



# NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## **Overview and Event:**

On March 19, 2024, the Board of Directors held a Community Conversation called “Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow” to learn about the current attendance patterns of our students and steps that the district is taking to improve attendance. The Board and community members were presented student attendance trends by Kirsten Rue, Director of Student Achievement. Then Autumn Cummings, Assistant Principal at Pleasant Glade and Chambers Prairie Elementary Schools, and Shawn McDonald, Assistant Principal at Komachin Middle School, provided examples of how their respective schools have implemented strategies to improve student attendance. After the presentations, Board Vice President Dr. Jennifer Thomas facilitated a fishbowl discussion with students, parents, educators, and administrators. At the conclusion of the discussion, community members participated in table-group discussions. Table facilitators took notes, which were provided to the Board in a debrief held on March 21, 2024.

This Community Conversation focused on NTPS Strategic Plan Goal 2 – Responsible, Resilient, Empowered Learners, Outcome b: Increased percentage of regular school attenders.

## **Board Determination:**

As a result of the Community Conversation, the Board’s Determination is as follows:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and lasting impact on student attendance – in terms of the requirement for students to stay home when sick, the shift of instructional resources to online at the secondary level, and the impact on students’ social connection and wellbeing. The tools and strategies that the NTPS Office of Student Achievement has deployed are important MTSS Tier I, II, and III strategies that need to continue. The Board believes that the persistent and consistent deployment of the MTSS Tiered strategies is essential to continuing to improve attendance. The Board commends staff who have been committed to the Tier I strategies.
- The Board directs the superintendent to further expand and resource MTSS Tier II approaches so that building attendance teams can deploy Tier II strategies more efficiently. The Board recognizes that at-risk attenders, with appropriate support, have become regular attenders.
- The Board directs the superintendent to explore new options for MTSS Tier III support. The Board recognizes that the Tier III intervention structures are mandated by law and NTPS is following the requirements. The shortfall the Board has identified is the lack of a school model that better meets the needs of students who are chronically absent. Therefore, the newly identified options must include an alternative learning model tied to the comprehensive high school(s) to better meet the social and academic needs of students who have become chronically absent. The Board expects the alternative model to be short-term (one semester or year) to provide the services students need to get back on track and become regular attenders.

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