

2022-23 District Family Update No. 27 | May 26, 2023

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Dear Northfield School District Families:

We are preparing to “land the plane” and end the 2022-23 school year. Thank you for your partnership in helping us navigate a “reset” year as we emerged from the pandemic. This year, we sought to get back into a regular rhythm and re-establish our baseline. As expected, there were high and low points.

We focused on relationships, worked together to ensure regular student attendance, continued to work on meeting students’ academic and social/emotional needs, all in the pursuit of our vision to prepare **every** student for lifelong success. Additionally, we anticipate our end-of-year data showing substantial improvement in critical areas. Voters also overwhelmingly approved two capital projects levy questions and welcomed new school board members.

We experienced tragedy, tolerated an arduous winter, tackled difficult budget reductions, learned from our work to modernize family engagement/communication, and continue to seek solutions to the multitude of challenges resulting from a global pandemic.

As a school community, we experience these highs and lows **together**. I am proud of the perseverance and optimism we have demonstrated. I value your feedback — both positive and critical. We must work together to constantly improve our school district for our students to prepare them for a constantly changing world.

Community Memorial Day Celebration

The community Memorial Day celebration will be held on Monday, May 29, 2023, at 9:00 am at Veteran’s Memorial Park. In the event of rain, the celebration will be moved to the gymnasium at St. Olaf College. Check KYMN Radio for weather-related updates about the event.

Legislative update

The Minnesota House and Senate approved HF 2497, the education finance omnibus bill and Governor Walz signed the bill on Wednesday. The highlights of the bill include:

- Basic formula is increased by 4% in FY24 and 2% FY25.
- The basic formula will be indexed with inflation beginning with the FY26. School districts will receive a minimum of a 2% increase and a maximum of a 3% increase based on the consumer price index.
- Forty-four percent (44%) of the special education cross subsidy will be reimbursed in FY24 and FY25. Fifty percent (50%) will be reimbursed in FY26 and FY27.
- You can [view a summary of the bill here](#).
- Policy adopted as part of the bill will require new expenditures by the district.

Northfield Teaching Fellows Program

The Northfield School District received a “Grow Your Own” grant from the Minnesota Department of Education in 2022. The “Northfield Teaching Fellows” program is open to applicants who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) attending

or planning to attend a Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board-approved (PELSB-approved) teacher preparation program. The district, in partnership with the Northfield Healthy Community Initiative, recently approved four applicants as part of its second round of funding.

[According to the Minnesota Department of Education](#), “only 5.9 percent of our teacher workforce identify as teachers of color or American Indian teachers; whereas 36.7 percent of our students identify as students of color or American Indian students.” Students benefit from “learning from someone they can relate to, socially and culturally.” ([Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019](#)) Congratulations Xochitl Oaxaca, Ana Marquez Gatton, Ana Gallego, and Lupema Celis Castillo!

Alumni Spotlight: Ben Wang '16

2016 Northfield High School alumni Ben Wang plays one of the lead roles in the new Disney+ series *American Born Chinese*. [You can read the recent Star Tribune article about Ben and his new series here.](#)

Air Quality Index and School Activities

Earlier this week, our area was covered by an “orange” alert from the Environment Protection Agency’s Air Quality Index (AQI). It was not the first time that our area has been in a “orange” alert. However, greater intensity from the Rice County Landfill fire prompted additional questions. [You can learn more about the air quality index here.](#) This summer, the district will create guidelines in how it approaches outdoor activities with students when air quality deteriorates and include them as part of its crisis plan.

Community member/parent superintendent meeting times available on June 12

On Monday, June 12, we have set aside time for community members and parents/caregivers to meet one-on-one with the superintendent. This is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and feedback. If you would like to schedule a 15-30 minute meeting, please contact Anita Aase at aaase@northfieldschools.org. Interpreters are available as needed.

Board update

The school board held regular meetings on May 8 and May 22. The board packets, table files, and meeting videos are [located on our website](#). You can [listen](#) to my recaps on KYMN radio.

Thank you!

While we will continue to navigate obstacles, I am confident that our future is bright. We have the right people with the right mindset and the dedication necessary to do difficult things. I look forward to accelerating progress in realizing our district vision in 2023-24! Thank you for your ongoing support, grace, and trust. We do not take any of it for granted.

Sincerely,



Matt

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Superintendent of Schools

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