

August 2013

Dear Colleagues:

I want to take this opportunity to greet you at the start of a new school year and offer a warm welcome to those of you who are joining Northfield Public Schools for the first time this fall. I hope you had a wonderful and relaxing summer, and that you are ready to return, refreshed and renewed.

The Northfield Public School District is committed to helping students reach their full potential. Students and staff have made great strides in educational performance and instructional improvement.

Highlights during the past 12 months

- Maintained a positive fund balance that allowed us to sustain current staff and programs despite limited State funding increases, State initiated short-term borrowing from schools, and late State Aid payments to schools.
- Continued to spend over 70% of our District expenditures on direct classroom instruction by enhancing administrative efficiencies.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) supported increased student achievement through strengthened teaching, while flexible grouping allowed students to learn at their instructional level.
- Implemented Response to Intervention (RtI) in all elementary buildings. RtI provided support and interventions when students are having difficulties with learning. Getting students “back on track” resulted in decreased referrals to special education.
- Implemented Phase I of a Transformational Technology Initiative that trained all teachers to use tablet computers effectively in preparation for a 1:1 student initiative.
- Implemented staff training and curriculum.
- Continued Bridges to K, Where Everyone Belongs (WEB), Link Crew, and the 9th Grade Academy to support communication and connections between incoming students and caring adults as they enter a new building.
- Elementary and secondary students continued to out-perform the state and nation in MAP, MCA, ACT, PLAN and EXPLORE tests.
- 85% of our high school students taking the Advanced Placement (AP) tests earned college credit for AP high school classes.
- The TORCH program increased high school graduation and college entrance for Latino and first generation college-bound students.

Adapting to economic and security challenges

- Community support of the Operating and Capital Projects Levies and the District’s stewardship of our budget reserves allowed us to maintain all programs and staff for the 2013-14 school year.
- The District’s self-insured healthcare continued to provide stability in healthcare premiums costs for 2012-13.
- Increased security measures were implemented in all buildings in the second semester of the 2012-13 school year.

- More on Reverse Side -

Future plans and progress

- Continuing to implement the Response to Intervention (RtI) problem-solving model with the support of RtI coaches in each elementary building. Providing scientifically-based interventions to students who need more support to reach proficiency in the classroom.
- Expanding the implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) in all our schools. RtI will continue to support academic interventions when students are having difficulties with learning and expand interventions for students who need positive behavior support.
- Implementing Phase II of the Transformational Technology initiative providing a tablet computer for every secondary student and a pod of 4-6 tablet computers in elementary classrooms.
- Continuing Wednesday morning Professional Learning Community time that directly supports teacher collaboration in improving instruction for their students.
- Continuing to implement District and building plans to address the needs of subgroups that are not making adequate yearly progress on MCA, MAP and other assessments.
- Completing building improvement and security projects and continuing to upgrade our technology infrastructure to enhance safety, usability accessibility and reliability.

Optimism for the future

- We deeply appreciate our supportive community and the financial stability provided by the Operating and Capital Projects Levies. We remain committed to delivering educational excellence that empowers all learners to participate in our dynamic world.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind each employee that it is their responsibility to read and be familiar with the following policies that can be found on the School District's website.

Please go to: <http://nfld.k12.mn.us/about/board/policies>

- Policy 102 – Equal Educational and Employment Opportunity
- Policy 409 – Employee Publications, Instructional Materials, Inventions and Creations
- Policy 410 – Family and Medical Leave
- Policy 413 – Harassment and Violence
- Policy 414 – Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse
- Policy 415 – Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults
- Policy 418 – Drug-free Workplace/Drug-free School
- Policy 419 – Tobacco-free Environment
- Policy 441 – Use of Technology and Telecommunications Systems by Employees
- Policy 514 – Bully Prohibition
- Policy 522 – Student Sex Nondiscrimination
- Policy 526 – Hazing Prohibition

Northfield Public Schools remains committed to excellence and ready to help every child be successful. The credit for our success belongs to you, and I thank each of you for the work you do each day for our students. As we face the new year, everyone's collective efforts will be needed to accomplish what lies ahead. The successes we have achieved and will continue to achieve in the future are a testimony to the power of teamwork.

Have a great year!

Respectfully,



L. Chris Richardson, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

PH: 507.663.0629

E-mail: Chris.Richardson@nfld.k12.mn.us