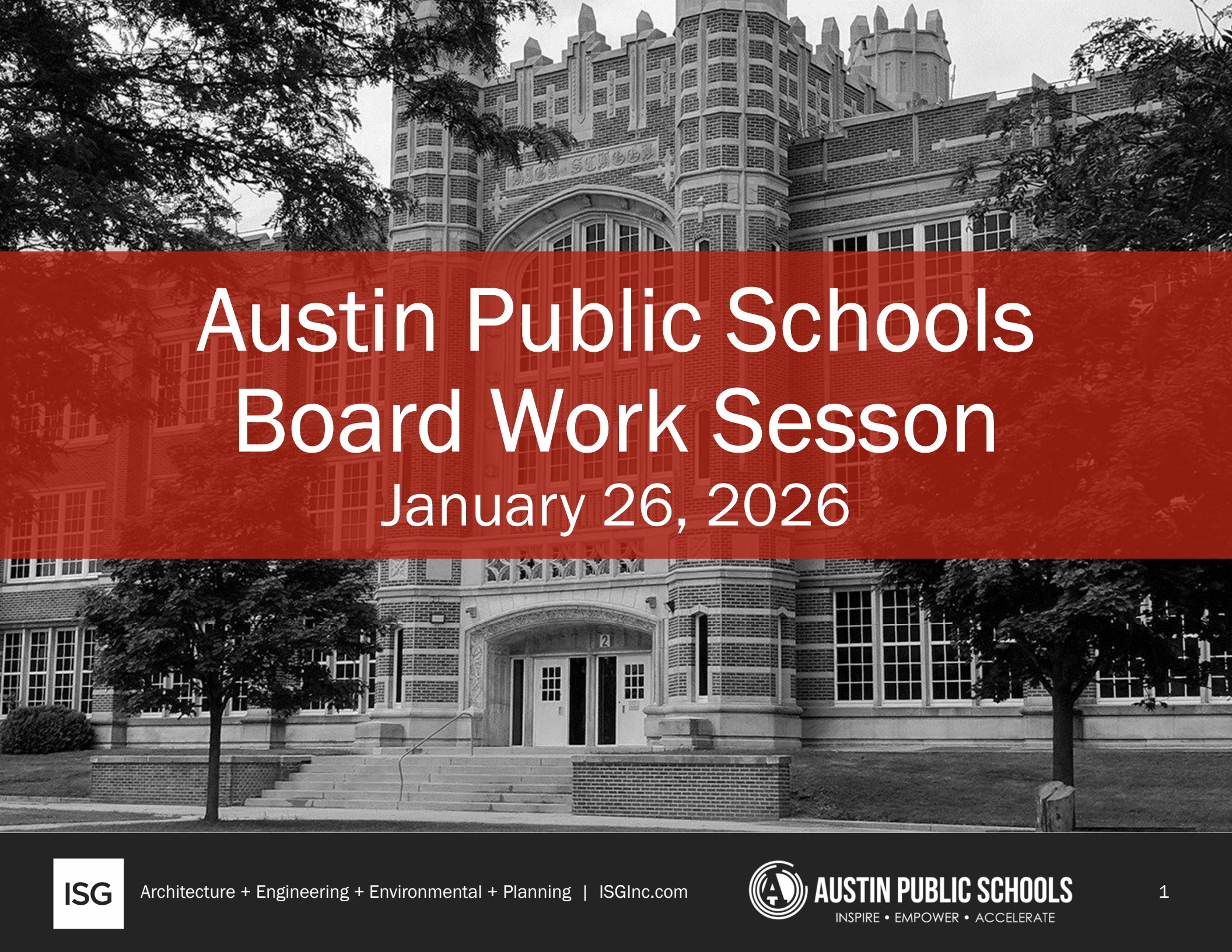


School Board Study Session
Monday, January 26, 2026 4:00 PM

District Office Conference Room, Room 164
Austin High School
401 3rd Ave. NW
Austin, MN 55912

Agenda

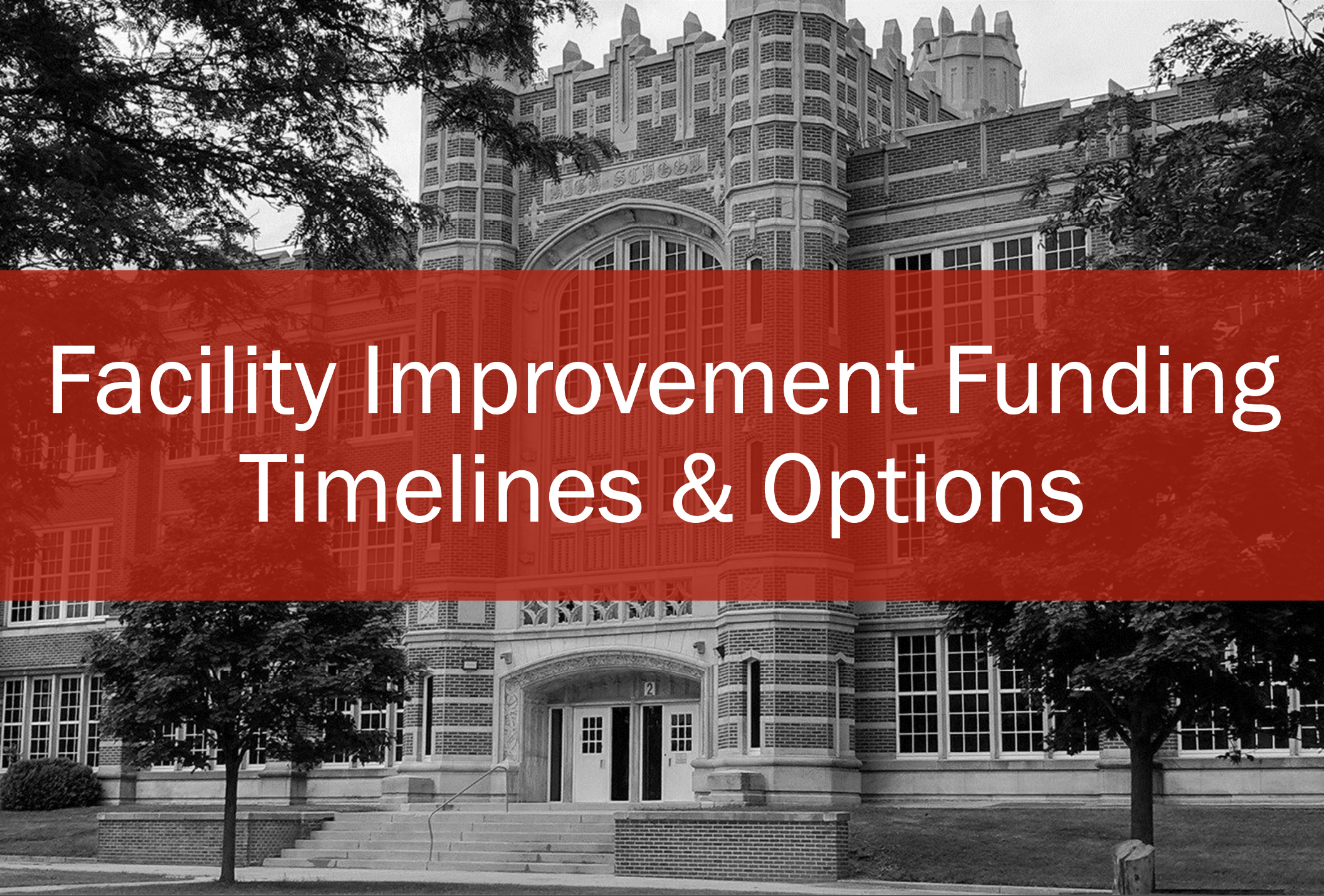
1. Call to order/roll call
Speaker(s): Chairperson
2. Approval of agenda (Action)
Speaker(s): Chairperson
3. Facilities plan and utilization discussion
Speaker(s): Superintendent Dr. Joey Page, Exec Dir of Finance and Operations Todd Lechtenberg and Representatives from ISG, Rapp Strategies, and PTMA
4. The following policies in section 400 are up for regular review.
Speaker(s): Chairperson
 - 4.A. Policy 420 - Students and Employees with Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases and Certain Other Communicable Diseases and Infectious Conditions
 - 4.B. Policy 421 - Gifts to Employees and School Board Members
 - 4.C. Policy 422 - Policies Incorporated by Reference
 - 4.D. Policy 423 - Employee-Student Relationships - REDLINE updates attached
 - 4.E. Policy 424 - License Status
 - 4.F. Policy 426 - Paraprofessional Certification Policy - REDLINE updates attached
 - 4.G. Policy 427 - Workload Limits for Certain Special Education Teachers
 - 4.H. Policy 428 - Employee Use of Social Media
 - 4.I. Policy 433 - Leave for Staff Members Elected to Public Office or Chosen as Party Officers or Delegates to Party Conventions
5. BOARD TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION (ACTION)
6. Superintendent's goals update
7. BOARD TO ENTER OPEN SESSION (ACTION)
8. Adjournment (Action)

The background of the slide is a black and white photograph of a large, ornate brick building with Gothic-style architecture, featuring a prominent central tower with a crenellated top. A red semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text in white. The building's facade is detailed with arched windows and decorative stonework.

Austin Public Schools Board Work Session January 26, 2026

Agenda

- Facility Improvement Timelines & Options
- Potential Facility Improvement Scenarios & Tax Impacts
- Discuss Next Steps



Facility Improvement Funding Timelines & Options



Timeline Options

- Assigned Funds Projects
 - 2026 Design, engineering, state approvals & bidding
 - Required time before construction: Jan-April design/ engineering, MNDOLI review May-July, bidding, board approval of bids, construction begins.
 - Summer 2027 Construction

Remaining Needs

- Board Authorized Bond Funding
 - 2026 Design, engineering, MDE approval (September), state approvals & bidding
 - Summer 2027 Construction (pending size of projects)
- Voter-approved Bond Funding
 - November 2026 vote
 - 2027 design, engineering, state approvals & bidding
 - Summer 2028/2029 Construction (pending size of projects)

What are board authorized funding options?

- Abatement Bonds (parking lots)
- Roofing (\$100K minimum per site)
- IAQ (Indoor Air Quality)
 - HVAC standards not being met and describe how we will meet current standards
 - Deferred maintenance of building mechanical systems:
 - HVAC
 - Controls
 - Fire suppression
 - Electronic door controls and control software
 - Fuel system
 - Asbestos abatement

Scope Summary

- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**
 - Former computer lab HVAC update
 - Address chilled water leak
 - Address minor roof repairs
- **Remaining Scope**
 - Masonry wall repairs
 - Window replacement
 - Door replacement
 - Ceiling replacement
 - Interior finishes & casework
 - Restroom renovation
 - Fire alarm replacement
 - SPED reconfiguration

Facility Conditions Summary

Neveln Elementary School

- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**

- Replace boilers and associated steam components
- Replace steam fin tube radiation and associated piping
- Upgrade Fire Alarm System

- **Remaining Work**

- Secure entry improvements
- Domestic water piping
- Main electrical service upgrade
- Locker replacement
- Door & window replacement

- **Assigned Funds Scope**

- Restroom remodel
- Replace boilers and associated steam components
- Replace steam fin tube radiation and associated piping

Facility Conditions Summary

Southgate Elementary School

- Potential Board Authorized Scope
 - Replace Boiler
- Assigned Fund Scope
 - Restroom remodel
- Remaining Work
 - Masonry & wall repairs
 - Exterior wall stucco repairs
 - Window replacement
 - Door replacement
 - Ceiling replacement
 - Interior finishes
 - Electrical panel replacement
 - Fire alarm replacement

Scope Summary

Sumner Elementary School

- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**
 - Restroom remodel
- **Remaining Work**
 - Masonry wall repairs
 - Window replacements
 - Door replacement
 - Ceiling replacement
 - Interior finish replacement
 - Casework replacement
 - Accessible route to 2nd floor south wing classrooms
 - Electrical panel replacement
 - Fire alarm upgrade
 - Domestic water piping
 - Secure entrance remodel
 - Remodel 2nd floor original auditorium area
- **Assigned Fund Scope**
 - Restroom remodel

Scope Summary

Woodson

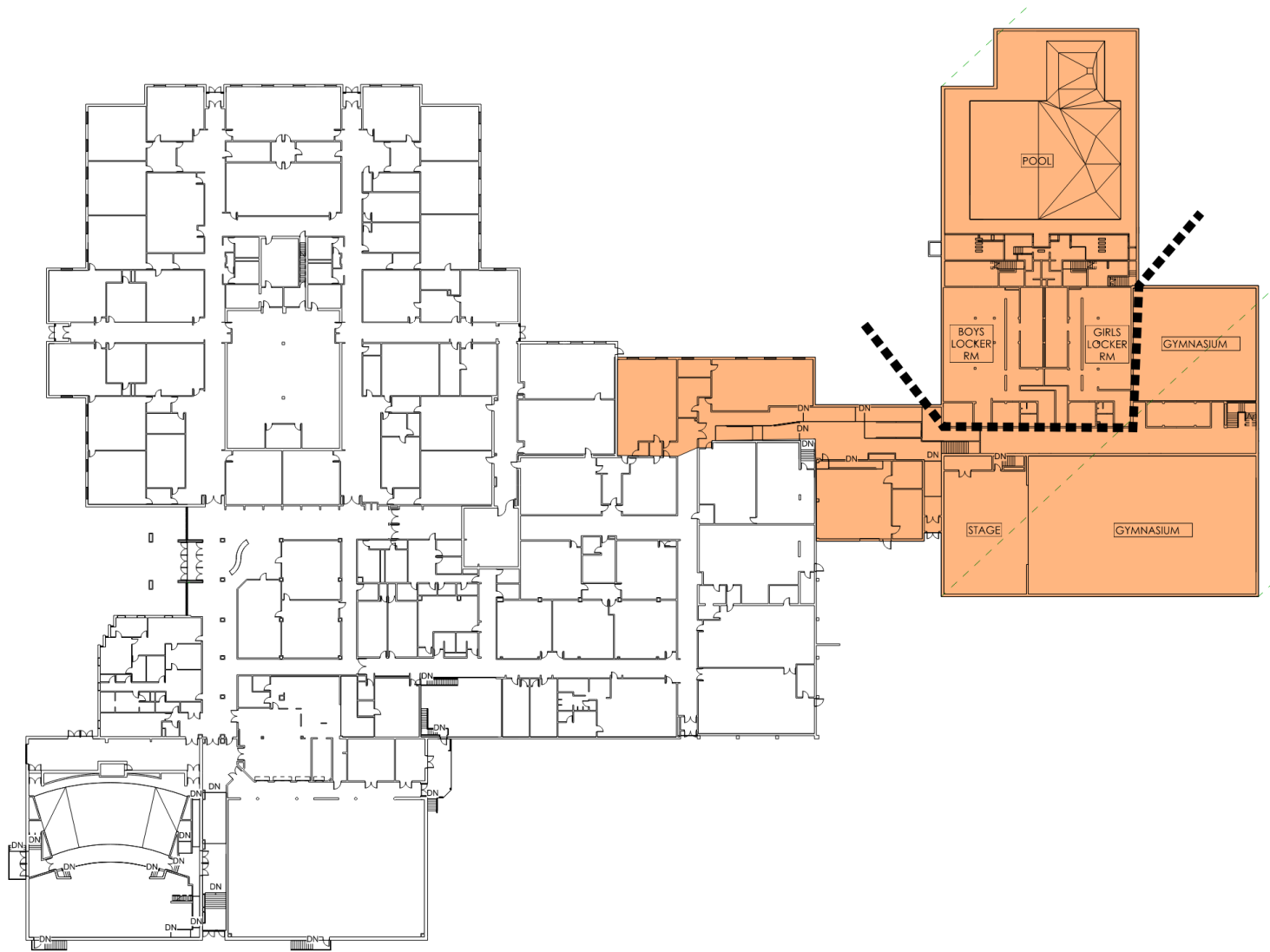
- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**
 - Concrete sidewalk replacement
- **Remaining Work**
 - Masonry/ wall repairs
 - Window replacement
 - Interior finishes & casework
 - Restroom updates
 - Electrical panel replacement
 - Fire alarm upgrade

Scope Summary

- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**
 - East half of building IAQ updates
 - CTE dust collection updates (part of IAQ)
- **Remaining Work**
 - Skylight replacement
 - Masonry/ wall repairs
 - Door replacement
 - Remaining interior finishes
 - Electrical panel replacement
 - Fire alarm upgrade (excluding east wing)

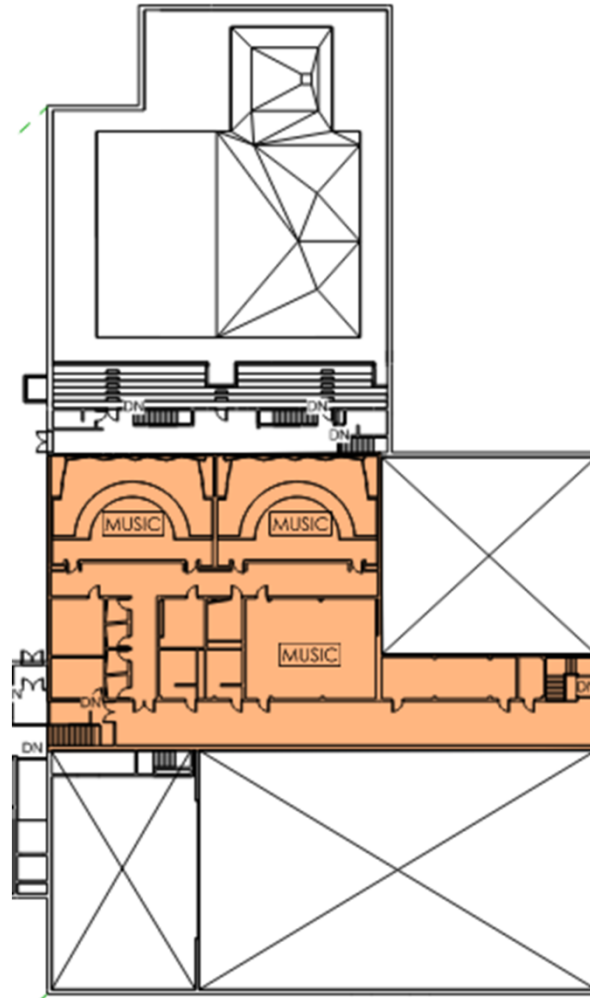
First Floor IAQ Area

Ellis Middle School



Second Floor IAQ Area

Ellis Middle School



Facility Conditions Summary

Indoor Pool

- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**
 - IAQ updates
 - Locker room updates (part of IAQ)
- **Remaining Work**
 - Masonry/ wall repairs
 - Diving well reconfiguration
 - Pool equipment replacement
 - Pool area finish replacement

Scope Summary

- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**
 - Combine HS & Annex boiler systems
 - Minor HVAC work at AHU-15
- **Remaining Work**
 - Skylight replacement
 - Masonry/ wall repairs
 - Door replacements
 - Interior finish updates
 - Locker replacement
 - Locker room remodeling
 - Restroom updates
 - Electrical panel replacement
 - Fire alarm upgrade
 - Water hater replacement

Scope Summary

High School Annex

- **Potential Board Authorized Scope**
 - Lower level IAQ updates
 - Lower-level restroom update (part of IAQ)
- **Remaining Work**
 - Door replacement
- **Assigned Fund Scope**
 - Electrical service replacement

Cost Summary

Building	Description of Work	Board Approved Bond Funding
Banfield Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ +	\$74,600
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$15,400
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$44,990
	Former Computer Lab Finishes, ceiling, lighting	\$135,140
Neveln Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$2,850,300
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$0
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0
	Wall paint at perimeter areas	\$152,700
	Restrooms Remodel	
Southgate Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$202,000
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$8,700
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0
	Restrooms Remodel	
Sumner Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$0
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$0
	Restrooms Remodel	
Woodson	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$18,600
	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$0
Ellis Middle School	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$5,303,800
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$20,500
Indoor Pool	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$6,630,700
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$450,000
High School	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$758,600
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$47,770
HS Annex	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$4,096,100
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0
Total Project Cost		\$20,809,900

Board Authorized Project Options Summary

- Scenario A
 - Neveln, High School & High School Annex
 - \$7,905,470 total project cost

Building	Description of Work	Board Approved Bond Funding	Board Approved Bond Funding
			Scenario A
Neveln Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$2,850,300	\$3,003,000
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$0	
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
	Wall paint at perimeter areas	\$152,700	
	Restrooms Remodel		
High School	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$758,600	\$806,370
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$47,770	
HS Annex	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$4,096,100	\$4,096,100
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
Total Project Cost			\$7,905,470

Board Authorized Project Options Summary

- Scenario B
 - Scenario A + elementaries & MS (exclude indoor pool & locker rooms)
 - \$13,729,200 total project cost

Building	Description of Work	Board Approved Bond Funding	Board Approved Bond Funding
			Scenario B
Banfield Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ *	\$74,600	\$270,130
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$15,400	
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$44,990	
	Former Computer Lab Finishes, ceiling, lighting	\$135,140	
Neveln Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$2,850,300	\$3,003,000
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$0	
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
	Wall paint at perimeter areas	\$152,700	
	Restrooms Remodel		
Southgate Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$202,000	\$210,700
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$8,700	
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
	Restrooms Remodel		
Sumner Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$0	\$0
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$0	
	Restrooms Remodel		
Woodson	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$18,600	\$18,600
	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$0	
Ellis Middle School	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$5,303,800	\$5,324,300
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$20,500	
High School	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$758,600	\$806,370
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$47,770	
HS Annex	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$4,096,100	\$4,096,100
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
Total Project Cost			\$13,729,200

Board Authorized Project Options Summary

- Scenario C
 - Scenario B + indoor pool & locker rooms work
 - \$20,809,900 total project cost

Building	Description of Work	Board Approved Bond Funding	Board Approved Bond Funding
			Scenario C
Banfield Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ *	\$74,600	\$270,130
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$15,400	
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$44,990	
	Former Computer Lab Finishes, ceiling, lighting	\$135,140	
Neveln Elementary	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$2,850,300	\$3,003,000
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$0	
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
	Wall paint at perimeter areas	\$152,700	
Southgate Elementary	Restrooms Remodel		\$210,700
	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$202,000	
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$8,700	
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
Sumner Elementary	Restrooms Remodel		\$0
	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$0	
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$0	
Woodson	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$18,600	\$18,600
	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$0	
Ellis Middle School	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$5,303,800	\$5,324,300
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$20,500	
Indoor Pool	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$6,630,700	\$7,080,700
	Qualifying FCA Items for LTFM Roofing	\$450,000	
High School	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$758,600	\$806,370
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$47,770	
HS Annex	Qualifying FCA Items for IAQ	\$4,096,100	\$4,096,100
	Abatement Bonds/ Parking Lots	\$0	
Total Project Cost			\$20,809,900

Project Amount
 Term of Bond
 District NTC Value (Prelim Pay 26)

Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
\$7,905,470	\$13,729,200	\$20,809,900
20	20	20
31,168,969	31,168,969	31,168,969

Property Type Est. Market Value

Estimated Annual Tax Increase		
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Residential Homestead	Est. Market Value	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
	\$75,000	\$10	\$17	\$26
	100,000	14	24	36
	150,000	26	44	67
	200,000	37	65	98
	250,000	49	85	129
	300,000	61	106	160
400,000	85	147	222	

Commercial - Industrial	Est. Market Value	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
	\$250,000	\$93	\$160	\$242
	500,000	202	348	527
	750,000	311	537	813
1,000,000	420	725	1,098	

Agricultural Homestead*	\$/acre	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
	\$9,000	\$0.29	\$0.51	\$0.77
	10,000	0.33	0.56	0.86
	11,000	0.36	0.62	0.94
12,000	0.39	0.68	1.03	

* Homestead land limited to first \$3,800,000 in value. All additional land taxed like Ag non-homestead land.

Agricultural Non Homestead	Est. Market Value	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
	\$9,000	\$0.59	\$1.02	\$1.54
	10,000	0.66	1.13	1.71
	11,000	0.72	1.24	1.88
12,000	0.79	1.36	2.05	

Assumptions

1. Assumes interest rates as of January 20, 2025 + 0.75%.
2. No growth assumed in district net tax capacity



Timeline Options

- Assigned Funds Projects
 - 2026 Design, engineering, state approvals & bidding
 - Required time before construction: Jan-April design/ engineering, MNDOLI review May-July, bidding, board approval of bids, construction begins.
 - Summer 2027 Construction
- Board Authorized Bond Funding
 - 2026 Design, engineering, MDE approval (September), state approvals & bidding
 - Summer 2027 Construction (pending size of projects)
- Voter-approved Bond Funding
 - November 2026 vote
 - 2027 design, engineering, state approvals & bidding
 - Summer 2028/2029 Construction (pending size of projects)



Next Steps

Next Steps

1. Board decision on board authorized scenario
2. Board decision to pursue bond referendum



Thank You!



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School Funding Reference Information



School Funding Tools

Description	MN Statute	Use of Funds	New \$ to Budget?	Voter Approval	Funds Borrowed	New Tax Impact w/ Levy	Maximum Levy	Tax Base	Maximum Term
Referendum Revenue	126C.17	Day to Day Operations	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Moving Cap Set by Statute	Referendum Market Value	10 years
School Building Bonds	475 123B.02	Capital Expenditures	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Voter Authorized	Net Tax Capacity	30 years
Capital Projects Levy	123B.63	Capital Expenditures defined in 126C.10 subd 14	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Voter Authorized	Net Tax Capacity	10 years
LTFM Bonds/Levy	123B.595	Capital expenditures defined in 123B.595	No	No	Yes or pay-as-you-go	No	\$380/APU	Net Tax Capacity	30 years
LTFM(+) Bonds/Levy	123B.595	Roofs, Indoor air quality, fire alarm & suppression, & asbestos abatement	Yes	No	Yes or pay-as-you-go	Yes	Cost of Eligible Projects	Net Tax Capacity	30 years
Capital Facilities Bonds	123B.62	Capital Expenditures defined in 126B.62	No	No	Yes	No	Can't exceed operating capital	Net Tax Capacity	15 years
Capital Equipment Notes	123B.61	Capital Expenditures defined in 126B.61	No	No	Yes	No	Can't exceed operating capital	Net Tax Capacity	10 years
Lease Levy / Capital Levies	126C.40	Capital Expenditures defined in 126C.40	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	\$212 per APU	Net Tax Capacity	30 years
Lease Purchase / Installment Purchase	465.71	Capital Expenditures	No	No	Yes	No	Paid from General Fund	Net Tax Capacity	30 years
Abatement Bond	469.1812 - 469.1815	Parking Lots	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	max of 10% NTC or \$200,000	Net Tax Capacity	15 years



Long Term Facilities Maintenance Plus (+)

Eligible uses include:

Indoor Air Quality

Fire Suppression

Asbestos Abatement



Roofing



- Additional LTFM revenue beyond \$380/pupil
 - Creates tax impact
- Revenue limited only by costs of eligible projects
- Projects >\$100,000 per site per year
- Revenue used for Pay-As-You-Go or bonding
- No voter approval



Abatement Bonds

Eligible uses
include:

Parking Lot projects

- No voter approval; requires public hearing
- Creates new revenue source = tax impact
- Bonds limited to 15 years under most circumstances
- Review and comment required for projects over \$2,000,000



School Building Bonds

- Voter approved
- Most flexibility in project and bond structure
- Creates tax impact
- 30 years maximum term
- MDE review and comment required for projects over \$2,000,000
- May be eligible for debt service equalization

**STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES WITH SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED
INFECTIONS AND DISEASES AND CERTAIN OTHER COMMUNICABLE
DISEASES AND INFECTIOUS CONDITIONS**

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[Note: School districts are not required by statute to have a policy addressing these issues. However, Minnesota Statutes section 121A.23 provides that school districts must have a program that incorporates the provisions contained in this policy.]

I. PURPOSE

Public concern that students and staff of the school district be able to attend the schools of the district without becoming infected with serious communicable or infectious diseases, including, but not limited to, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Hepatitis B, and Tuberculosis, requires that the school board adopt measures effectively responding to health concerns while respecting the rights of all students, employees, and contractors, including those who are so infected. The purpose of this policy is to adopt such measures.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Students

The policy of the school board is that students with communicable diseases not be excluded from attending school in their usual daily attendance setting so long as their health permits and their attendance does not create a significant risk of the transmission of illness to students or employees of the school district. A procedure for minimizing interruptions to learning resulting from communicable diseases will be established by the school district in its IEP and Section 504 team process, if applicable, and in consultation with community health and private health care providers. Procedures for the inclusion of students with communicable diseases will include any applicable educational team planning processes, including the review of the educational implications for the student and others with whom the student comes into contact.

B. Employees

The policy of the school board is that employees with communicable diseases not be excluded from attending to their customary employment so long as they are physically, mentally, and emotionally able to safely perform tasks assigned to them and so long as their employment does not create a significant risk of the transmission of illness to students, employees, or others in the school district. If a reasonable accommodation will eliminate the significant risk of transmission, such accommodation will be undertaken unless it poses an undue hardship to the school district.

C. Circumstances and Conditions

1. Determinations of whether a contagious individual's school attendance or

job performance creates a significant risk of the transmission of the illness to students or employees of the school district will be made on a case by case basis. Such decisions will be based upon the nature of the risk (how it is transmitted), the duration of the risk (how long the carrier is infectious), the severity of the risk (what is the potential harm to third parties), and the probabilities the disease will be transmitted and will cause varying degrees of harm. When a student is disabled, such a determination will be made in consultation with the educational planning team.

2. The school board recognizes that some students and some employees, because of special circumstances and conditions, may pose greater risks for the transmission of infectious conditions than other persons infected with the same illness. Examples include students who display biting behavior, students or employees who are unable to control their bodily fluids, who have oozing skin lesions, or who have severe disorders which result in spontaneous external bleeding. These conditions need to be taken into account and considered in assessing the risk of transmission of the disease and the resulting effect upon the educational program of the student or employment of the employee by consulting with the Commissioner of Health, the physician of the student or employee, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student.

D. Students with Special Circumstances and Conditions

The school nurse, along with the infected individual's physician, the infected individual or parent(s)/guardian(s), and others, if appropriate, will weigh risks and benefits to the student and to others, consider the least restrictive appropriate educational placement, and arrange for periodic reevaluation as deemed necessary by the state epidemiologist. The risks to the student shall be determined by the student's physician.

E. Extracurricular Student Participation

Student participation in nonacademic, extracurricular, and non-educational programs of the school district are subject to a requirement of equal access and comparable services.

F. Precautions

The school district will develop routine procedures for infection control at school and for educating employees about these procedures. The procedures shall be developed through cooperation with health professionals taking into consideration any guidelines of the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health. (These precautionary procedures shall be consistent with the school district's procedures regarding blood-borne pathogens developed pursuant to the school district's employee right to know policy.)

G. Information Sharing

1. Employee and student health information shall be shared within the school district only with those whose jobs require such information and with those who have a legitimate educational interest (including health and safety) in such information and shall be shared only to the extent required to accomplish legitimate educational goals and to comply with employees' right to know requirements.
2. Employee and student health data shall be shared outside the school district only in accordance with state and federal law and with the school district's policies on employee and student records and data.

H. Reporting

If a medical condition of student or staff threatens public health, it must be reported to the Minnesota Commissioner of Health.

I. Prevention

The school district shall, with the assistance of the Commissioners of Health and Education, implement a program to prevent and reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases in accordance with Minnesota Statutes section 121A.23 that includes:

1. planning materials, guidelines, and other technically accurate and updated information;
2. a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, technically accurate, and updated curriculum that includes helping students to abstain from sexual activity until marriage;
3. cooperation and coordination among school districts and Service Cooperatives;
4. a targeting of adolescents, especially those who may be at high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and infections, for prevention efforts;
5. involvement of parents and other community members;
6. in-service training for district staff and school board members;
7. collaboration with state agencies and organizations having a sexually transmitted infection and disease prevention or sexually transmitted infection and disease risk reduction program;
8. collaboration with local community health services, agencies and organizations having a sexually transmitted infection and disease risk

reduction program; and

9. participation by state and local student organizations.
10. The program must be consistent with the health and wellness curriculum.
11. The school district may accept funds for sexually transmitted infection and disease prevention programs developed and implemented under this section from public and private sources, including public health funds and foundations, department professional development funds, federal block grants, or other federal or state grants.

J. Vaccination and Screening

The school district will develop procedures regarding the administration of Hepatitis B vaccinations and Tuberculosis screenings in keeping with current state and federal law. The procedures shall provide that the Hepatitis B vaccination series be offered to all who have occupational exposure at no cost to the employee.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 121A.23 (Programs to Prevent and Reduce the Risks of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases)
Minn. Stat. § 144.441 (Tuberculosis Screening in Schools)
Minn. Stat. § 142 (Testing in School Clinics)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)
20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.* (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
29 U.S.C. § 794 *et seq.* (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, § 504)
42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.* (Americans with Disabilities Act)
29 C.F.R. 1910.1030 (Bloodborne Pathogens)
Kohl by Kohl v. Woodhaven Learning Center, 865 F.2d 930 (8th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 493 U.S. 892 (1989)
School Board of Nassau County, Fla. v. Arline, 480 U.S. 273 (1987)
16 EHLR 712, OCR Staff Memo, April 5, 1990

Policy Adopted: 10/13/03
Policy Revised: 04/13/09
Policy Reviewed: 07/13/15
Policy Updated: 02/12/18
Policy Reviewed: 01/11/21
Policy Updated: 04/24/23

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to avoid the appearance of impropriety or the appearance of a conflict of interest with respect to gifts given to school district employees and school board members.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The school district recognizes that students, parents, and others may wish to show appreciation to school district employees. The policy of the school district, however, is to discourage gift-giving to employees and to encourage donors instead to write letters and notes of appreciation or to give small tokens of gratitude as memorabilia.
- B. A violation of this policy occurs when any employee solicits, accepts, or receives, either by direct or indirect means, a gift from a student, parent, or other individual or organization of greater than nominal value.
- C. A violation of this policy occurs when any employee solicits, accepts, or receives a gift from a person or entity doing business with or seeking to do business with the school district. Employees may accept items of insignificant value of a promotional or public relations nature or a plaque with a resale value of \$5 or less with an inscription recognizing an individual for an accomplishment. The superintendent has discretion to determine what value is “insignificant.”
- D. Teachers may accept from publishers free samples of textbooks and related teaching materials.
- E. This policy applies only to gifts given to employees where the donor’s relationship with the employee arises out of the employee’s employment with the school district. It does not apply to gifts given to employees by personal friends, family members, other employees, or others unconnected to the employee’s employment with the school district.
- F. An elected or appointed member of a school board, a school superintendent, a school principal, or a district school officer, including the school business official, may not accept a gift from an interested person.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Gift” means money, real or personal property, a service, a loan, a forbearance or forgiveness of indebtedness, or a promise of future employment that is given without something of equal or greater value being received in return.

- B. “Interested person” means a person or a representative of a person or association that has a direct financial interest in a decision that a school board member, a superintendent, a school principal, or a district school officer is authorized to make.
- C. “Financial interest” means any ownership or control in an asset which has the potential to produce a monetary return.

IV. PROCEDURES

Any employee considering the acceptance of a gift shall confer with the administration for guidance related to the interpretation and application of this policy.

V. VIOLATIONS

Employees who violate the provisions of this policy may be subject to discipline, which may include reprimand, suspension, and/or termination or discharge.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 10A.07 (Conflicts of Interest)
Minn. Stat. § 10A.071 (Prohibition of Gifts)
Minn. Stat. § 15.43 (Acceptance of Advantage by State Employee; Penalty)
Minn. Stat. § 471.895 (Certain Gifts by Interested Persons Prohibited)

Policy Adopted: 09/15/03
Policy Reviewed: 09/12/11
Policy Reviewed: 10/14/13
Policy Revised: 09/14/15
Policy Reviewed: 02/12/18
Policy Updated: 01/11/21

POLICIES INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

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PURPOSE

Certain policies as contained in this policy reference manual are applicable to employees as well as to students. To avoid undue duplication, the school district provides notice by this section of the application and incorporation by reference of the following policies that also apply to employees:

Model Policy 505	Distribution of Nonschool-Sponsored Materials on School Premises by Students and Employees
Model Policy 507	Corporal Punishment
Model Policy 510	Student Activities
Model Policy 511	Student Fundraising
Model Policy 517	Student Recruiting
Model Policy 518	DNR-DNI Orders
Model Policy 519	Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies
Model Policy 522	Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedure and Process
Model Policy 524	Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy
Model Policy 525	Violence Prevention
Model Policy 535	Service Animals in Schools

Employees are charged with notice that the above cited policies are also applicable to employees; however, employees are also on notice that the provisions of the various policies speak for themselves and may be applicable although not specifically listed above.

Policy Reviewed: 02/12/18
Policy Updated: 01/11/21
Policy Updated: 04/24/23

EMPLOYEE-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

423

I. PURPOSE

The school district is committed to an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. Every school district employee is to provide students with appropriate guidance, understanding, and direction while maintaining a standard of professionalism and acting within accepted standards of conduct.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. This policy applies to all school district employees at all times, whether on or off duty and on or off of school district locations.
- B. At all times, students will be treated by teachers and other school district employees with respect, courtesy, and consideration and in a professional manner. Each school district employee is expected to exercise good judgment and professionalism in all interpersonal relationships with students. Such relationships must be and remain on a teacher-student basis or an employee-student basis.
- C. Teachers must be mindful of their inherent positions of authority and influence over students. Similarly, other school district employees also may hold positions of authority over students of the school district and must be mindful of their authority and influence over students.
- D. Sexual relationships between school district employees and students, without regard to the age of the student, are strictly forbidden and may subject the employee to criminal liability.
- E. Other actions that violate this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Dating students.
 - 2. Having any interaction/activity of a sexual nature with a student.
 - 3. Committing or attempting to induce students or others to commit an illegal act or act of immoral conduct which may be harmful to others or bring discredit to the school district.
 - 4. Supplying alcohol or any illegal substance to a student, allowing a student access to such substances, or failing to take reasonable steps to prevent such access from occurring.
- F. School district employees shall, whenever possible, employ safeguards against improper relationships with students and/or claims of such improper relationships.

[Note: Such safeguards may include the following: avoiding altogether or minimizing physical contact, keeping doors open when talking or meeting with students one-on-one, and/or making sure that such meetings with a student take place in rooms with windows and/or others nearby.]

- G. Excessive informal and social involvement with individual students is unprofessional, is not compatible with employee-student relationships, and is inappropriate.
- H. School district employees will adhere to applicable standards of ethics and professional conduct in Minnesota law.

III. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

- A. Complaints and/or concerns regarding alleged violations of this policy shall be handled in accordance with MSBA/MASA Model Policy 103 (Complaints – Students, Employees, Parents, Other Persons) unless other specific complaint procedures are provided within any other policy of the school district.
- B. All employees shall cooperate with any investigation of alleged acts, conduct, or communications in violation of this policy.

IV. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

Upon receipt of a report, the school district will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. It also may include reporting to appropriate state or federal authorities, including the Board of Teaching or the appropriate licensing authority and appropriate agencies responsible for investigating reports of maltreatment of minors and/or vulnerable adults. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Minnesota and federal law, and school district policies.

V. SCOPE OF LIABILITY

Employees are placed on notice that if an employee acts outside the performance of the duties of the position for which the employee is employed or is guilty of malfeasance, willful neglect of duty, or bad faith, the school district is not required to defend and indemnify the employee for damages in school-related litigation.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 16 (~~School District or Charter School Disclosure of Violence or Inappropriate Sexual Contact Personnel Data~~)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd 2 (~~Mandatory Reporting to Minnesota Board of Teaching Suspension or Revocation of Licenses~~)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subds. 5(b) and 13(b) (~~Employment; Contracts; Termination Mandatory immediate discharge of teachers with license revocations due to child or sex abuse convictions~~)

Minn. Stat. §§ 609.341-609.352 (~~Defining “intimate parts” and “position of authority” as well as detailing various sex offenses~~ Definitions)

Minn. Stat. § 260E (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)

Minn. Stat. § 626.557 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)

Minn. Rules Part 3512.5200 (Code of Ethics for School Administrators)

Minn. Rules Part ~~8700.7500~~ 8710.2100 (Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers)

Policy Adopted: 12/05/04
Policy Reviewed: 10/14/13
Policy Reviewed: 07/13/15
Policy Reviewed: 02/12/18
Policy Reviewed: 01/11/21
Policy Updated: 02/14/22

LICENSE STATUS

424

[Note: The provisions of this policy substantially reflect legal requirements.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that qualified teachers are employed by the school district and to fulfill its duty to ascertain the licensure status of its teachers. A school board that employs a teacher who does not hold a valid teaching license or permit places itself at risk for a reduction in state aid. This policy does not negate a teacher's duty and responsibility to maintain a current and valid teaching license.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. A qualified teacher is one holding a valid license to perform the particular service for which the teacher is employed by the school district.
- B. No person shall be a qualified teacher until the school district verifies, through the Minnesota education licensing system available on the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board website, that the person is a qualified teacher consistent with state law.
- C. The school district has a duty to ascertain the licensure status of its teachers and ensure that the school district's teacher license files are up to date. The school district shall establish a procedure for annually reviewing its teacher license files to verify that every teacher's license is current and appropriate to the particular service for which the teacher is employed by the school district.
- D. The school district must annually report to the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board: (1) all new teacher hires and terminations, including layoffs, by race and ethnicity; and (2) the reasons for all teacher resignations and requested leaves of absence. The report must not include data that would personally identify individuals.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall establish a schedule for the annual review of teacher licenses.
- B. Where it is discovered that a teacher's license will expire within one year from the date of the annual review, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee will advise the teacher in writing of the approaching expiration and that the teacher must complete the renewal process and file the license with the superintendent prior to the expiration of the current license. However, failure to provide this notice does not relieve a teacher from his/her duty and responsibility of ensuring that his/her teaching license is valid, current and appropriate to his/her teaching assignment.

- C. If it is discovered that a teacher's license has expired, the superintendent will immediately investigate the circumstances surrounding the lack of license and will take appropriate action. The teacher shall be advised that the teacher's failure to have the license reinstated will constitute gross insubordination, inefficiency and willful neglect of duty which are grounds for immediate discharge from employment.

- D. The duty and responsibility of maintaining a current and valid teaching license appropriate to the teaching assignment as required by this policy shall remain with the teacher, notwithstanding the superintendent's failure to discover a lapsed license or license that does not support the teaching assignment. A teacher's failure to comply with this policy may be grounds for the teacher's immediate discharge from employment.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 122A.16 (Qualified Teacher Defined)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.22 (District Verification of Teacher Licenses)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40 (Employment; Contracts; Termination – Immediate Discharge)
Minn. Stat. § 127A.42 (Reduction of Aid for Violation of Law)
Vettleson v. Special Sch. Dist. No. 1, 361 N.W.2d 425 (Minn. App. 1985)
Lucio v. School Bd. of Independent Sch. Dist. No. 625, 574 N.W.2d 737 (Minn. App. 1998)
In the Matter of the Proposed Discharge of John R. Statz (Christine D. VerPloeg), June 8, 1992, *affirmed*, 1993 WL 129639 (Minn. App. 1993)

Policy Adopted: 12/13/04
Policy Reviewed: 7/13/15
Policy Reviewed: 02/12/18
Policy Updated: 01/11/21
Policy Revised: 07/10/23

PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION POLICY

426

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish certification requirements for all paraprofessionals employed by Austin Public Schools.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of Austin Public Schools that all paraprofessionals employed by the district meet state and federal standards ~~including those outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act.~~

All district paraprofessionals must meet **one** of the following criteria ~~by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year; within the first 60 days of employment per MN Statutes 120B.362.~~

A. An Associate's Degree

OR

B. Two years of study at an institution of higher education

OR

C. A passing score on a state approved local assessment

OR

D. A portfolio that demonstrates all Minnesota Paraprofessional Core Competencies (Special Education paraprofessionals only)

The district shall pay the **initial** costs incurred for ~~one~~ test administration for each paraprofessional employed by the district. If the paraprofessional fails to achieve the required score on the state approved test, the paraprofessional may take the test additional times **at his/her expense.**

The district shall convene a panel to review portfolios prior to the beginning of each school year for those paraprofessionals seeking to meet the criteria through the development of a portfolio.

Policy Adopted: 03/08/04
Policy Reviewed: 10/10/11
Policy Reviewed: 7/13/15
Policy Reviewed: 02/12/18
Policy Reviewed: 01/11/21
Policy Reviewed: 12/12/22

WORKLOAD LIMITS FOR CERTAIN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

427

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish general parameters for determining the workload limits of special education staff who provide services to children with disabilities receiving direct special education services 60 percent or less of the instructional day.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Special Education Staff, Special Education Teacher

“Special education staff” and “special education teacher” both mean a teacher employed by the school district who is licensed under the rules of the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board to instruct children with specific disabling conditions.

B. Direct Services

“Direct services” means special education services provided by a special education teacher or a related service professional when the services are related to instruction, including cooperative teaching.

C. Indirect Services

“Indirect services” means special education services provided by a special education teacher or a related service professional which include ongoing progress reviews; cooperative planning; consultation; demonstration teaching; modification and adaptation of the environment, curriculum, materials, or equipment; and direct contact with the pupil to monitor and observe.

D. Workload

“Workload” means a special education teacher’s total number of minutes required for all due process responsibilities, including direct and indirect services, evaluation and reevaluation time, management of individualized education programs (IEPs), travel time, parental contact, and other services required in the IEPs.

III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Workload limits for special education teachers shall be determined by the appropriate special education administrator, in consultation with the building

principal and the superintendent.

- B. In determining workload limits for special education staff, the school district shall take into consideration the following factors: student contact minutes, evaluation and reevaluation time, indirect services, management of IEPs, travel time, and other services required in the IEPs of eligible students.

IV. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT UNAFFECTED

This policy shall not be construed as a reopening of negotiations between the school district and the special education teachers' exclusive representative, nor shall it be construed to alter or limit in any way the managerial rights or other authority of the school district set forth in the Public Employment Labor Relations Act or in the collective bargaining agreement between the school district and the special education teachers' exclusive representative.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 179A.07, Subd. 1 (Inherent Managerial Policy)
Minn. Rule 3525.0210, Subps. 14, 27, 44, and 49 (Definitions)
Minn. Rule 3525.2340, Subp. 4.B. (Case Loads for School-Age Educational Service Alternatives)

Policy Adopted: 08.10.15

Policy Revised: 08.08.22

Policy Updated: 08.02.23

EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

428

I. PURPOSE

As a national leader in using technology as an accelerator of learning, the Austin Public School District recognizes the value of teacher inquiry, investigation, and innovation using new technology tools to enhance the learning experience. The District also recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies.

This policy addresses employees' use of publicly available social media networks including: personal Web sites, Web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media. The District takes no position on employees' decision to participate in the use of social media networks for personal use on personal time. However, use of these media for personal use during District time or on District equipment is prohibited. In addition, employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws or District policies.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The District recognizes the importance of online social media networks as a communication and e-learning tool. Toward that end, the District provides password-protected social media tools and District-approved technologies for e-learning and encourages use of District tools for collaboration by employees. However, public social media networks, outside of those sponsored by the District, may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities without the prior authorization of the Superintendent, or designee, and parental consent for student participation on social networks. The District may use these tools and other communication technologies in fulfilling its responsibility for effectively communicating with the general public.

However, employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws or District policies.

The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. When employees choose to join or engage with District students, families, or fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside those approved by the District, they are advised to maintain their professionalism as District employees and address inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks, including making a mandated report if such event arises.

III. DEFINITIONS

- Public social media networks include websites, web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media generally available to the public or consumers and which do not fall within the District's electronic technologies network.

- Examples of public social media networks include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, SnapChat, and blog sites.
- District approved password-protected social media tools are those that fall within the District's electronic technologies network or which the District has approved for educational use. The District has greater authority and responsibility to protect minors from inappropriate content and can limit public access within this limited public forum.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to remember they are role models to students in this community. Because readers of social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the schools and the District, the District requires employees to observe the following rules when referring to the District, its schools, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers, and communities on any social media networks:

- An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's postings, displays, or communications on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable District policies.

Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications (by word, image or other means). Employees shall not use obscene, profane or vulgar language on any social media network or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, or bullying.

Employees should not use their District e-mail address for communications on public social media networks that have not been approved by the District. Employees must make clear that any views expressed on these networks are the employee's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the District. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the District or post comments as a representative of the District, except as authorized by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

When authorized as a spokesperson for the District, employees must disclose their employment relationship with the District.

Employees may not disclose information on any social media network that is confidential or proprietary to the District, its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy laws.

Employees may not use or post the District logo, or school logo (defined as the Packer Logo, Austin A, or other site specific image) on any social media network without permission from the Superintendent, or designee.

- Employees will remove images posted on any social media network of co-workers if an objection is made by the co-worker as it relates to the posted image.
- Employees may not post images of students that have completed an objection to media release on file with the district. This does not include images of students taken in the public arena, such as at sporting events or fine arts public performances.
- Employees may not post any non-public images of District premises and property, including floor plans.
- The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media representing students or groups within the District. When employees, including coaches/advisors, choose to join or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as an employee of the District. Employees must maintain appropriate employee-student relationships at all times and must address inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks, even if the employee is not the owner of the social media thread. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online.
- Employees who participate in social media networks may decide to include information about their work with the District as part of their personal profile, as it would relate to a typical social conversation. This may include:
 - Work information included in a personal profile, to include District name, job title, and job duties.
 - Status updates regarding an employee's own job promotion.
 - Personal participation in District-sponsored events, including volunteer activities.
- An employee who is responsible for a social media network posting that fails to comply with the rules and guidelines set forth in this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees will be held responsible for the disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information, information that violates the privacy rights or other rights of a third party, or the content of anything posted on any social media network.
- Anything posted on an employee's Web site or Web log or other Internet content for which the employee is responsible will be subject to all District policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines. The District is free to view and monitor an employee's public Web site, professional social media site, or professional Web log at any time without consent or previous approval. Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose to the District the existence of and to provide the District with access to an employee's professional Web site or Web log or other professional social media network as part of an employment selection, promotion, or disciplinary process.

Legal Reference:

- Minnesota Administrative Rule 8710.2000 Code of Ethics For Minnesota Teachers; Children's Internet Protection Act

First Reading: 10/10/16
Policy Approved: 11/14/16
Policy Reviewed: 03/12/18
Policy Reviewed: 01/11/21
Policy Revised: 12/12/22
Policy Revised: 04/10/23

POLICY GUIDELINES

Austin Public Schools uses social media to:

- Share news, announcements, reminders and issues related to our school community.
- Engage parents in responsible and respectful conversations about our schools.

Austin Public Schools has sole authority to control the content of posts and information distributed through its social media accounts. Austin Public Schools does not intend to create a forum for public discussion of topics or information unrelated to the District and its operations.

While the District does not have an obligation to monitor this discussion at all times, it will remove comments that contain the following:

- Spam
- Offensive or inflammatory language
- Inappropriate remarks and profanity
- Personal attacks
- Contain personal information about a student or staff member
- Promotional or sales-related posts or comments
- Comments that are unrelated to the purpose of the page or post
- Links to other pages that contain similar content, or that link to sites containing malware, viruses, scams, criminal content, or content inappropriate for minors
- Language or content that targets any specific race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, age, or veteran status
- Language or content that incites violence
- Violations of the Terms of Use for the platform used

Austin Public Schools staff are not responsible for user-generated content. The opinions expressed in user-generated content do not necessarily reflect those of District staff. Participants are expected to treat each other with respect.

Followers should not expect responses to every question or comment posted. Further, complaints should be submitted to the District through the procedures in District policies.

The District reserves the right to close the forum and remove the ability for users to comment or post on District social media.

Please contact the District Office at 507-460-1900 with any questions.

Revised: 04/10/23

**LEAVE FOR STAFF MEMBERS ELECTED TO PUBLIC
OFFICE OR CHOSEN AS PARTY OFFICERS OR DELEGATES
TO PARTY CONVENTIONS**

433

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the conditions under which staff members who have been elected to public office or chosen as political party officers or delegates to party conventions will be granted paid or unpaid leave to engage in activities associated with their public office, status as political party officers or delegates.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Some staff members have the opportunity to serve in positions of leadership in governmental organizations. The District recognizes the value of such participation and wishes to encourage it with the understanding that the staff member's primary responsibility is to the students in the classroom. The following definitions and guidelines have been developed for that purpose.

III. GUIDELINES

- A. This section applies to staff members who are elected to public office, who are chosen as political party officers or delegates to party conventions and who request leave as set forth in Minnesota Statutes, sections 3.088, 202A.135, and 211B.10. If the staff member serves in that office or position with reimbursement, the staff member will be granted leave with loss of full pay for those days of absence from their work assignment. If the staff member does not receive reimbursement for their services, absence from work assignment taken to perform these services may be taken as personal leave per his/her working agreement or contract or leave at loss of full pay. Per the teachers' working agreement, teachers may be allowed up to 5 days of absence with loss of substitute pay for those days. Additional days of absence from their work assignment would be at loss of full pay.
- B. To receive consideration for the leave described in paragraph A above, a staff member must:
1. Inform the Superintendent of Schools of the expected school time demands of the position prior to accepting the position; and
 2. Request leave days in writing at least ten (10) days prior to need.

Sources:

- Minn. Stat. § 211B.10
- Minn. Stat. § 3.088
- Minn. Stat. § 202A.135

Policy Adopted: 11/14/05
Policy Reviewed: 7/13/15
Policy Reviewed: 03/12/18
Policy Reviewed: 01/11/21
Policy Updated: 12/12/22