

## The School Board unanimously approved placing two levy questions on the November 8, 2011 ballot

### Ballot Question #1

The first levy question asks voters to revoke the current \$1,270/pupil operating levy and replace it with a \$1,604/pupil operating levy for the next ten years, which will continue to be adjusted for inflation each year.

### Ballot Question #2

The second levy question asks voters to continue the \$750,000 per year capital projects levy for the next ten years after the current levy expires at the end of 2013-14. This levy would 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


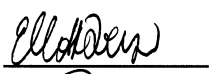
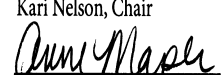



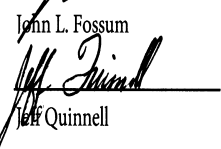
First of all, we'd like to thank you. Thank you for the concerns that many of you shared with us over the financial challenges we face as a district. Thank you for your long-term support of our current levies and of the work we do for children.

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 total revenue to spend than 42% 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 six years, Northfield has had to make budget cuts of over \$4 million. This is not just a "Northfield budget problem" - it's a state-wide funding issue. Currently 90% of the K-12 public 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 three to four years or more, 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 8.

 Kari Nelson, Chair	 Ellen Iverson, Vice Chair
 Anne Maple, Treasurer	 Noel Stratmoen, Clerk
 John L. Fossum	 Julie Pritchard
 Jeff Quinnell	



Seated left to right: Jeff Quinnell and Kari Nelson. Standing left to right: Anne Maple, Noel Stratmoen, Ellen Iverson, John Fossum and Julie Pritchard.



October 2011

Inside:

- Operating Levy Information
- Capital Project Levy Information

[nfld.k12.mn.us](http://nfld.k12.mn.us)  
Superintendent  
Dr. Chris Richardson  
507.663.0629

## Ballot Question # 1 Operating Levy

### Ballot Question #1

The first levy question asks voters to revoke the current \$1,270/pupil operating levy and replace it with a \$1,604/pupil operating levy for the next ten years, which will continue to be adjusted for inflation each year.

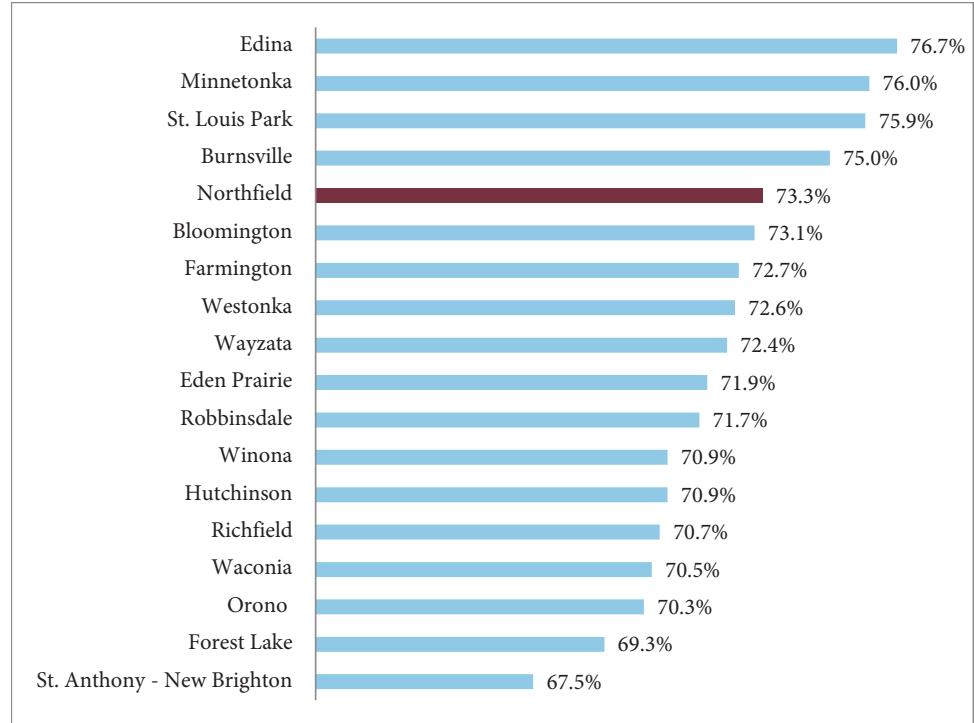


An operating levy gives a school district the ability to levy dollars over and above the per-pupil funding allocated by the State of Minnesota.

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

### 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)

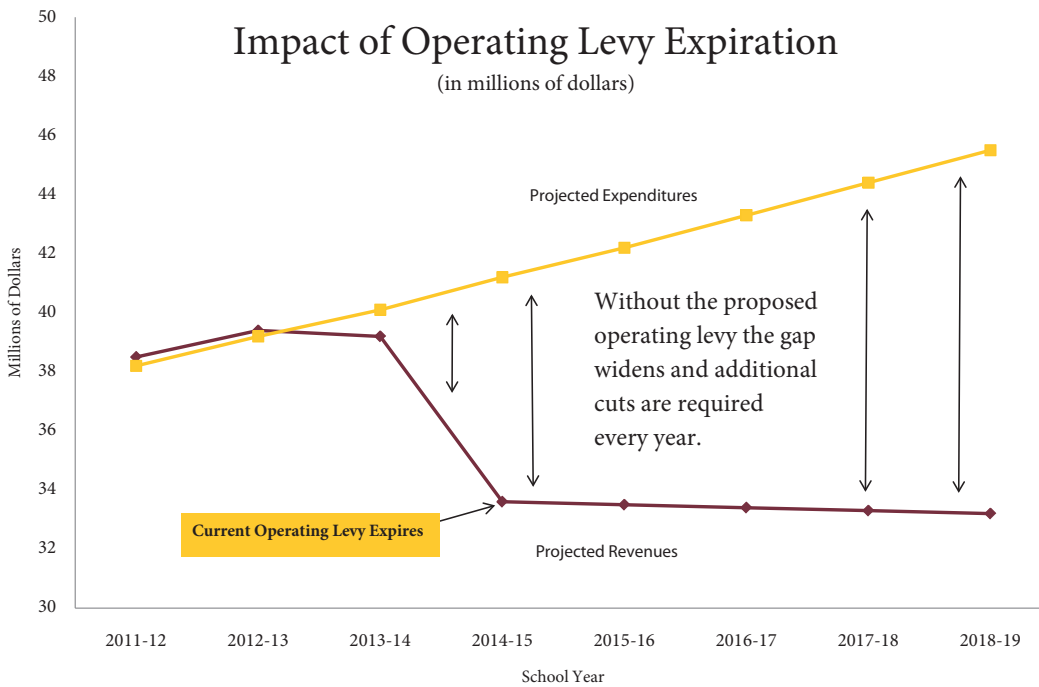


MN Department of Education FY2010 Profile report

### Why do we need the increased operating levy?

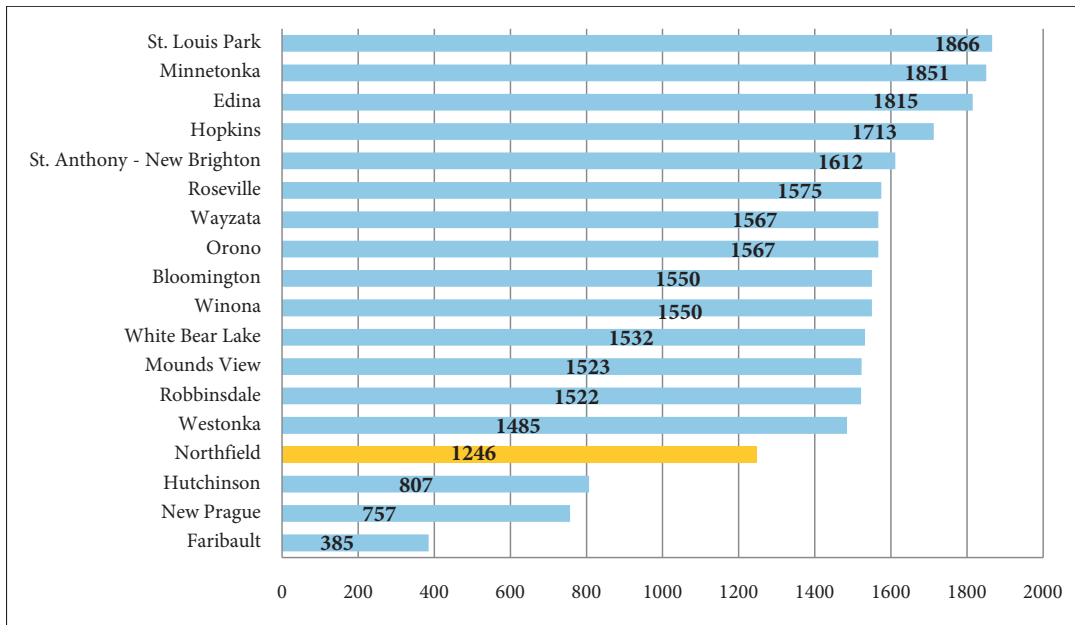
- In six of the last fifteen years, we have received no increase in general fund formula revenues from the state.
- The school district has reduced expenditures for the 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2011-12 school years by a total of \$4 million.
- Without funding from the proposed operating levy referendum, significant additional cuts will need to be made.
- In the past we've been able to rely on reasonable increases in state funding in most years. Since 2003 any formula increase from the state has not matched inflation, and for three of the last six years there has been no increase in funding at all.
- Annual expenditures for health insurance, natural gas, diesel fuel, gasoline, and special education have all increased by up to 20% over the last three years.

# Ballot Question # 1 Operating Levy



## Current operating levy comparison to other districts

Northfield has a lower referendum revenue per pupil unit than the majority of school districts we're compared with for academic programs.



Current 2011-12 operating levy revenue per pupil

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Our current levy is as much as \$600 less per pupil than other districts with similar programs.

This is the same as having up to \$15,000 per classroom less than other comparable districts (classroom of 25).

## Ballot Question # 1 Operating Levy

### What is the impact of the operating levy?

Estimated 2012 tax impact of the operating levy

Year Taxes are Payable	2012	2012	NET CHANGE
	Revoked Authority	Proposed Authority	
Additional Revenue/Pupil Unit	-\$1,269.90	\$1,604.43	\$334.53
Est. Net Change in Revenue	-\$5,484,228	\$6,928,940	\$1,444,711
Est. Market Value Tax Rate	-0.27283%	0.34567%	0.07284%

Type of Property	Taxable Market Value	Estimated Taxes for Referendum Levy Only*		
	\$50,000	-\$136	\$173	\$37
	75,000	-205	259	54
	100,000	-273	346	73
	125,000	-341	432	91
	150,000	-409	519	110
Residential	175,000	-477	605	128
Homesteads,	200,000	-546	691	145
Apartments,	225,000	-614	778	164
and Commercial-	250,000	-682	864	182
Industrial Property	275,000	-750	951	201
	300,000	-818	1,037	219
	350,000	-955	1,210	255
	400,000	-1,091	1,383	292
	450,000	-1,228	1,556	328
	500,000	-1,364	1,728	364
	600,000	-1,637	2,074	437
	800,000	-2,183	2,765	582

\* The figures in the table are based on school district taxes for the referendum levy only, and do not include tax levies for other purposes. Tax increases shown above are gross increases, not including the impact of the state Property Tax Refund ("Circuit Breaker") program. Many owners of homestead property will qualify for a refund, based on their income and total property taxes. This will decrease the net effect of the referendum levy for many property owners.  
**NOTE: Agricultural property will pay taxes for the proposed referendum based only on the value of the house, garage and one acre. Seasonal recreational residential property (i.e., cabins) will pay no taxes for the proposed referendum.**

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.

### Voting YES means . . .

- Maintaining the quality of educational programs and staff at 2011-12 level for the next three to four 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 three rounds of budget cuts.
- Maintaining class sizes at the 2011-12 level for the next three to four years or more.
- Having no student activity fee increases in 2012-13.
- Providing the greatest stability while the state attempts to address their budget deficit.

### Voting NO means beginning in 2013-14 the district must. . .

- cut \$900,000 from the 2013-14 and \$6.7 million from the 2014-15 school budget if the levy fails.
- make across the board cuts of 14-15 staff members in 2013-14.
- make across the board cuts of 115-120 staff members in 2014-15.
- increase class sizes from 2011-12 to 2014-15 by 4 to 6 students per classroom in every K-12 grade level.
- 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, and co-curricular programs and activities.

## Ballot Question # 2 Capital Projects Levy

### Ballot Question #2

The second levy question asks voters to continue the \$750,000 per year capital projects levy for the next ten years after the current levy expires at the end of 2013-14. This levy would 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 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.

### 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.
- The significant lack of dollars is 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 2012 tax impact of the capital projects levy

Fiscal Year	Expiring Authority 2013-14	Proposed Authority 2014-15	Net Change
Projected Annual Revenue	-\$750,000	\$750,000	\$0
Year Taxes Are Payable	2013	2014	
Estimated Tax Capacity Rate	-3.224%	3.224%	0.000%

Type of Property	Taxable Market Value	Estimated Taxes for Capital Projects Levy		
Residential Homestead	\$100,000	-\$32	\$32	\$0
	125,000	-40	40	0
	150,000	-48	48	0
	175,000	-56	56	0
	200,000	-64	64	0
	250,000	-81	81	0
	300,000	-97	97	0
	350,000	-113	113	0
	400,000	-129	129	0
	500,000	-161	161	0
Commercial/ Industrial +	750,000	-262	262	0
	\$200,000	-\$105	\$105	0
	500,000	-298	298	0
	750,000	-459	459	0
	1,000,000	-621	621	0
Apartments and Residential Non-Homestead (2 or more units)	2,000,000	-1,265	1,265	0
	\$150,000	-\$60	\$60	\$0
	300,000	-121	121	0
	500,000	-201	201	0
1,000,000	-403	403	0	

\* The figures in the table are based on school district taxes for the proposed capital projects levy only, and do not include tax levies for other purposes. Tax increases shown above are gross increases, not including the impact of the state Property Tax Refund ("Circuit Breaker") program. Many owners of homestead property will qualify for a refund, based on their income and total property taxes. This will decrease the net tax increase for many property owners.

+ For commercial-industrial property, the estimates above are for property in Rice and Goodhue Counties. The tax impact for commercial-industrial property in Dakota County will be slightly less, due to the impact of the Twin Cities Fiscal Disparities program.

**NOTE: Tax Rate to Include on Ballot is 3.205%.**



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](http://www.nfld.k12.mn.us), and click on "2011 Levy Election" found in the bottom, right hand corner.

## Ballot Question # 2 Capital Projects Levy

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

Northfield Schools are consistently recognized for academic success.

### Voting YES means . . .

- Completion of roof replacement on a timely basis to avoid interior and wall damage.
- Repair of 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 the district will have limited ability to . . .

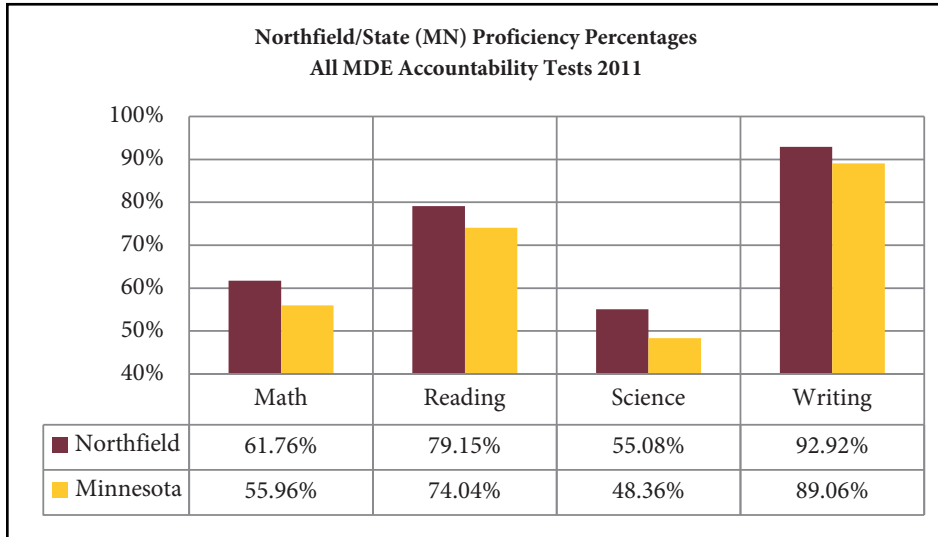
- replace roofs as they wear out.
- repair walls, floors, ceilings and plumbing/electrical services resulting in damage to buildings and unsafe/unusable spaces.
- repair heating and ventilation to maintain quality learning environment for students.
- support and replace obsolete instructional technology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

## Our Quality Schools

- 16 Advanced Placement (AP) classes are offered at the High School. Last year, 88% of students who took AP exams for college credit scored 3 or higher.
- This year, 13 high school seniors received semi-finalist or commended student National Merit recognitions for their academic performance.
- The average ACT composite score: 25.1 compared to the state average of 22.9.
- Last year on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), Northfield students scored above state averages at every grade level in reading, mathematics, writing and science.
- Last year, on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP tests), Northfield students scored above national averages at every grade level.
- In 2010–11, middle school students outperformed national averages on every section of the EXPLORE Grade 8 Exam.
- The Area Learning Center offers an innovative curriculum to support the unique needs of nontraditional students.
- Clustering of gifted/talented students at each level offers additional challenges to the district's highest-achieving students.
- Graduating seniors:
  - 68% plan to attend a four-year college or university.
  - 20% plan to attend a two-year college.
  - 12% have other plans that include entering the workforce, enlisting in a military branch, traveling abroad or volunteering.

## Our Quality Schools

### MCA Proficiency of Northfield Compared to Minnesota



Source: Minnesota Department of Education



- For the past 13 years Northfield High School students have scored above state and national averages on the ACT exam, with averages of 1.3 points above the Minnesota mean and 2.6 points above the national mean.
- Northfield Public Schools students are consistently high performers in math. On the spring 2011, NWEA Measures of Academic Progress math test, given to 5.1 million students nationwide, the percentile mean of all Northfield students was 72.15, with 1781 Northfield students placing in the top quartile of math students across the nation.
- The Northfield High School graduation rate has exceeded 98% in each of the past six years.
- The reading proficiency of Northfield fifth graders based upon Minnesota standards, has averaged 84% over the past six years.

Source: Research, Evaluation and Assessment - Northfield Public Schools

In 2011, Northfield Public Schools students who took the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) outperformed other Minnesota students in math, science, reading and writing.

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

POSTAL PATRON

**Voting**

**Be sure to vote November 8.**

**Precincts and polling places for the November 8, 2011 levy election**

<b>Precinct</b>	<b>School District Polling Place</b>
Castle Rock Township Eureka Township Greenvale Township Sciota Township Waterford Township City of Northfield, Ward 3, Precinct 3	<b>Bethel Lutheran Church</b> 1321 North Avenue Northfield, Minnesota
Webster Township City of Northfield, Ward 3, Precinct, 1 City of Northfield, Ward 3, Precinct 2 City of Northfield, Ward 4, Precinct 1	<b>St. John's Lutheran Church</b> 500 Third Street West Northfield, Minnesota
Bridgewater Township Cannon City Township Erin Township Forest Township City of Dundas City of Northfield, Ward 4, Precinct 2	<b>Northfield Community Resource Center</b> 1651 Jefferson Parkway Northfield, Minnesota
City of Northfield, Ward 1, Precinct 1 City of Northfield, Ward 1, Precinct 2 City of Northfield, Ward 2, Precinct 1	<b>First United Church of Christ</b> 300 Union Street Northfield, Minnesota
Northfield Township City of Northfield, Ward 2, Precinct 2 City of Dennison (Rice County Portion) City of Dennison (Goodhue County Portion) Warsaw Township	<b>United Methodist Church</b> 1401 South Maple Street Northfield, Minnesota

*For information on absentee ballots, contact the school district office at 507.663.0629.*

