

**BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS  
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA**

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 24, 2025  
**TO:** BOARD OF EDUCATION  
**FROM:** JORDAN HICKMAN, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
**SUBJECT:** REQUEST FOR EXTENDED LEAVE: GRETCHEN RUSCH

**COMMENTS:**

Gretchen Rusch, a Library Media Specialist at J.W. Smith and Northern Elementary Schools, wishes to secure approval from the Board of Education for a Five Year Extended Leave of Absence under the provisions of M.S. 122A.46. Ms. Rusch's request is for July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2030.

Your approval is required for this request.

Once the leave is approved, the employee involved has the following rights:

1. The right to be reinstated to a position for which they are licensed at the beginning of any school year after the first year of the extended leave of absence, unless (a) they are discharged, (b) they are placed on unrequested leave of absence, (c) their contract is terminated pursuant to M.S. 122A.40 or 122A.41 while they are on extended leave, or (d) they do not advise the Board of their intentions to return before February 1 in the school year preceding the year in which they wish to return.
2. The right to retain seniority and continuing contract rights as though they had remained in the District.
3. The employee is required to pay the employee and employer share of TRA. The school district can pay the employer share if it chooses to do so.