

Northfield Levy Referendum Guide

Public Schools I.S.D. 659 MINNESOTA

The School Board unanimously approved placing two levy questions on the November 7, 2006 ballot

Ballot Question #1

The first levy question asks voters to revoke the current \$685/pupil operating levy and replace it with a \$1,180/pupil operating levy for the next seven years adjusted for inflation each year.

Ballot Question #2

The second levy question asks voters for \$750,000 per year for the next seven years to maintain buildings and grounds, support instructional technology and update textbooks needed to educate our students. Passage of ballot question two for capital projects levy is contingent on the successful passage of ballot question one for the operating levy.

A message from your School Board

First of all, we'd like to thank you. Thank you for the concerns that many of you shared with us over the financial challenges we face as a district. Thank you for your long-term support of the work we do for children.

As your School Board, we are proud of the educational opportunities we provide for students. We're also proud of the fact that we spend a greater percentage of our district budget on classroom instruction than 82% of the school districts in the state. While we have less revenue to spend than 62% of the school districts in the state, we spend it responsibly and we focus our funds on children and classrooms.

You have heard the news reports about how districts across the state are cutting student programs and services to balance budgets. Over the last two years, Northfield has had to make budget cuts of over \$3.3 million. This is not just a "Northfield budget problem" - it's a state-wide funding issue. Currently 90% of the 343 school districts in Minnesota have operating levies in place. Northfield is not an exception.

The referenda will not eliminate our financial challenges. They will, however, allow us to stabilize and maintain current student programs and services for four to six years, until the state finds a way to adequately fund public education.

Our goal is to provide you with the information you need to understand the challenges we face. We encourage you to read this special edition *Levy Guide*, to ask questions, and to give serious consideration to addressing the needs of our students on November 7.



October 2006

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Public Information Meetings:

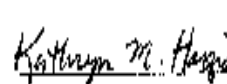
Tues., Sept. 26
7 p.m.

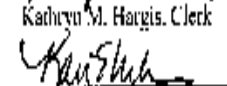
High School Auditorium

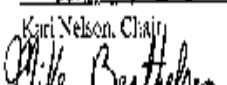
Mon., Oct. 2
7 p.m.

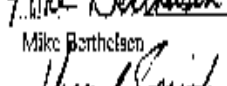
High School Auditorium


nfld.k12.mn.us
Superintendent
Dr. Chris Richardson
507-663-0629

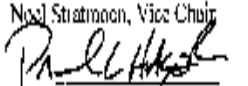

Kathryn M. Hargis, Clerk

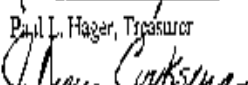

Kari Nelson, Chair


Mike Berthelsen


Wendy Smith


Noel Stratmoen, Vice Chair


Paul L. Hager, Treasurer


Diane Cirksema



Back left to right: Paul Hager, Kari Nelson, Kathryn Hargis, Mike Berthelsen. Front left to right: Diane Cirksema, Noel Stratmoen, Wendy Smith

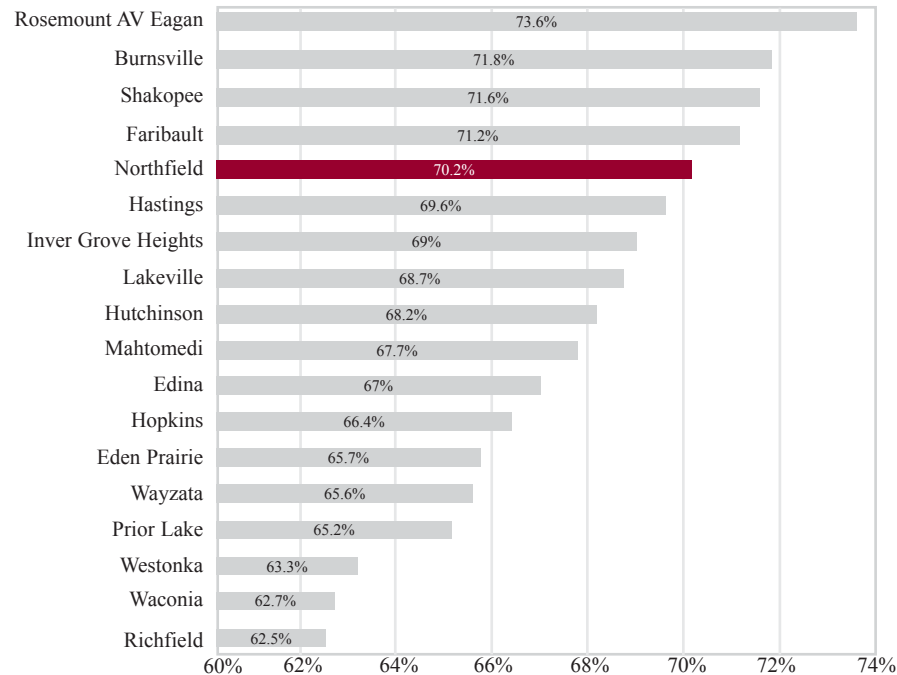
Ballot Question # 1 Operating Levy

Ballot Question #1

The first levy question asks voters to revoke the current \$685/pupil operating levy and replace it with a \$1,180/pupil operating levy for the next seven years adjusted for inflation each year.

Percentage of general fund budget spent on instruction

Northfield spends a larger percentage of its budget on instruction than 82% of the state's districts. (newest information available)



Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2003-04

Why do we need the increased operating levy?

- In six of the last fifteen years, we have received no increase in general fund formula revenues from the state.
- To maintain our quality programs, the school district has used all of its fund balance and briefly entered statutory operating debt.
- The school district has reduced expenditures for the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years by \$3.3 million.
- Without funding from the proposed operating levy referendum, significant additional cuts will need to be made.
- State funding increases have averaged 2% per year for the last 15 years.
- The cost to maintain current educational programs and services is increasing by an average of 4% per year.
- Annual expenditures for health insurance, natural gas, diesel fuel, gasoline, and special education tuition have all increased by up to 20% or more per year for the last three years.

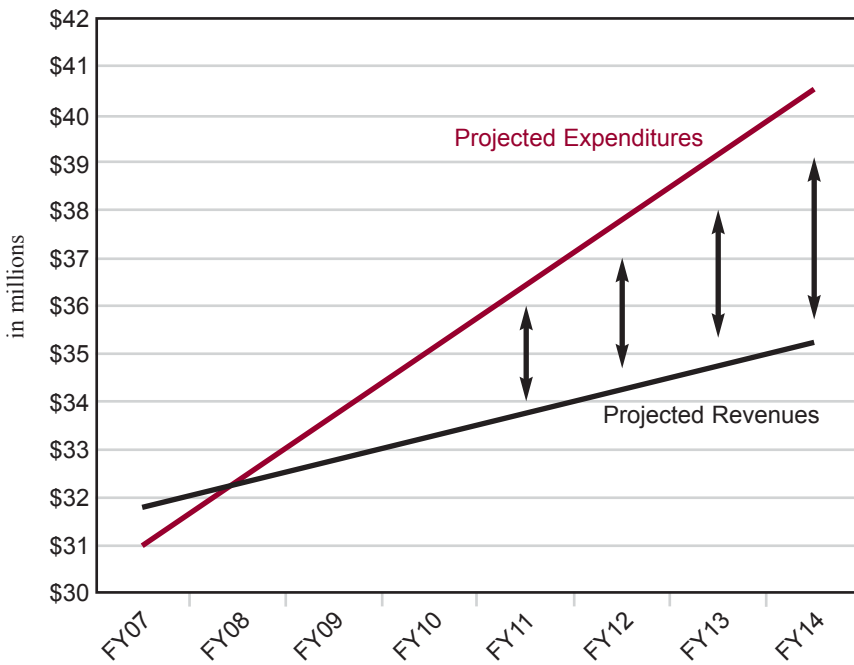
An operating levy gives a school district the ability to levy dollars over and above the per-pupil funding allocated by the State of Minnesota.

An operating levy provides additional revenue to the general fund, which pays for teachers, support staff, benefits, supplies, and services.



Ballot Question # 1 Operating Levy

Impact of 4% average expenditure increase with less than 2% average revenue increase

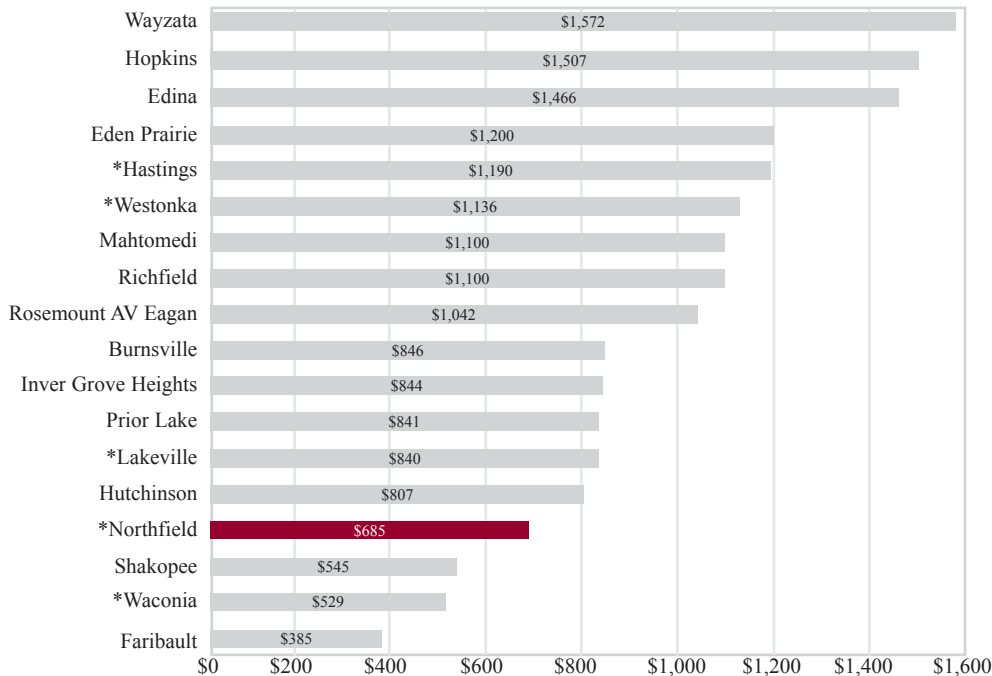


Without the proposed operating levy the gap widens and additional cuts are required every year.



Current operating levy comparison to other districts

Northfield has the 212th lowest referendum revenue per pupil unit out of 343 districts.



Our current levy is as much as \$887 less per pupil than other districts with similar programs.

This is the same as having up to \$26,610 per classroom less than other comparable districts.

Current 2006-07 operating levy revenue per pupil unit

*indicates districts holding a levy referendum in 2006

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Ballot Question # 1 Operating Levy

What is the impact of the operating levy?

Estimated 2007 tax impact of the operating levy

Taxable Market Value (residential, apartments, commercial/industrial*)	Annual New Cost	Monthly New Cost	Daily New Cost
\$100,000	\$106	\$ 8.83	\$0.29
\$150,000	\$159	\$13.25	\$0.44
\$200,000	\$212	\$17.67	\$0.58
\$250,000	\$265	\$22.08	\$0.73
\$300,000	\$319	\$26.58	\$0.87
\$350,000	\$372	\$31.00	\$1.02
\$400,000	\$425	\$35.42	\$1.16
\$500,000	\$531	\$46.75	\$1.45

* For agricultural homesteads, only the house, garage and one acre is taxed for operating levies. Seasonal/recreational property is not taxed for operating levies.

For more information on how the proposed levies would affect your property taxes, go to the Northfield Public Schools website, www.nfld.k12.mn.us and choose "How would the proposed levies affect your property taxes?"

Voting YES means . . .

- Maintaining the quality of educational programs at 2006-07 level for the next four to six years.
- Maintaining instructional programs for all students including high needs students, academically advanced students and students doing average work - especially those programs that have been at risk during the last two rounds of budget cuts.
- Maintaining class sizes at the 2006-07 level for the next four to six years.
- Having no student activity fee increases in 2007-08.

Voting NO means . . .

- The district must cut \$400,000 from the 2007-08 and \$3.9 million from the 2008-09 school budget.
- The district must make across-the-board staff cuts - 35 to 40 additional staff could be lost over two years.
- Class sizes from 2006-07 to 2008-09 would increase by five or six students per classroom in every grade level, K-12.
- The district must make across-the-board cuts in all programs such as electives, choice programs, other programs that don't provide direct instruction in the state standards, co-curricular programs and activities.



Your vote will make a difference for our students and for our communities.

- Reasonable class sizes, comprehensive programs, and high quality facilities are often cited as significant factors in helping to attract new students, families, businesses and industry to the area.
- This growth benefits the area's economy and enhances property values.
- Quality schools and quality communities go hand in hand.

Ballot Question # 2 Capital Projects Levy

Ballot Question #2

The second levy question asks voters for \$750,000 per year for the next seven years to maintain buildings and grounds, support instructional technology and update textbooks needed to educate our students. Passage of ballot question two for capital projects levy is contingent on the successful passage of ballot question one for the operating levy.

Why do we need a capital projects levy?

- State education funding is not keeping pace with the cost of maintaining our school buildings, supporting and replacing instructional technology, and replacing obsolete textbooks.
- Significant general fund budget cuts are compromising our ability to maintain our buildings, equipment and textbooks since general fund dollars must be focused exclusively on providing direct instruction to our students.

What is the impact of the capital projects levy

Estimated 2007 tax impact of the capital projects levy

	Taxable Market Value	Annual New Cost	Monthly New Cost	Daily New Cost
Residential				
	\$ 100,000	\$ 30	\$ 2.50	\$0.08
	\$ 150,000	\$ 45	\$ 3.75	\$0.12
	\$ 200,000	\$ 60	\$ 5.00	\$0.16
	\$ 250,000	\$ 75	\$ 6.25	\$0.21
	\$ 300,000	\$ 91	\$ 7.58	\$0.25
	\$ 350,000	\$106	\$ 8.83	\$0.29
	\$ 400,000	\$121	\$10.08	\$0.33
	\$ 500,000	\$151	\$12.58	\$0.41
Commercial/Industrial				
	\$ 200,000	\$ 98	\$ 8.17	\$0.27
	\$ 500,000	\$279	\$23.25	\$0.75
	\$1,000,000	\$581	\$48.42	\$1.59
Agricultural Homestead (Assumes a value of \$200,000 for home, garage and one acre of land)				
	\$ 400,000	\$ 94	\$ 7.83	\$0.26
	\$ 600,000	\$127	\$10.58	\$0.35
	\$1,000,000	\$220	\$18.33	\$0.60
Agricultural Non-Homestead Dollars Per Acre				
	\$2,500	\$0.75		
	\$3,000	\$0.91		
	\$4,000	\$1.21		

For more information on how the proposed levies would affect your property taxes, go to the Northfield Public Schools website, www.nfld.k12.mn.us and choose "How would the proposed levies affect your property taxes?"

A capital projects levy is a mechanism provided by the state to allow school districts to maintain buildings and grounds, and to replace instructional technology and textbooks.



Ballot Question # 2 Capital Projects Levy

Voting YES means . . .

- Completion of roof replacement on a timely basis to avoid interior and wall damage.
- Repair walls, floors, ceilings and plumbing/electrical services to insure all buildings are safe and usable.
- Support and update instructional technology and textbooks.

Voting NO means . . .

- Inability to replace roofs as they wear out.
- Inability to repair walls, floors, ceilings and plumbing/electrical services resulting in damage to buildings and unsafe/unusable spaces.
- Lack of heating and ventilation to maintain quality learning environment for students.
- Failure to support and replace obsolete instructional technology and outdated textbooks.

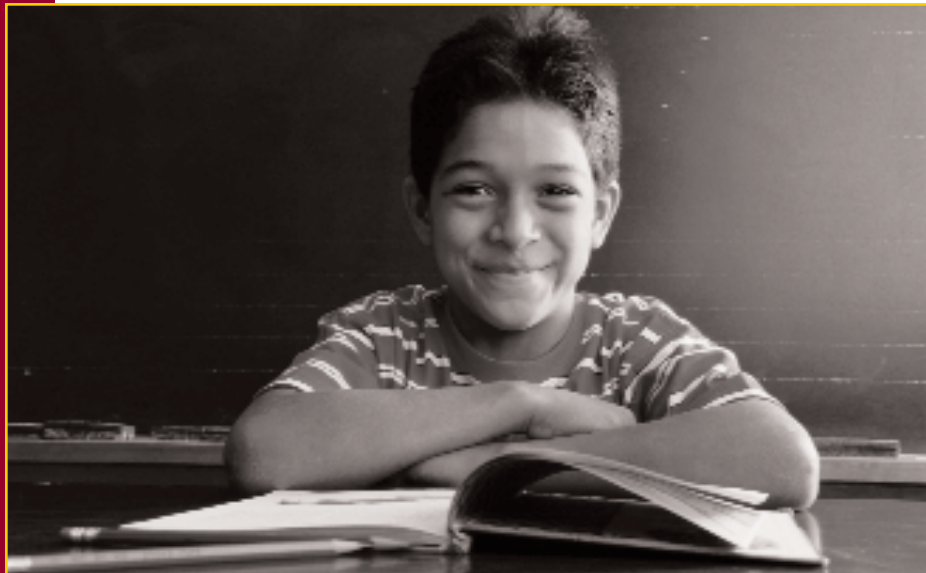
The community told us to be good stewards of our district buildings and grounds and support our students with instructional technology and updated textbooks.

Our Quality Schools

Northfield Schools are consistently recognized for academic success.

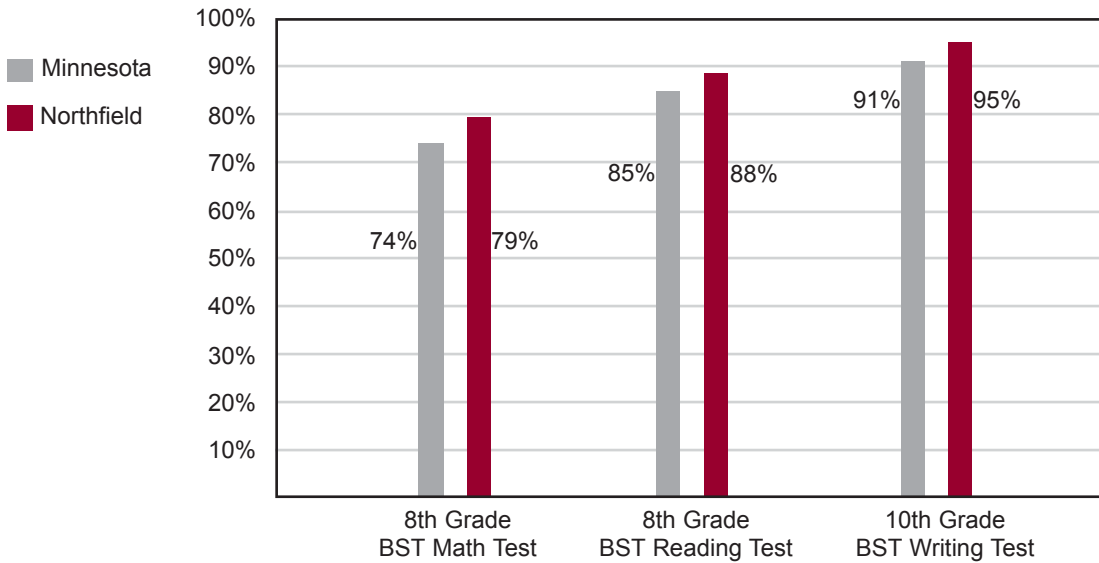
The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has awarded Northfield Schools with a “five star” rating, the highest possible recognition for academic success in the following areas:

- ★★★★★ In 2004-05, Bridgewater, Sibley and Greenvale Park elementary schools for reading performance
- ★★★★★ In 2005-06, Northfield High School for reading and mathematics performance, one of only ten high schools in the state to receive a “double five star” rating
- ★★★★★ In 2005-06, Northfield Middle School for mathematics performance



Our Quality Schools

2005 Basic Standards Tests (BST) results



In 2005, Northfield Public Schools students who took the 8th and 10th grade Basic Standards Tests (BST) outperformed other Minnesota students in math, reading and writing.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education



- In 2005, the Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) achievement tests show growth in mathematics, reading and language usage skills above national median norms in every grade from 2nd through 8th.
- Students in grades four, six, seven and eight performed one full year ahead of national norms in math.
- Students in grade five performed two full years ahead of national norms in math.
- Students in grades three, five and seven performed one full year ahead of national norms in reading.
- Students in grades three, five, six and seven performed one full year ahead of national norms in language usage.
- Standard and Poors recognized Northfield Middle School as one of only 45 schools in the state to narrow the gap between students in poverty and their higher performing classmates while simultaneously raising the scores of both groups.
- Northfield High School students taking the American College Test (ACT) consistently outperform students in Minnesota and across the nation.
- 88% of Northfield High School graduates enroll in post secondary education following graduation.

Source: Research, Evaluation and Assessment - Northfield Public Schools

A strong K-12 program prepares students for success in school and after graduation.

Be sure to vote November 7th.

Precincts and polling places for the November 7, 2006 general election

Precinct	Polling Place	Address
<u>Dakota County</u>		
City of Northfield 3 - 3	Bethel Lutheran Church	1321 North Ave., Northfield
Castle Rock Township	Castle Rock Town Hall	2537 - 240th St. W., Farmington
Eureka Township	Eureka Town Hall	25043 Cedar Ave., Farmington
Greenvale Township	Greenvale Town Hall	30725 Foliage Ave., Northfield
Sciota Township	Sciota Town Hall	30038 Alta Ave., Northfield
Waterford Township	Waterford Community Center	3847 - 321st St.W., Northfield
<u>Goodhue County</u>		
Dennison City	Warsaw Town Hall	3040 County 9 Blvd., Dennison
Warsaw Township	Warsaw Town Hall	3040 County 9 Blvd., Dennison
<u>Rice County</u>		
City of Northfield 1 - 1	St. Dominic's Catholic Church	104 Linden St., Northfield
City of Northfield 1 - 2	First United Church of Christ	300 Union St., Northfield
City of Northfield 2 - 1	Northfield City Hall	801 Washington St., Northfield
City of Northfield 2 - 2	United Methodist Church	1401 South Maple St., Northfield
City of Northfield 3 - 1	St. Olaf College, Buntrock Commons	1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield
City of Northfield 3 - 2	Emmaus Baptist Church	712 North Linden St., Northfield
City of Northfield 4 - 1	St. John's Lutheran Church	500 Third St. W., Northfield
City of Northfield 4 - 2	Northfield Community Resource Center (NCRC)	1651 Jefferson Pkwy., Northfield
City of Dundas	Holy Cross Episcopal Church	205 Second St. S., Dundas
Bridgewater Township	Bridgewater Town Hall	500 Railway St., Dundas
Cannon City Township	Cannon City Town Hall	4490 Crystal Lake Tr., Faribault
Erin Township	Erin Town Hall	12010 Independence Ave., Lonsdale
Forest Township	Forest Town Hall	3625 Millersburg Blvd., Faribault
Northfield Township	Northfield Town Hall	10901 East 110th St., Northfield
Webster Township	Webster Town Hall	4020 Delano Ave., Webster
Dennison	Warsaw Town Hall	3040 County 9 Blvd., Dennison

For information on absentee ballots, contact your county auditor



Prepared and paid by Independent School District No. 659 (Northfield), 1400 S. Division Street, Northfield, MN 55057-0600. This publication is not circulated on behalf of any candidate or ballot question.

Northfield

1400 DIVISION STREET SOUTH
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA 55057

Public Schools 1.S.D. 659 MINNESOTA

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