

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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April 16, 2024

Representative Cheryl Youakim
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Rep. Youakim:

Thank you for including Northfield Public Schools in the School Student Attendance Pilot Project. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began to wane, our district has been steadfastly focused on improving consistent attendance. Our community has high expectations and supports our district's vision to *prepare every student for lifetime success by developing critical thinkers who are curious and ready to engage in our society*. Achieving this vision begins with students attending school. We aim to ensure that every student feels part of our community, is connected with a caring adult, and has something they look forward to experiencing at school. This foundation is central to student attendance and success.

Our district has reviewed attendance procedures and made adjustments seeking consistency among schools in recording why students are absent. We have developed real-time data dashboards to provide current information about students with attendance issues. Our team intervenes with individual students when attendance issues arise. Our collaborative work includes community partners who assist us in this critical endeavor. Our consistent attendance rates have substantially increased since the last publicly reported data in 2021-22. Additional funds through this bill would allow our teams to evaluate the next actions that can help turbocharge our improvement.

Again, thank you for including our district in the proposed School Student Attendance Pilot Project. We would be pleased to participate.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Hillmann, Ed.D.
Superintendent