

2022-23 District Family Update No. 25 | April 13, 2023

 **Reading time: 3 minutes, two seconds**

Dear Northfield School District Families:

I've always appreciated the adage, "if you don't like Minnesota weather, wait 15 minutes." That feels true as we went from an April 1st blizzard to record-setting high temperatures this week.

Priority-based budget reductions approved by the board

Thank you to all students, families, community members, and staff who provided feedback through the priority-based budget process. Since the reduction packages were shared with the community in late February, you stepped up and shared your perspective while acknowledging the difficult situation the district — and so many others across the state — are facing due to chronic state underfunding and declining enrollment. I appreciate your emails, your phone calls, your public comment at board meetings, and for attending our public meetings about the reductions.

[The board approved this list of recommendations on Monday.](#) I want to highlight a few of the items we hear the most about during the feedback process.

- Middle school activities will continue as they have in the past. Increased activity fees in Grades 6-12 will provide the funding for them.
- The activity bus will remain. Increased ticket prices for admission to high school activities will provide the funding for it.
- The recommendation for changing from a seven-period day to a six-period day at the middle school is planned for implementation in 2024-25 as opposed to 2023-24. This delay will provide planning time to address the reasonable concerns raised during the implementation process.

The board will continue discussing potential changes to our transportation system this spring in accordance with the budget reductions made in 2022. I will keep you updated about this discussion in future communications.

Why did we need to make reductions?

I understand you may tire of our sharing the reasons why we are in this situation, but it is important to understand them. Chronic state underfunding and declining enrollment are very serious challenges that have put us in this unfavorable position. [Read more about those reasons here.](#)

It is critical to note that many districts are in this same situation for similar reasons. Districts also making substantial reductions include but are not limited to Edina, Faribault, Farmington, Lakeville, Mankato, New Prague, Rochester, and Wayzata. When districts like those (and us) are among those making substantial reductions, we recognize the issue is a structural funding problem at the state level.

Support for St. Olaf

Our community is interdependent and we know that there are many school district families who are also connected to St. Olaf College. The arrest of a St. Olaf student who has been charged [with several criminal counts related to alleged threats of violence](#) impacts our broader community. We are all grateful to the St. Olaf custodian who reported the concerns and averted

a potential tragedy, St. Olaf Public Safety for their prompt action, and the Northfield Police Department for their skilled work in response. The custodian's actions demonstrate the importance of saying something if you see something concerning. Remember the [county-wide Tip411 system](#) allows for anonymous reporting. We stand with St. Olaf as they recover from this disturbing situation.

Save the Date: Arts á la Carte on April 21 at NHS

Come join us for this ART-FULL community-wide event on April 21 from 5:30 pm—9 pm! The evening will include music and speech performances, a mug and print sale, a spring play preview in the auditorium, Honors Art booths in the hallways, a student art gallery in the lower cafeteria, and art activities all around NHS to entertain all ages! There will be pottery wheel demonstrations, henna art, shrinky dinks, splatter faces, robot art, face painting, mini wood landscape art, a film festival, and much more!

 Text credit: NHS Schoology page

Congratulations!

I am proud to share that several members of our school community have recently been recognized:

- Former teacher, coach, and Director of Student Activities Tom Graupmann was [recently inducted](#) into the Minnesota Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association Hall of Fame. Congratulations, Tom!
- Northfield High School student Jack Linder's video "Build Your Brain" earned fourth place in the [Escape the Vape 2023](#) video challenge.
- The Northfield Area Learning Center has received a "[promising practices](#)" award from Synergy and Leadership Exchange for their innovative Wednesday schedule that allows experiential learning opportunities for their students.

Thank you

As always, thank you for your trust and support. We value the opportunity to serve your students!

Sincerely,

Matt

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