

October 2, 2025

Commissioner Willie Jett  
Minnesota Department of Education  
400 NE Stinson Blvd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55413



Don Peschel, Board President  
Erich Martens, Executive Director  
Minnesota State High School League  
2100 Freeway Boulevard  
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Keith Ellison, Attorney General  
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 600  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2131

Re: Urging Compliance with Title IX and Entry into Resolution Agreement Following U.S.  
Department of Education OCR and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services OCR  
Notice of Violation

Dear Commissioner Jett, President Peschel, Director Martens, and Attorney General Ellison,

Forest Lake Area Schools, ISD #831, writes to express our strong support for immediate compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, following the joint Letter of Findings and Notice of Violation issued on September 30, 2025, by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (ED OCR) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights (HHS OCR). This determination found that the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) are in violation of Title IX by permitting males to participate in female-designated athletic programs and to access female-only sensitive spaces, such as locker rooms and restrooms.

As recipients of federal financial assistance, failure to correct these violations directly threatens our schools' ability to serve our students and communities. We urge the MDE and MSHSL to promptly enter into the resolution agreement offered by ED OCR and HHS OCR to rectify these issues, ensure ongoing compliance with federal law, and safeguard the educational opportunities and rights of all students in Minnesota.

Compliance with Title IX is not only a legal obligation but also essential to maintaining the integrity of our educational and athletic programs. The federal findings observe that Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, which refers to biological sex, not so-called gender identity. By allowing males to participate in female sports and access female intimate spaces, MDE and MSHSL have denied female students equal athletic opportunities and compromised their privacy, safety, and dignity—outcomes that undermine the very purpose of Title IX. Entering into the resolution agreement will align state policies with federal requirements, safeguarding students' rights and ensuring that our schools can operate without the risk of federal enforcement actions.

Protecting fairness in women's sports is paramount. The federal determination highlights how permitting males to compete on female teams displaces female athletes from podiums, denies them advancement opportunities, and diminishes their visibility and recognition in competitions. Female students in our district and across Minnesota deserve equal chances to excel in sports, free from unfair physical advantages that biological differences confer. By entering into the resolution agreement, MDE and MSHSL can ensure equal treatment and foster an environment where female athletes can thrive.

Protecting the privacy and dignity interests of students is equally important. As the federal findings observe, allowing males into female-only locker rooms and restrooms leads to documented harms to female students' safety, privacy, and access to educational activities. Title IX's regulations explicitly permit sex-separated facilities and require that they be comparable and protective. Resolving these issues through the offered agreement will protect all students' rights, eliminate risks to their well-being, and ensure that sensitive spaces remain safe and dignified for their intended users.

Furthermore, swift compliance is necessary to protect federal funds that support Minnesota's schools. Continued noncompliance risks the withholding of federal financial assistance, which would adversely affect educational programs, extracurricular activities, and resources for students statewide. We cannot afford to jeopardize these vital funds due to policies that violate Title IX.

Finally, entering into the resolution agreement will eliminate the confusion and uncertainty currently facing school districts like ours. Local administrators, teachers, coaches, and staff need clear, consistent guidance to implement policies that comply with federal law while serving our communities. By entering into the resolution agreement promptly, MDE and MSHSL can provide the clarity that our districts and schools need to focus on educating and supporting students effectively.

Very truly yours,



Curt Rebelein, Junior  
President, Forest Lake Area School Board



Tessa Antonson  
Clerk, Forest Lake Area School Board

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 831  
Forest Lake, Minnesota  
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

October 2, 2025

UNNOFICIAL – DRAFT MINUTES

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The regular meeting of the School Board of Independent School District No. 831, Forest Lake, Minnesota, was called to order by Member Rebelein at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 2, 2025 at the Forest Lake Area Schools District Office, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll was called and the following members were present: Tessa Antonsen, Jill Christenson, Julie Corcoran, Luke Hagglund, Mark Kasel, Curt Rebelein, Jr., Gail Theisen and Superintendent Steve Massey, ex officio.

Member Antonsen moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Kasel to approve the meeting agenda as presented. All members voted aye. The motion to approve the agenda carried.

SCHEDULED / UNSCHEDULED VISITORS

- Listening Session: 14 people attended
- Green Cards: 4 speakers addressed agenda topics

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Student Report – Bleacher Captains reported on homecoming events
- FLAMS Principal Miller presented on the start of the school year with adding 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the building as well as the Best Buddies program that has been implemented.
- Positive Happenings – Members talked about events in the community and district

REPORTS

- Workshops and Conferences - None
- City of Forest Lake – Members Christenson & Theisen presented on recent meetings
- Community Education – Member Christenson reported that activities are robust
- MSBA – Member Theisen presented on the recent fall retreat, delegate resolutions
- Superintendent Massey thanked the FLAMS team for the powerful work that is happening in their school. Columbus Elementary recently celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The recent government shutdown will not have an immediate impact on public education funding, but it will depend on the length of the shutdown. The Strategic Planning committee has met once with another meeting scheduled on 10/08/25. Superintendent Massey announced his retirement as of 6/30/2026, humbly

expressing gratitude to the talented and dedicated staff of the district and his family for their support over his career. It has been his greatest honor to serve the students, family and staff of Forest Lake Area Schools.

Member Rebelein moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Hagglund to accept Superintendent Massey's intent to retire as of June 30, 2026, which accepts the conclusion to his employment contract and to provide authorization to the board chair and vice chair to initiate an executive search process to identify a possible successor. Via roll call vote, all members voted aye. The motion carried.

#### CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Member Rebelein requested to pull 7.6 from the Consent Agenda.

Member Kasel moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Hagglund to approve agenda items 7.1-7.5; 7.7; 7.8. All members voted aye, the motion carried.

7.1 Approved the Minutes of September 4 & 18, 2025

7.2 Approved the Bills as of October 2, 2025

7.3 Approved Classified Personnel  
Add / Change of Position

- Request the addition of a .5 FTE Communities that Care (CTC) Coordinator position at Forest Lake Area High School, 20 hours per week from October 6, 2025 through June 30, 2026. This position will be funded by the CTC MN Dept of Health Grant.

#### Authorization of Transfer

- Abel, Michelle: from SAC Program Aide at Linwood Elementary to SAC Substitute District Wide, effective September 26, 2025
- Cornell, Amber: ECFE Teaching Assistant II at the Education Center, from 16.75 hours per week to 12.5 hours per week and 148 days per year, effective September 25, 2025
- Grinstead, Amanda: Special Education Paraprofessional at Forest Lake Area Middle School, from 30 hours per week to 32.5 hours per week, effective September 2, 2025
- Manni, Amy: ECFE Teaching Assistant II at both Columbus Elementary and the Education Center, from 25 hours per week to 22.75 hours per week, effective September 11, 2025
- Peter, Debra: Special Education Paraprofessional at Forest Lake Area Middle School, from 30 hours per week to 32.5 hours per week, effective September 2, 2025
- Riepe, Olivia: SAC Program Aide at Columbus Elementary, from 10 hours per week to 20 hours per week, effective October 13, 2025

- Tessier-Schak, Anne: ECFE Teaching Assistant II at the Education Center, from 23.5 hours per week to 16.5 hours per week and 148 days per year, effective September 25, 2025
- Whall, Beth: Special Education Paraprofessional at the Education Center, from 16 hours per week to 18 hours per week, effective September 2, 2025

#### End of Employment / Termination

- Lukas, Hailey: Special Education Paraprofessional at Forest Lake Area Middle School, effective September 22, 2025

#### Recommendation of Employment

- Crohn, Joy: Long Hour Cook Helper at Forest Lake Area Middle School, 20 hours per week and 178 days per year, effective September 29, 2025 (contingent upon satisfactory background check)
- Kolden, Michael: School Bus Driver Trainee, effective September 17, 2025
- Mills, Samuel: School Bus Driver Trainee, effective September 17, 2025
- Oberholtzer, Holly: SAC Office Assistant III at the Education Center, 20 hours per week and 202 days per year, effective September 29, 2025
- Oney, Robert: School Bus Driver Trainee, effective September 16, 2025
- Roberts, Heather: ECFE Teaching Assistant II at both Forest View Elementary and the Education Center, 11.5 hours per week and 169 days per year, effective September 24, 2025
- Thibault, Lillian: Special Education Paraprofessional at Forest Lake Area Middle School, 30 hours per week and 177 days per year, effective September 26, 2025 (contingent upon satisfactory background check)
- Voth, Emmett: Special Education Paraprofessional at Forest Lake Area Middle School, 28 hours per week and 177 days per year, effective October 3, 2025 (contingent upon satisfactory background check)

#### Resignation(s)

- Hentges, John: Noon Duty at Wyoming Elementary, effective September 26, 2025
- McCracken, Jake: District Maintenance Mechanic at Forest Lake Area High School, effective September 5, 2025
- O'Connor, Rachael: Special Education Paraprofessional at Forest View Elementary, effective September 26, 2025

#### 7.4 Approved Licensed Personnel

##### Non-Curricular Assignments

- Alexander, Morgan: MS Yearbook - 1.0 Head Advisor
- Blackburn, Kaitlyn: MS Orchestra - .5 Head Director & .5 Assistant Director
- Erickson, Tab: MS WEB - .33 Head Advisor & .33 Assistant Advisor
- Guidry, John: MS Choir - 1.0 Assistant Director

- Kowarsch, Jennifer: MS Student Council - .5 Head Advisor & .5 Assistant Advisor
- Kowarsch, Jennifer: MS WEB - .33 Head Advisor & .33 Assistant Advisor
- Laqua, Maurya: MS Band - .5 Head Director & .5 Assistant Director
- Laqua, Maurya: MS Jazz Band - .5 Head Director & .5 Assistant Director
- MacLean, Lara: MS Choir - 1.0 Head Director
- MacLean, Lara: MS Band - 1.0 Assistant Director
- Marn, Jeff: MS Strategy Club - 1.0 Head Advisor
- Matheson, Jake: MS Band - .5 Head Director & .5 Assistant Director
- Matheson, Jake: MS Jazz Band - .5 Head Director & .5 Assistant Director
- Miron, Michael: MS FFA - 1.0 Assistant Advisor
- Parke, Robert: MS FFA - 1.0 Head Advisor
- Reynolds, Sallyann: MS WEB - .33 Head Advisor & .33 Assistant Advisor
- Schreiber, Pojanat: MS Orchestra - .5 Head Director & .5 Assistant Director
- Schreiber, Pojanat: MS Pops Orchestra - 1.0 Head Director
- Schurhamer, Mackenzie: MS Student Council - .5 Head Advisor & .5 Assistant Advisor
- Thein, Rebecca: Wyoming Yearbook - 1.0 Advisor

#### Recommendation of Employment

- Chaplin, Jocelyn: Effective 10/13/25 (Pending satisfactory background check)

#### Unpaid LOA

- Donohue, Kaitlyn: Approximate dates - 11/17/25-11/20/25
- Hirsch, Brittany: Approximate dates - 10/21/25-10/31/25
- Hirsch, Randall: Approximate dates - 10/31/25-11/7/25

7.5 Designate Superintendent as MDE Identified Official with Authority (IOwA)

7.7 Approve Superintendent to Teach at U of M for Spring 2026 Term

7.8 Approve Middle School Science Club

- Chair Rebelein moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Hagglund to formally adopt the letter provided by the Chair and direct administration to deliver a signed copy to the addressed individuals using an overnight delivery service and to provide the board with confirmation of delivery.
- Point of Order made by Chair Rebelein to Member Christenson that her discussion could be taken as a personal attack against himself in regards to the timing of the 61 page opinion that resulted in him drafting the letter and the her feeling of the lack of informing the board of this topic.

- Point of Order made by Member Christenson that this was not on the agenda that was approved as presented at the start of the meeting. Chair Rebelein determined that this is germane to 7.6.
- Member Christenson moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Theisen to appeal the decision of the chair that this letter is germane due to its relationship to both MSHSL and female sports, stating that the agenda should have been amended to include this topic. Via roll call vote, those members voting to agree with Member Christenson: Christenson, Corcoran, Theisen. Members voting with Member Rebelein: Antonsen, Hagglund, Kasel, Rebelein. The motion to appeal the decision of the chair failed.
- Point of Inquiry made by Member Antonsen asking for affirmation that this letter states that the district is willing to be in compliance with federal law regarding Title IV. Chair Rebelein affirms this letter is only stating an opinion, not any legal fact or inferring any legal finding on the district's part.
- Superintendent Massey asks the board to consider the precedent that gets set for the board to seek outside counsel from law firms that has not been formally approved by the board to provide counsel to the district. Chair Rebelein states that the chair is authorized to engage in legal counsel.
- Vote is called for the original motion to formally adopt the letter provided by the chair and direct administration to deliver a signed copy to the addressed individuals using an overnight delivery service and provide proof of delivery. Via roll call members voting aye to adopt the letter: Antonsen, Hagglund, Kasel, Rebelein. Members voting nay to adopt the letter: Christenson, Corcoran, Theisen. The motion carried.

7.6 Member Hagglund moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Rebelein to approve the Emerging Status School Commitment Form – MSHSL Girls Team Dual Wrestling. All members voted aye, the motion carried.

#### ACTION ITEMS:

8.1 Donations – Member Christenson reviewed and thanked those providing donations totaling \$8,590.02. Member Christenson moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Hagglund to accept donations provided to FLAS. All members voted aye, the motion carried.

8.2 Member Christenson moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Kasel to approve the FLAS Staff Retirement(s). All members voted aye, the motion carried.

8.3 – 8.8 1300 Series Policies (Policies 1301-1306)

- Member Rebelein moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Hagglund to rescind Policies 202-214 and replace with Policies 1301-1306 as presented.

8.3 School District Administration Proposed Policy 1301 – No discussion

8.4 Superintendent Proposed Policy 1302

- Member Antonsen moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Kasel to strike from 1302 III.D the verbiage “personal and”. Via roll call vote, members voting aye: Antonsen, Hagglund, Kasel, Rebelein. Members voting nay: Christenson, Corcoran, Theisen. The motion carried.

8.5 Superintendent Selection Proposed Policy 1303 – No discussion

8.6 Superintendent Contract Duties and Evaluation Proposed Policy 1304

- Member Rebelein moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Hagglund under 1304 II.A add the verbiage to the last sentence stating “... and shall be posted publicly on the Forest Lake Area School website alongside all other employment contracts.” Members voting aye: Antonsen, Christenson, Hagglund, Kasel, Rebelein. Members voting nay: Theisen. Abstain: Corcoran. The motion carried.

8.7 Policy Implementation Proposed Policy 1305 – No discussion

8.8 Administration Code of Ethics Proposed Policy 1306

Vote was called on motion to rescind Policies 202-214 and replace with Policies 1301-1306 as presented. Members voting aye: Antonsen, Hagglund, Kasel, Rebelein. Members voting nay: Christenson, Corcoran, Theisen. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

9.1 First Reading – Transportation Employees Drug, Alcohol & Cannabis Testing Policy  
313

As there was no further business, Member Kasel moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Hagglund to adjourn. All members voted aye and the meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

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Curt Rebelein, Jr.                      President

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Tessa Antonsen                      Clerk

Date: 11/06/2025