

"Dear Gov. Dayton, Sen. Majority Leader Gazelka, Speaker of the House Daudt, Sen. Draheim, and Rep. Bly:

"The Northfield Public Schools serve approximately 4,000 students in Rice, Dakota and Goodhue counties. As an educational community, we have watched the recent horrific event at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. We are sorrowful and angry that these kinds of unacceptable acts continue to take place at schools — places where students should feel safe. Parents send their children to school with the expectation of safety and should not have to worry if their children will come home at the end of the day.

"Political rhetoric can get in the way of meaningful action. As a locally-elected School Board representing our community, we are charged with ensuring the education, health and safety of students. We unanimously request our state government take immediate action to:

- Effectively regulate access to firearms in the interest of public safety.
- Fund public-health research on firearms-related issues.
- Fund reasonable school security enhancements, including personnel and facilities expenditures.
- Fund strong mental health support systems for children and young adults.

"There are numerous data points and statistics we could share with you to support the four points above. However, it is the stories that are most powerful. The stories of Columbine, Sandy Hook, Parkland and dozens of other gun-related violent incidents on

school or college campuses are compelling enough. In Minnesota, the stories of Red Lake and Rocori High Schools still reverberate in our state's culture.

Northfield Public Schools have taken action to make our schools as safe as we are able. We have:

- Increased physical security through controlled entryways at our schools.
- Expanded our staff skillset with training such as Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- Trained crisis teams using the PREPaRE framework from the National Association of School Psychologists.
- Implemented the evidence-based Second Step social/emotional learning curriculum in grades K-8.
- Trained more than two dozen high school students to be peer helpers using a curriculum developed by the renowned Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.
- Conducted lockdown drills in our schools.

"We will continue to do our part but we need your help. It is time for you, our elected leaders, to take action. We encourage you to set aside politics and act as statesmen and stateswomen. Our state and nation need strong leadership from you at this moment in history."