no contribution to that teacher's account.
  - 1.2. **District Match.** The District will match a teacher's contribution to a 403(b) tax-deferred plan according to and up to the maximum amounts on the following schedule. For teachers who work less than full time, the district matching contribution will be prorated accordingly.

<b>Years of Completed Teaching Experience in Northfield</b>	<b>Maximum Annual School District Matching Contribution</b>
1- 6 years	\$1,000.00
7-17 years	\$1,500.00
18 years or more	\$2,500.00

- 1.3. **Total Matching Contribution.** Tax deferred accounts shall be opened with an approved vendor. The District approved vendor list is available in the Human Resources Office, the Finance Office or on the District website. Matching contributions made by the District will continue until the total matching contribution made by the District for the eligible teacher reaches \$35,000.
- 1.4. **Leave of Absence.** Teachers on a leave of absence for one (1) or more years may not participate in the District's matching 403(b) tax-deferred plan while on leave.

## **ARTICLE XIX SPECIAL PAY DEFERRAL AND HEALTH CARE SAVINGS PLAN**

1. Teachers who retire and are eligible for severance pay shall participate in an IRS approved 401(a), 403(b) or 457 based Special Pay Deferral Plan and a trust-based Health Care Savings Plan made available through the District. Of the severance amount, 0% shall be designated to the Special Pay Deferral Plan, and 100% shall be designated to the Health Care Savings Plan.

## **ARTICLE XX PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PROGRAM**

1. **Premises for Professional Growth Program.** In a society that is rapidly expanding in its social, technological, and educational needs, it becomes imperative that the District should recognize and provide leadership in areas which will lead to a quality education for all our students.
  - 1.1. Though excellent facilities and materials are very important, the parties believe that the primary factor for a quality education is a progressive, well-trained, experienced, and dedicated faculty.
  - 1.2. To attract and retain quality teachers, the District must provide a variety of ways in which they may maintain and enhance their high standards. This continuous growth process should include avenues for growth in skills, for gaining new insights into the needs of our students, for providing a broad base of experience and information, and for exploring new methods and patterns most conducive to efficient learning.
  - 1.3. The District recognizes the worth of these highly trained teachers by providing a salary schedule that includes several lanes.
  - 1.4. The District provides the procedures that will most efficiently and fairly evaluate each individual's professional growth before accepting their credits for lane change.
  - 1.5. The District attempts to recognize past credits earned by teachers and encourages the teaching staff to prepare for the present and future needs of our students.

**2. Establishment and Operation of the Professional Growth Committee.**

2.1. All matters pertaining to Professional Growth will be submitted to the Professional Growth Committee in the following manner:

2.1.1. Each teacher should review their plan for professional growth with the building committee representative(s).

2.1.1.1. This Building Committee will include the building principal (or their appointee), and two full-time certified teaching staff members (one of which will represent the Building Professional Growth Committee on the District Professional Growth Committee).

2.1.1.2. The Building Committee will review the candidate's "Intent Form" and suggest improvements or deletions if necessary. These Intent Forms are due prior to the Professional Growth Committee meeting date. To be certain that the credits will be acceptable, it is the staff members' responsibility to consult with their Professional Growth Building Representatives prior to beginning any course.

2.1.1.3. When Intent Forms are completed and approved by the Building Committee, they will be forwarded to the Professional Growth Committee. The Professional Growth Committee will review the Intent Forms and recommend action to the Human Resources Department or the Superintendent's designee.

2.1.1.4. Minutes and lane change recommendations of the Professional Growth Committee will be submitted to the Director of Human Resources for appropriate action. Each staff member will receive a copy of the minutes of the Professional Growth meeting and it is the staff member's obligation to review these minutes to determine their lane change status. When necessary, teachers should consult with their building committee in regard to their professional growth records.

2.1.1.5. All approved credits shall remain a part of each staff member's professional growth file and shall not be subject to revocation as long as the staff member is employed by the Northfield School District.

2.2. Professional Growth and the Professional Growth Committee shall relate to NEW TEACHERS as follows:

- 2.2.1. When new teachers are hired, the academic credentials of these staff members will be submitted to the Human Resources Department for recommended lane placement. The chair of the Professional Growth Committee will review the placement before action by the School Board in all cases where it is possible or applicable.
- 2.2.2. New teachers are bound by the step and lane agreement upon which they were hired as indicated on the Declared Credits by New Teachers Form. Review of a teacher's step or lane placement would be made only when there is a claim that credentials are misrepresented by a teacher or claim that the Board or its representative has misrepresented its offer.
- 2.2.3. The Professional Growth Committee shall provide information about professional growth procedures in the "New Teacher Packets" distributed by the Human Resources Office. New teachers should contact their Building Professional Growth Committee if procedure clarification is required.
- 2.2.4. Graduate credits earned before the date of a new teacher's licensure may be considered for initial lane placement at the discretion of the Director of Human Resources or the Superintendent's designee if the graduate credits are germane to the teachers assigned subject matter.

- 2.3. The Professional Growth Committee:
  - 2.3.1. The Professional Growth Committee will include two (2) teachers and one (1) alternate from each building of the District, one (1) elementary administrator, one (1) secondary administrator, and the Director of Human Resources.
  - 2.3.2. Professional Growth Representatives in each school building shall determine the members of their Building Professional Growth Committee. It is recommended that there should be at least one (1) experienced member on the building committee.
- 2.4. **Forms.** The following forms are in use by the Professional Growth Committee and should be available in the office of the Principal of each building. These forms are periodically revised to meet changing needs.
  - 2.4.1. Application for Lane Change Form
  - 2.4.2. Declared Credits by New Teacher Form

### 3. **Lane Change Procedures.**

- 3.1. A teacher who qualifies for a higher salary education classification will be placed upon the higher schedule based on recommendations by the Director of Human Resources and the Professional Growth Committee. Individual contracts will be

modified prospectively to reflect qualified lane changes in accordance with the following procedures. The salary for the higher lane placement will become effective on the first of the month following the Professional Growth Committee's action. Undeclared credits earned prior to initial employment may not be used to attain subsequent lane advancement. To ensure that the applicant is informed that undeclared graduate credits earned prior to initial employment may not be used to attain subsequent lane advancement, both applicant and Director of Human Resources shall sign the Declared Credits by New Teacher Form. Copies of the Declared Credits by New Teacher Form shall then be placed in the applicant's professional growth folder and personnel file.

A teacher applying for a lane change shall submit a completed copy of the Application for Lane Change Form to the Professional Growth Committee.

- 3.2. **Transcripts.** When the Professional Growth Committee recommends a lane change for a teacher, an official transcript of college credits and a list of approved local credits in semester hours shall be submitted (credits which apply to the particular lane change) to the Director of Human Resources at the next District Professional Growth meeting. When the teacher is moving to the MA lane, the official transcript must show the terminal degree and the date the degree was conferred.
- 3.3. **Cut Off Dates.** The cut-off dates when teachers must submit intentions to change lanes for the upcoming semester are published yearly in the Guidelines for Professional Growth Procedures.
- 3.4. **Written Statements.** Teachers who intend to make any kind of changes in professional status should be sure they secure the proper forms from their building representatives and submit them before the published deadlines.

#### 4. Guidelines for the Continuing Professional Growth Program.

##### 4.1. General Policies

- 4.1.1. Credit may be earned by staff members through study initiated for one or more of the following purposes:
  - 4.1.1.1. Increasing the depth of preparation in areas of specialization.
  - 4.1.1.2. Broadening of liberal arts education in areas related to their field of specialization.
  - 4.1.1.3. Acquiring new skills and/or knowledge related to current developments and scholarship in their field of specialization.

- 4.1.1.4. Increasing knowledge of educational methods, philosophy, child development, and psychology.
- 4.1.1.5. Preparation for new responsibilities in the District that have been or will be assigned.
- 4.1.2. All graduate credits earned after a bachelor's degree has been granted, and that are in education, in the particular teacher's field, or in a related field will be evaluated by a committee.
- 4.1.3. All local credits will also be evaluated by this committee.
- 4.1.4. Only those graduate and/or local credits earned after a terminal degree has been granted shall be applicable to the next lane. After the B.A. or M.A. has been granted and validated by the college, future graduate and/or local credits earned are applied to the next lane change. Teachers who earn a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license while employed by the District will be eligible to apply all relevant graduate level credits earned in pursuit of that license to the next lane change upon issuance of the Tier 3 or Tier 4 license.
- 4.1.5. The building level evaluation committee will include the building principal or assistant principal and one or more Professional Growth Committee building representatives.

4.2. **Kinds of credits to be considered for evaluation.**

- 4.2.1. **Local Credits.** Local credits might include in-service training, travel, technical workshops, approved customized professional development experiences, approved micro-credentials or conferences.
- 4.2.2. **College/University graduate-level credits.** These credits should be clearly identified as graduate-level credits that are offered through a college or university that can be used towards a graduate-level degree, and not correspondence professional development credits. The Professional Growth committee will establish criteria and procedures for evaluating the validity of graduate credits.
- 4.2.3. **Technical College Credits.** Technical College credits must meet the same criteria as college or local credit. It is the intent that these credits be granted for increasing skills that improve an instructor's technical competencies in the areas of their teaching assignment and relevance to current workforce needs.
- 4.2.4. **Undergraduate Credits.** Undergraduate credits in the following areas with prior approval from the Superintendent or designee:

- 4.2.4.1. Spanish as a second language
- 4.2.4.2. American Sign Language
- 4.2.4.3. Somali as a second language
- 4.2.4.4. Swahili as a second language
- 4.2.4.5. English as a second language

4.3. **The requirements for local credit would be as follows:**

- 4.3.1. In-service courses or workshops must have the approval of the Professional Growth committee prior to offering the course to insure that credit will be granted.
  - 4.3.1.1. This includes instructors (leaders) and participants attending courses or workshops outside the school day who do not receive a stipend or are not otherwise compensated by the District for their time.
  - 4.3.1.2. Instructors will receive local credits only once for the same course and then only if not paid for service.
- 4.3.2. The instructor of the course must certify the proficiency of the applicant for the records to be eligible. The instructor may earn credits by declaring the amount of time spent instructing during the workshops as well as their preparation time. A minimum of twenty (20) hours combined class and out-of-class work as an instructor or leader is deemed sufficient to equal one local credit.
- 4.3.3. Persons wishing to take local credits should receive the approval of their building committee.
- 4.3.4. The norm for course credits or technical workshop credits is as follows:
  - 4.3.4.1. 1 credit: A minimum of twenty (20) hours combined class and out-of-class work.
  - 4.3.4.2. 2 credits: A minimum of forty (40) hours combined class and out-of-class work.
- 4.3.5. Allowances for special projects or other course-related activities will be evaluated individually. These would include evaluation for activities not specified or of a shorter duration such as travel, conferences, etc. No more than a career total of six (6) credits for travel shall be allowed for any individual teacher.
- 4.3.6. No more than four (4) local credits shall be applied within any given lane, except for technical workshop credits, where all credits approved by the

Professional Growth Committee shall apply.

- 4.3.7. A certificate will be issued by the instructor or administrator at the completion of workshop or coursework for local credit. Members are required to retain these certificates in their professional growth files.

## **ARTICLE XXI PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

1. **Payments.** The District shall provide protective clothing and protective eyewear for teachers in classes that require other than the ordinary clothing. This would include such classes as industrial technology, family and consumer science, art, and science. The maximum annual amount per eligible employee is \$250.00.

## **ARTICLE XXII SALARY CHECKS**

1. **Salary Payments and Deductions.** Salary payments will be electronically deposited twice per month on or before the 15th and 30th of each month commencing each contract year in the month of September. In most instances electronic payments will be deposited on the Friday prior to those dates if they fall on a weekend. The Finance Office will annually electronically publish a list of payroll dates for the ensuing contract year.

Teachers will be paid on a 24 payment basis with equal amounts paid beginning September 15 and ending August 30 of the subsequent year. Payment for additional work will be made as reported by principals. Pay for co-curricular activities will be made according to the statement of the assignment.

## **ARTICLE XXIII MEET AND CONFER PROCEDURES**

1. **Meet and Confer Items.** The School Board and the NEA mutually recognize that the PELRA provides for the establishment of procedures whereby the parties may meet and confer on educational policies of the district and on matters relating to the terms and conditions of employment in addition to the terms and conditions specifically set forth in this Agreement.
2. **Meet and Confer Committee.** In order to comply with the spirit and intent of the PELRA, the parties hereby establish a Meet and Confer committee to which all matters subject to the meet and confer process shall be referred; provided, however, that matters appropriate for consideration by the Staff Advisory Council should be deferred to the Council. The Meet and Confer committee shall be composed of four (4) members appointed by the School Board, at least one of whom shall be a School Board member, and four (4) members appointed by the NEA. The Meet and Confer committee shall meet at the request of either party, but no less often than once every four (4) months. The Meet and Confer committee shall be given advance notice and reasonable opportunity to meet prior to the adoption of

changes to any of the following policies: [102 - Educational and Employment Opportunity](#); [436 – Professional Staff Performance Evaluation](#); [403 – Dismissal of Employees](#); [652 – Instructional Materials Selection and Production](#).

Any grievances with respect to such policies shall be policy grievances and shall not be subject to arbitration. The teacher handbook for each building shall be reviewed with the NEA building representative prior to its presentation to the staff during workshop.

3. **Other District Committees.** The Co-Curricular committee shall continue to function in accordance with policies adopted by the School Board. Proposed changes in the functions or purposes of the Co-Curricular committee will be discussed with the Meet and Confer committee prior to implementation, unless the Superintendent and the NEA have already reached agreement on the proposed changes.

## ARTICLE XXIV GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

### 1. Definitions.

- 1.1. **Contract Grievance:** A claim by a teacher, group of teachers, or the exclusive representative that there has been a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of any provision of this Contract.
- 1.2. **Policy Grievance:** Any dispute or disagreement as to the interpretation or application of any term or terms of other established policies, rules, or regulations of the Employer. A policy grievance may be processed through the grievance procedure to the level of the School Board, but shall not be subject to arbitration.
- 1.3. **Days:** “Days” mean calendar days excluding Saturday, Sunday, and legal holidays as defined by Minnesota Statutes.
- 1.4. **Service and Filing:** The filing or service of any notice or document herein shall be timely if it is personally served or if it is sent by certified mail postmarked by the United States Postal Service within the time period.
- 1.5. **Reduced to Writing:** “Reduced to writing” means a concise statement outlining the nature of the grievance, the provision(s) of the contract in dispute, and the relief requested. The District has a grievance form for this purpose (see Exhibit D), copies of which are available in the office of each building principal. The grievance form must be signed by the grieving teacher (or one of a group of grieving teachers) and by a duly authorized representative of the NEA (even if the teacher does not wish to be represented by the NEA). All subsequent processing of the grievance should ordinarily use the original grievance form.

- 1.6. **Answer:** "Answer" means a concise response outlining the School Board's position on the grievance.
- 1.7. **Computation of Time:** In computing any period of time prescribed or allowed by procedures herein, the day on which the act, event or default for which the designated time period begins to run shall not be counted. If the last day of the period so computed falls on a day within the regular school year which is not a teacher duty day, that day shall not be counted and the period shall run until the end of the next teacher duty day. If the last day of the period so computed falls outside the regular school year on a Saturday, a Sunday, or a legal holiday, that day shall not be counted and the period shall run until the end of the next day which is not a Saturday, a Sunday, or a legal holiday.

2. **Level I.** Before filing a formal grievance, the teacher shall first discuss the alleged grievance with their building principal or other immediate supervisor in an attempt to resolve the grievance on an informal basis within the same conference.
  - 2.1. A formal grievance is initiated at Level I when it is reduced to writing on the grievance form (Exhibit D) and served on the building principal or other immediate supervisor. The building principal or other immediate supervisor must be served within twenty (20) days after the grievance occurred or twenty (20) days after the teacher knew, or through the exercise of reasonable diligence should have known, of the occurrence giving rise to the grievance. The teacher filing a formal grievance shall also serve a copy on the NEA.
  - 2.2. The building principal or other representative of the Employer shall, within five (5) days after receipt of the written grievance, meet with and serve on the grievant and the NEA a written statement of the disposition of the grievance.
3. **Level II.** If a grievance is not satisfactorily resolved at Level I, it may be appealed to Level II by serving a notice of appeal on the Superintendent within five (5) days after receipt of the written disposition of the grievance at Level I. A formal grievance involving teachers in more than one (1) building may also be initiated by the NEA at Level II by reducing it to writing on the grievance form (Exhibit D) and serving it on the Superintendent within twenty (20) days after the grievance occurred or twenty (20) days after the NEA knew, or through the exercise of reasonable diligence should have known of the occurrence giving rise to the grievance.
  - 3.1. The Superintendent or their designee shall meet with the grievant and/or NEA within ten (10) days after receipt of an appeal of a grievance from Level I or a grievance initiated at Level II. The Superintendent or their designee shall, within five (5) days of such meeting, serve on the grievant and the NEA a written statement of the disposition of the grievance at Level II.

4. **Level III.** If a grievance is not satisfactorily resolved at Level II, it may be appealed to Level III by serving a notice of appeal on the Clerk of the School Board within five (5) days after receipt of the written disposition of the grievance at Level II. Such notice of appeal shall include a copy of the written statement of the grievance and the answers at Level I and Level II.
  - 4.1. The School Board shall meet with the grievant and the NEA within ten (10) days after receipt of the notice of appeal, or by the date of its next regular board meeting, whichever is later. In the case of a grievance involving a group of teachers, such meeting need include only the NEA and the School Board.
  - 4.2. The School Board shall, within ten (10) days of such meeting, serve on the grievant and the NEA a written statement of the disposition of the grievance at Level III.
5. **Level IV.** The NEA may submit to arbitration any contract grievance that has been properly processed through Level III of the grievance procedure. The NEA must file with the Superintendent and Bureau of Mediation Services a written notice of intention to arbitrate not more than fifteen (15) days after the written disposition of the grievance at Level III.
  - 5.1. The parties shall endeavor to select a mutually acceptable arbitrator to hear and decide the grievance. If no agreement is reached, either party may request from the Bureau of Mediation Services, a list of arbitrators selected by the Commissioner, providing such request is made within fifteen (15) days after request for arbitration. Upon receipt of the list of arbitrators, the District and the exclusive representative shall alternately strike names from the list of arbitrators selected by the Commissioner until only one (1) name remains. If the parties are unable to agree on who shall strike the first name, the question shall be decided by a flip of the coin.
  - 5.2. Upon appointment of the arbitrator, the teacher(s) or the exclusive representative shall within five (5) days after the notice of appointment forward to the arbitrator, with a copy to the School Board, the substance of the grievance that shall include the following:
    - 5.2.1. The issues involved.
    - 5.2.2. Statement of the facts.
    - 5.2.3. Position of the grievant.
    - 5.2.4. The written documents developed in the first three levels of the grievance procedure.
  - 5.3. The School Board is to make a similar submission of information; it shall also be done within five (5) days after the notice of appointment of the arbitrator, with copies to the teacher(s) or the exclusive representative.

- 5.4. The Board and the exclusive representative shall not be permitted to assert in such arbitration procedure any grievance or to rely on any evidence not previously disclosed to either party.
- 5.5. The arbitrator shall not have the power to add, to subtract from, or to modify in any way the terms of the existing contract.
- 5.6. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding on all parties to the dispute unless the decision violates any provision of the laws of Minnesota or rules or regulations promulgated thereunder, or municipal charters or ordinances or resolutions enacted pursuant thereto, or which cause a penalty to be incurred thereunder. The decision shall be issued to the parties by the arbitrator, and a copy shall be filed with the Bureau of Mediation Services, State of Minnesota.
- 5.7. Each party shall bear its own expenses in connection with arbitration including expenses relating to the parties' representatives, witnesses, and any other expenses that the party incurs in connection with presenting its case in arbitration. A transcript or recording shall be made of the hearing at the request of either party. The parties shall share equally the fees of the arbitrator, but the cost of the transcript or recording will be paid by the party requesting the same (or shared if mutually agreeable) any other expenses which the parties mutually agree are necessary for the conduct of the arbitration.
- 5.8. Processing of all grievances shall occur after the close of the student contact portion of the teacher's workday whenever possible. If this is not possible, teachers shall not lose wages, subject to the limitation in Article IV, Section 8, during their necessary participation in the grievance proceeding on the following basis:
  - 5.8.1. The number of teachers participating may equal the number of administrative representatives participating in the grievance proceeding on behalf of the School Board; or
  - 5.8.2. If the number of said administrative representatives participating on behalf of the School Board is less than three (3), three (3) teachers may participate in the proceedings without loss of wages.
- 5.9. The parties, by mutual written agreement, may waive any step and/or extend any time limits in the grievance procedure. Provided, however, that failure to adhere to the time limits shall result in a forfeit of the grievance or, in the case of the School Board or its designees, shall require mandatory alleviation of the grievance as outlined in the last statement by the exclusive representative or teacher.
- 5.10. The provisions of this grievance procedure shall be severable, and if any provision or paragraph thereof or application of any such provision or paragraph under any circumstance is held invalid, it shall not affect any other provision or paragraph of this grievance procedure or the application of any provision or paragraph thereof

under different circumstances.

6. **Time Limits.** In the event a grievance is filed after May 15 of any year and strict adherence to the time limits may result in hardship to any party, the parties shall use their best efforts to process such grievance prior to the end of the school term or as soon thereafter as possible.
7. **Contract Expiration.** Notwithstanding the expiration of this contract, any claim or grievance arising hereunder may be processed through the grievance procedure until resolution.
8. **No Reprisals.** No reprisals of any kind shall be taken by the Board or the School Administration against any teacher because of their participation or refusal to participate in this grievance procedure.
9. **Representation.** Any teacher or the Employer may be represented at any stage of this grievance procedure by any person(s) or agent(s) designated by such party to act on their behalf. The NEA shall have the right to have a representative present and to express its position at any meeting for the adjustment of grievances under this Contract.

## **ARTICLE XXV** **DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE**

1. **Discipline and Discharge.** No teacher shall be disciplined without just cause. District actions regarding discharge shall be governed by [MN Stat. 122A.40](#).
2. **Corrective Discipline.**
  - 2.1. **Objective.** A step in just cause disciplinary situations is a teacher/supervisor conference where the teacher has the opportunity to provide the teacher's side of the situation.
  - 2.2. **Representation.** Both the teacher and the District are entitled to be represented at all levels of this disciplinary process.
  - 2.3. **Written Reprimand.** If the supervisor believes that a written reprimand is necessary, and having provided the teacher with the opportunity for the teacher to provide an explanation regarding the circumstances, the supervisor will provide a copy of the reprimand to the teacher.
  - 2.4. **Suspension.** If the District decides that a suspension is appropriate, the length of the suspension will be appropriate to the infraction or misconduct under the circumstances of the situation.
  - 2.5. **Progressive Discipline.** The District intends to follow a policy of progressive discipline with its employees, but reserves its right to decide the level of discipline it

deems appropriate. The normal sequence of discipline would be:

- 2.5.1. Oral reprimand (in a formal, private setting);
- 2.5.2. Written reprimand;
- 2.5.3. Suspension without pay.

The relative seriousness of the matter will determine at what level disciplinary action is commenced. The District may, in its discretion, suspend a teacher with pay pending an investigation.

- 2.6. **Appeal.** The employee may request review of the District's decision through the grievance procedure. At the employee's option, the matter may be submitted directly to arbitration pursuant to Section 5 of the grievance procedure.

## **ARTICLE XXVI** **JOB SHARING**

1. Teachers may volunteer and the District may, in its sole discretion, agree that two (2) or more teachers may share a position. A teacher's status in a shared position may be renewed on a year-to-year basis.
2. Teachers sharing a position shall be entitled to the leave benefits of Article VIII on a pro-rata basis.
3. Salaries for teachers sharing positions shall be prorated to reflect the fraction of the position shared. Increments and lane changes for teachers sharing a position shall be administered as if such teachers were teaching full-time, appropriately prorated for time worked.
4. Teachers sharing positions shall be treated in accordance with their former status, if any, as full-time or part-time teachers for purposes of Article XIV.
5. Teachers who formerly taught full time and are eligible for protection under the unrequested leave of absence article (Article XIV), shall be entitled to revert to full time status in any future school year, (unless, pursuant to Article XIV, this would result in the placement on unrequested leave of a more senior qualified teacher), by giving written notice of this intention to the Superintendent before February 1 prior to the school year of the intended return.
6. Insurance benefits are as provided in Article VII for part-time teachers.

## **ARTICLE XXVII** **DURATION**

1. **Term and Reopening Negotiations.** This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect for a period commencing on July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027, and thereafter until modifications are made pursuant to the PELRA. If either party desires to modify or amend this Agreement commencing on July 1, it shall give written notice of such intent no later than May 1, 2027. Unless otherwise mutually agreed, the parties shall not commence negotiations more than 90 days prior to the expiration of this Agreement.
2. **Effect.** This Agreement constitutes the full and complete Agreement between the School Board and the Northfield Education Association representing the teachers of the District. The provisions herein relating to terms and conditions of employment supersede any and all prior Agreements, resolutions, practices, School District policies, rules or regulations concerning terms and conditions of employment inconsistent with these provisions.
3. **Finality.** Any matters relating to the current contract terms, whether or not referred to in this Agreement, shall not be open for negotiation during the term of this Agreement unless mutually agreed upon by both parties.
4. **Severability.** The provisions of this Agreement shall be severable, and if any provision under any circumstances is held invalid, it shall not affect any other provisions of this Agreement or the application of any provision thereof.
5. **Individual Contracts.** All probationary teachers except occasional substitutes will be initially employed by written individual contracts. Any individual contract between the District and an individual teacher, heretofore executed, will be subject to and consistent with the terms and conditions of this Agreement. If an individual contract contains any language inconsistent with the Agreement, this Agreement during its duration shall be controlling. Any individual contract hereafter executed will be in the form provided in Exhibit E. Extensions or renewals of individual contracts may be by written notice of assignment.

## **ARTICLE XXVIII** **TEACHER RETIREMENT**

Teachers planning on retiring from Northfield Public Schools shall notify the District by February 1 of the year in which they plan on retiring.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement on the dates set forth under the signatures of their respective representatives.

**NORTHFIELD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

Amanda Miller  
Amanda Miller, President

Paula M. Baragary  
Paula Baragary, Chief Negotiator

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DIST. NO 659**

Claudia Gonzalez-George  
Claudia Gonzalez-George, Chairperson

Amy Goerwitz  
Amy Goerwitz, Clerk

Dated this 19 day of December, 2025.

Dated this 15 day of December, 2025.

**SCHEDULE A**  
**SALARY SCHEDULE 2025-2026**

	BA	BA10	BA20	BA30	BA40	MA	MA10	MA20	MA30	MA40
1	56,550	58,227	60,376	62,554	64,716	66,560	68,000	69,449	70,891	72,333
2	58,007	59,741	62,058	64,408	66,743	68,638	70,081	71,534	72,979	74,422
3	59,501	61,292	63,782	66,316	68,831	70,781	72,227	73,680	75,126	76,571
4	61,033	62,887	65,556	68,281	70,984	72,992	74,438	75,890	77,336	78,782
5	62,606	64,521	67,381	70,301	73,208	75,273	76,716	78,166	79,613	81,056
6	64,217	66,198	69,255	72,385	75,499	77,623	79,062	80,514	81,956	83,398
7	65,871	67,917	71,179	74,529	77,862	80,047	81,483	82,929	84,365	85,804
8	67,568	69,683	73,161	76,735	80,298	82,548	83,976	85,415	86,847	88,281
9	69,307	71,492	75,195	79,006	82,812	85,125	86,546	87,980	89,404	90,829
10	69,307	73,352	77,287	81,347	85,404	87,784	89,195	90,619	92,035	93,451

Teachers that hold an Ed.D. or Ph.D. are eligible for a \$2,500 annual stipend. Transcripts outlining the Ed.D. or Ph.D. must be on file with the Human Resources Office.

Employees that hold a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in a field of study germane to their subject matter will receive an additional \$1,000 annual stipend.

Teachers holding a Principal license and an Education Specialist degree will automatically be placed at MA+40. Transcripts outlining the Education Specialist degree must be on file with the Human Resources Office.

**Lane Freezing (from Article V, Section 2).**

A. The following lanes will have steps frozen as listed:

Lane

B.A.	9
All other lanes	10

No teacher may advance beyond the maximum step on a lane set forth above.

B. Negotiated raises in steps during subsequent years shall, however, be paid.

C. A teacher changing lanes from a frozen step shall receive credit toward step increments in the new lane for service while on the frozen step, up to the maximum step on the new lane set forth above.

**SCHEDULE B**  
**SALARY SCHEDULE 2026-27**

Step	BA	BA10	BA20	BA30	BA40	MA	MA10	MA20	MA30	MA40
1	57,681	59,391	61,583	63,805	66,010	67,891	69,360	70,838	72,309	73,780
2	59,168	60,936	63,299	65,696	68,078	70,011	71,483	72,964	74,439	75,911
3	60,691	62,518	65,057	67,643	70,207	72,196	73,672	75,153	76,629	78,103
4	62,253	64,145	66,868	69,646	72,404	74,452	75,926	77,408	78,883	80,357
5	63,858	65,812	68,729	71,707	74,673	76,778	78,251	79,729	81,205	82,677
6	65,502	67,522	70,640	73,833	77,009	79,175	80,643	82,124	83,595	85,068
7	67,188	69,275	72,602	76,020	79,419	81,647	83,112	84,588	86,053	87,521
8	68,919	71,077	74,624	78,269	81,904	84,199	85,655	87,123	88,584	90,047
9	70,693	72,922	76,699	80,586	84,468	86,828	88,277	89,740	91,192	92,646
10	70,693	74,819	78,833	82,974	87,112	89,540	90,979	92,431	93,875	95,320

Teachers that hold an Ed.D. or Ph.D. are eligible for a \$2,500 annual stipend. Transcripts outlining the Ed.D. or Ph.D. must be on file with the Human Resources Office.

Employees that hold a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in a field of study germane to their subject matter will receive an additional \$1,000 annual stipend.

Teachers holding a Principal license and an Education Specialist degree will automatically be placed at MA+40. Transcripts outlining the Education Specialist degree must be on file with the Human Resources Office.

**Lane Freezing (from Article V, Section 2).**

A. The following lanes will have steps frozen as listed:

Lane

B.A. 9

All other lanes 10

No teacher may advance beyond the maximum step on a lane set forth above.

B. Negotiated raises in steps during subsequent years shall, however, be paid.

C. A teacher changing lanes from a frozen step shall receive credit toward step increments in the new lane for service while on the frozen step, up to the maximum step on the new lane set forth above.

**SCHEDULE C**  
**Co-Curricular Pay Schedule**

**I. DETERMINATION OF SUPPLEMENTS**

The rate of pay for activities included in this section shall be determined through negotiations between the School Board and the NEA.

Coaches and Advisors of athletic and activities programs will be placed on the Schedule C pay schedule based on 4 criteria:

1. Number of Participants
2. Length of Season
3. Liability/Safety
4. Program Supervision

A review of participation in each activity will be conducted every four (4) years to determine approximate placement of positions on Schedule C. Pay is based on a percentage of BA, Step 1 of the teacher salary schedule in each year of the contract.

**SCHEDULE C 2025-2026**

<b>MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE (MSHSL) SPONSORED ACTIVITIES</b>									
HEAD COACHES			ASSISTANTS AND OTHER			9TH GRADE	MS HEAD	MS ASST	MS 6TH GR
14%	13%	12%	10%	9%	8%	8%	6%	5%	4%
\$7,917	\$7,352	\$6,786	\$5,655	\$5,090	\$4,524	\$4,524	\$3,393	\$2,828	\$2,262

<b><u>NON-MSHSL SPONSORED ACTIVITIES</u></b>			
1	2	3	4
12%	9%	6%	4%
\$6,786	\$5,090	\$3,393	\$2,262

**SCHEDULE C 2026-2027**

<b>MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE (MSHSL) SPONSORED ACTIVITIES</b>									
HEAD COACHES			ASSISTANTS AND OTHER			9TH GRADE	MS HEAD	MS ASST	MS 6TH GR
14%	13%	12%	10%	9%	8%	8%	6%	5%	4%
\$8,075	\$7,499	\$6,922	\$5,768	\$5,191	\$4,614	\$4,614	\$3,461	\$2,884	\$2,307

<b><u>NON-MSHSL SPONSORED ACTIVITIES</u></b>			
1	2	3	4
12%	9%	6%	4%
\$6,922	\$5,191	\$3,461	\$2,307

Coaches and advisors that were paid in accordance with Schedule C during the 2020-2021 school year will have their compensation held harmless beginning July 1, 2021 until they resign their position on Schedule C.

#### **A. Experience Increment for Activities**

New Coaches and advisors will be placed on the following table based on the prior experience as determined by the Director of Student Activities, or other designee.

Completed Years of Experience	Stipend
1	\$0.00
2	\$0.00
3	\$125.00
4	\$125.00
5	\$175.00
6	\$175.00
7	\$250.00
8	\$250.00
9	\$250.00
10	\$350.00

**SCHEDULE D | 2025-2027**  
**All Schedule D rates begin July 1 of each year**

<b>Miscellaneous Rates</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>2026-2027</b>
Hourly rate of pay outside of contract time unless stated otherwise. Examples include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attending training</li> <li>● Providing training</li> <li>● Supervision of non-athletic events</li> <li>● After school instruction</li> <li>● Targeted Services instruction</li> <li>● Bridges to Kindergarten</li> <li>● Building and District Level Work Teams</li> <li>● Curriculum Writing</li> <li>● IEP meetings held during prep</li> </ul>	\$40.00/hr	\$40.00/hr
Substituting for another teacher	\$40.00/hr	\$40.00/hr
Homebound Instruction	Lane/Step	Lane/Step
Chair of the Continuing Education Committee <i>Note: This stipend constitutes 50% of the continuing education committee chair stipend. The NEA will pay the other 50% directly to the chair.</i>	\$750.00	\$750.00
Professional Growth Committee Chair <i>Note: This stipend constitutes 50% of the professional growth committee chair stipend. The NEA will pay the other 50% directly to the chair.</i>	\$125.00	\$125.00
District Initiated Room Move Stipend	\$100.00	\$100.00
Elementary Teachers who are assigned additional students because a substitute for the students' regular teacher cannot be secured will receive additional compensation as indicated below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Less than or equal to two hours</li> <li>● More than two hours</li> <li>● Entire class for the full day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● \$75.00</li> <li>● \$150.00</li> <li>● \$200.00</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● \$75.00</li> <li>● \$150.00</li> <li>● \$200.00</li> </ul>
Summer School/Credit Recovery/Extended School Year	Lane/Step	Lane/Step
<b>Overload Calculation</b>		
A secondary teacher who contracts to teach a sixth class or a second supervision assignment will be compensated at the rates indicated below. A homeroom or activity period that is implemented by a seventy percent (70%) affirmative vote of a building teaching staff who cast ballots and whose activities, topics and utilization is determined by the building teaching staff and not assigned by the building principal or administration shall not constitute a sixth class or second supervision period as		

described in this paragraph. Any vote associated with this section will be jointly counted by the exclusive representative and an assigned representative from the District.

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Classes</u>	<u>Supervision</u>	<u>Rate</u>
7 period day	6	1	$\frac{1}{6}$ Pro-rata
6 period day	6	0	$\frac{1}{6}$ Pro-rata
7 period day	6	0	$\frac{1}{6}$ Pro-rata
6 period day	5	1	$\frac{1}{6}$ Pro-rata
7 period day	5	2	<input type="checkbox"/> Pro-rata
6 period day	N/A	N/A	

Proration shall be based on the teacher's lane and step placement on the salary schedule, excluding longevity and other compensation.

<b>Ancillary Rates</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>2026-2027</b>
High School Band	\$6,361	\$6,488
Middle School Band	\$3,862	\$3,939
Pep Band	\$1,000	\$1,020
Elementary Band	\$2,499	\$2,549
High School & Middle School Jazz Band	\$1,590	\$1,622
High School Orchestra	\$6,361	\$6,488
Middle School Orchestra	\$3,862	\$3,939
Elementary Orchestra	\$2,499	\$2,549
High School Vocal	\$6,361	\$6,488
Middle School Vocal	\$3,862	\$3,939
Elementary Vocal (split)	\$1,079	\$1,101
Junior and Senior Class Advisors	\$2,499	\$2,549
Rock and Roll Revival - Director	\$7,724	\$7,879
Rock and Roll Revival - Choreographer	\$5,112	\$5,214
Rock and Roll Revival - Band Leader	\$4,430	\$4,519
Rock and Roll Revival - Vocal Coach	\$4,430	\$4,519
Rock and Roll Revival - Production Coordinator	\$4,430	\$4,519
Middle School Spelling Bee	\$613	\$626
DECA Advisor	\$3,408	\$3,476
FFA Advisor	\$4,000	\$4,080

The stipends above will be tied to the increase on Schedule A and B, respectively.

**EXHIBIT D****GRIEVANCE FORM**

Grievance # \_\_\_\_\_ (District Completes)

Name of Grievant \_\_\_\_\_

Date Filed \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Association Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Date Grievance Occurred \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of the grievance (including events/conditions of the grievance/persons responsible)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contract provision allegedly violated: \_\_\_\_\_

Redress Sought: \_\_\_\_\_

Grievant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (signed **before** submitting grievance)**LEVEL I - FORMAL -- DATE ISSUED:** \_\_\_\_\_**Disposition by Principal and Reasons Therefore:**

Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Initial Applicable Statements:**

I hereby accept the above disposition.  
 I hereby decline the above disposition.  
 I intend to process the grievance to the next step.

Grievant's Signature (after principal's disposition)  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_**Distribution of Form**

- Board of Education
- Superintendent
- Human Resources Director
- Building Principal
- Northfield Education Association
- Grievant

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**LEVEL II - FORMAL -- DATE ISSUED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disposition by Superintendent and Reasons Therefor:**

Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
-----

Initial Applicable Statements:

I hereby accept the above disposition.  
 I hereby decline the above disposition.  
 I intend to process the grievance to the next step.

Grievant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LEVEL III - FORMAL -- DATE ISSUED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disposition by Board of Education and Reasons Therefor:**

Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
-----

Initial Applicable Statements:

I hereby accept the above disposition.  
 I hereby decline the above disposition.  
 I intend to process the grievance to the next step.

Grievant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LEVEL IV - FORMAL -- DATE ISSUED**

Disposition and Award of Arbitrator: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Arbitrator \_\_\_\_\_

Exhibit E



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #659  
PROBATIONARY TEACHER CONTRACT

The School Board of Independent School District No. 659 of the State of Minnesota, enters into this agreement, pursuant to M.S. 122A.40, as amended, with **TEACHER NAME**, a legally qualified and licensed teacher who agrees to perform the teaching services prescribed by the School Board or its designated representative as **TEACHER ASSIGNMENT** for the **XXXX-XXXX** school year.

1. **Basic Services:** Said teacher also agrees to perform related professional services prescribed by the School Board or its designated representative during the school day as defined in the Agreement. This contract incorporates and is subject to the provisions of M.S. 122A.40, as amended, and the provisions of the Agreement for teachers of this District now or hereafter adopted for the said school year pursuant to the provisions of PELRA, as amended.
2. **Duration:** This contract covers the time period of **DATE** through **DATE**.
3. **Duty Year:** Teacher duty days and school days shall be those named on the school calendar as adopted by the School Board in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement for teachers of this District and the teacher agrees to teach on those legal holidays which the calendar may specify as a teacher duty day or school day.
4. **Additional Assignments:** The teacher may undertake, by separate agreement, the performance of additional work days or other additional assignments beyond the normal service prescribed for the teaching position, for the additional compensation established for such services. Any such additional assignment, and the additional compensation therefore, shall terminate at the end of the school year, and shall not be subject to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 122A.40, unless otherwise expressly provided herein.
5. **Salary:** In consideration thereof, the School Board agrees to pay said teacher a salary based on the following information:

**FTE:**

**Lane:**

**Step:**

**Days/Year:**

**Base Salary:**

**Employee Signature:**

**Board Chair Signature of Receipt:**

**Board Clerk Signature:**