

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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May 13, 2024

Northfield City Council
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057

Dear City Council Members:

The Northfield School District understands the city council is considering the construction of a new ice arena to serve our community. This letter affirms the Northfield School District's commitment to leasing the city's ice arena for the foreseeable future.

The district understands that its lease cost (including ice time) would increase by up to \$250,000 annually over 20 years. The district's board of education has approved the submission of this letter at its May 13, 2024, regular meeting. While the district must approve the cost each year as part of its annual levy process, this letter should give the city council confidence to move ahead with the long overdue replacement of the current ice arena.

The cost of not addressing this problem is significant. Conservative estimates suggest that at least 100 students would enroll elsewhere without an ice arena to support hockey and other ice-related activities. In Minnesota, school district revenue is heavily weighted on student enrollment. Based on a simple calculation, the district would likely lose around \$1 million in revenue in that scenario.

This situation is different from past discussions about the ice arena. This public/private partnership brings together the school district, the City of Northfield, the City of Dundas, and the Northfield Hockey Association. This partnership has the potential to solve a long-standing problem in our community.

Sincerely,

Matt Hillmann, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Claudia Gonzalez-George
Board Chair