

MINNETONKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #276
District Service Center
5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Minutes of February 3, 2022 Regular Board Meeting

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 3, 2022 in the Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Chairperson Chris Vitale presided. Other Board members present were: Mark Ambrosen, Katie Becker, Patrick Lee-O'Halloran, John Odom, Meghan Selinger, Lisa Wagner and Superintendent Dennis Peterson, ex officio. The meeting was also livestreamed on the District's YouTube channel.

Prior to the meeting, the Board recognized, via a video, the Hennepin Theatre Trust Spotlight Awards for Minnetonka Theatre's production of *Chicago*, Debate State Qualifiers and State Champion, DECA State Qualifiers, and Minnetonka Community Education Certified Program Planners.

Chairperson Vitale called the regular meeting to order and asked that everyone stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

1. AGENDA

Wagner moved, Ambrosen seconded, that the School Board approve the agenda as presented. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

2. SCHOOL REPORT: SCENIC HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

Scenic Heights Elementary Principal Joe Wacker updated the Board on a new position the school is piloting this year: Student Support Paraprofessional. The role is overseen by their social worker and administrative support person. The Student Support Paraprofessional evaluates students' needs and prescribes interventions so these students can be more successful in class. School Board members told Principal Wacker they are excited about this new role and to see how it impacts students.

3. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Chairperson Vitale noted that this opportunity for comment was available to community members who wished to address the Board on any item on that night's agenda. He also read the guidelines for Community Comments, for the benefit of those who wished to speak.

The following individuals then addressed the Board:

- Chanhassen resident Joanne Quackenbush spoke in support of lifting the mask mandate
- Minnetonka residents Katy Gilles and her daughter Meredith spoke in support of lifting the mask mandate
- Spring Park resident Shannon Hoban spoke in support of mask choice
- Excelsior resident Nicole Nejezchleba spoke in support of mask choice
- Excelsior residents Kathryn Bonine and her son Isaac (with friend Stanton) spoke in support of mask choice
- Excelsior resident Wes Bonine expressed his concern with how the school culture is being impacted by the mask mandate
- Chanhassen resident Jessica Cossalter spoke in support of mask choice
- Excelsior resident Melanie Winters spoke in support of mask choice
- Chanhassen resident Susanne Schaer spoke against COVID vaccinations for children
- Excelsior resident Jen Senescall spoke in support of mask choice
- Chanhassen resident Faith Staut spoke in support of mask choice
- Shorewood resident Abigail Hecker spoke in support of ending the mask mandate
- Greenwood resident David Evans spoke in support of ending the mask mandate
- Excelsior resident Chad Herman spoke in support of ending the mask mandate
- Chanhassen resident Palmer Nye spoke in support of mask choice
- Eden Prairie resident Camellia Ramos spoke in support of extending the mask mandate at the high school
- Minnetonka resident Sammi Gervais spoke in support of the mask mandate
- Minnetonka resident James Bullington spoke in support of postponing the approval of the Superintendent Leadership Profile
- Minnetonka resident Barbara Post spoke on behalf of five churches who are in support of the MCEE imperatives as they relate to the Superintendent Leadership Profile
- Deephaven resident Katie Williams spoke on behalf of St. Luke's in support of educational equity in relation to the Superintendent Leadership Profile
- Chanhassen resident Melissa White spoke in support of the mask mandate at MHS and for special ed students
- Minnetonka resident Amy Cho spoke in support of the mask mandate
- Minnetonka resident Doug Gilles spoke in support of ending the mask mandate and Safe Learning Plan as a whole

Chairperson Vitale thanked the community members for their comments.

4. REPORT ON COMMUNICATIONS RESULTS ON GOALS

Each year, the Minnetonka School Board establishes annual, actionable goals for District Administration that align with the vision and direction in which the Board wants to lead the District. These goals ensure continuation of a legacy of long-term excellence and educational success. The 2021-22 School Board goals are Excellence in Student Well-being and Belonging and Excellence in Student Learning and Support. An aspect of the goals is to provide ongoing communications to and engagement opportunities for District constituents that reflect the goal work. Executive Director of Communications Dr. JacQui Getty presented on the communications and engagement efforts in support of the School Board's desire to keep all stakeholders informed and involved. Additionally, she provided an overview of some of the District's broader communications and outreach projects from earlier in the school year and those yet to come.

Chairperson Vitale and other Board members thanked Dr. Getty for the informative report.

5. REVIEW OF SAFE LEARNING PLAN

The School Board has an expectation of reviewing the District's Safe Learning Plan at each regular meeting of the Board. Health Services Director Annie Lumbar Bendson presented, via a recorded video, an update on the impact COVID is having on the District and surrounding areas. Highlights of her presentation included the following:

- Positive downward trend on dashboard
- Hennepin County numbers are starting to trend down
- State weekly testing & positivity rates are expected to fall once we get current data
- National data from CDC on their COVID website (two-week lag)
- Active student cases are trending down from the spike in January
- Active staff cases are also trending down from the spike in January
- Recovered staff 323 & students 2,350 cumulatively

Dr. Peterson said one question people may have is when we will implement the five-day CDC isolation recommendation. There are several criteria that the CDC says must be followed to implement that. He said the District is piloting it with staff, and that we will evaluate how that goes before determining if we could roll it out to students. There are several considerations that must be made before allowing someone to return from isolation after just five days, so we want to see whether that will be manageable. Board member Wagner asked how the pilot is going with staff. Dr. Peterson said it's a small sample but has worked well thus far.

Chairperson Vitale asked whether the District received funding tied specifically to the safety protocols the District has in place, such as mask-wearing, as that question was brought up by a parent during Community Comments. Dr. Peterson said the District is transparent with what spending has taken place. We have used our funding for mitigation of the situation last year, trying to keep kids in school. Many other districts received 10-15 times the money we received. He said we made decisions about mask-wearing before we received that funding, so we did not make those decisions because of funding, but he will look into it more and will provide that information.

Board member Odom spoke about how COVID from a year ago is different than COVID today and that we should provide some criteria for when we can lessen mitigation efforts.

Board member Becker asked how the increased live-streaming model worked while that was in place. Dr. Peterson said it worked well and that the increased streaming has ended but many teachers are continuing to do it. Board member Becker thanked the teachers and administration for their efforts

Chair Vitale asked the Board whether they felt they would like a Special Meeting added tentatively to the next Study Session date, for the Board to use, if it needs to. The Board felt that made sense, to have a Special Meeting as a place holder, so that it is there if needed.

6. APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP PROFILE

The search firm of BWP & Associates presented the Superintendent Leadership Profile to the Board virtually for affirmation and approval. They noted that they had overseen a District-wide survey in multiple languages (3,562 responses) and conducted over 30 focus groups with community members, staff and students to obtain stakeholder input on the characteristics desired in the next superintendent. They had also conducted individual interviews with each Board member. Highlights of their presentation included the following:

District Strengths

- Reputation for academic excellence
- High levels of student performance across many areas
- Involved and supportive community
- Extensive educational programs and opportunities: academics, fine arts, career/technical, extracurricular, etc.
- Talented and dedicated teachers and staff
- Significant open enrollment: fiscal stability, resources

District Challenges/Issues

- Sense of belonging, equity, diversity and inclusion
- Meeting the social, emotional and well-being needs of students
- Sustaining financial resources – open enrollment dependency, future referendum, uncertain state support
- Some facilities at capacity/overcrowded as well as staffing needs
- Pandemic-related challenges
- Addressing different viewpoints of stakeholders
- Recruiting and retaining top personnel
- Community relations/communication to all stakeholders
- Curriculum

Next Superintendent – Characteristics, Skills, Experiences

- Values and advocates for belonging, equity, diversity and inclusion
- Highly effective interpersonal skills
- Financially savvy
- Strong and collaborative decision maker
- Referenda experience
- Active listener/communicator
- Personal integrity/character
- Interacts with all stakeholders
- Open to new ideas/forward thinking
- Delegate and hold others accountable
- Considers different viewpoints
- Involved and committed to community
- Visible/accessible
- Child-centered

Leadership Profile – Minnetonka

- A RELATIONSHIP builder with all, with exceptional INTERPERSONAL skills
- Highly PERSONABLE, and able to make tough DECISIONS and demonstrates SOUND JUDGMENT and INTEGRITY
- A leader fully INVESTED in the Minnetonka community, ACCESSIBLE and VISIBLE, and an ADVOCATE for belonging, diversity, equity and inclusion
- A UNITER who ENGAGES and LISTENS to all stakeholders, considering diverse viewpoints as part of the decision-making process and clearly COMMUNICATES the rationale for the decision
- A VISIONARY LEADER who can clearly ARTICULATE continuous excellence and is able to FACILITATE plans for greater cognitive and social-emotional/well-being growth

- An EXPERIENCED and SUCCESSFUL administrator who is FINANCIALLY savvy, with strong MANAGERIAL and DELEGATION skills that bring about the best in others
- An INCLUSIVE and COLLABORATIVE decision maker

Wagner moved, Becker seconded, that the Board approve the Superintendent Leadership Profile.

In the discussion that followed, Board member Selinger asked whether the items on slides were ordered in terms of how often they were mentioned or just arbitrary. The search firm said they were arbitrary. Board member Selinger asked the search firm to clarify what the questions or concerns about curriculum were from stakeholders. The search firm said the biggest concern they heard raised was about how parents needed to be more informed about what is included in curriculum.

Chairperson Vitale thanked all for participating in the survey, focus groups and interviews. Board member Wagner said there was a significant amount of feedback, and she said she felt the search firm has the best position to condense and consolidate what they've truly heard so that the Board should accept the profile, as is.

Board member Becker said she thought the words Belonging and Excellence should be capitalized in the Leadership Profile, along with the other words that have already been capitalized in the draft by the firm, as they are both strong elements of the District goals and would clearly communicate that to applicants. Vice Chair Ambrosen said he did not think it was important to do that at this point as they could dig into those aspects with finalists in interviews. Board member Selinger agreed with the Vice Chair and felt the Board should stay with BWP's Leadership Profile as written.

Board member Odom said he believes we should put a stronger emphasis on academic excellence and not just excellence. Chairperson Vitale wondered whether we could link to the Belonging and Excellence definitions, as the District has defined those words in its goals. Vice Chair Ambrosen asked whether the search firm will talk with candidates about Board goals. BWP said yes.

Board member Wagner asked why BWP highlighted the words it did. BWP said the words it highlighted are the essence of what they will look for in superintendent candidates.

Chairperson Vitale said he feels the word excellence should be capitalized because it is not a small thing for Minnetonka. Board member Wagner said that was an excellent point and she would agree that change could work. She agreed to incorporate this change into her original motion as a friendly amendment.

Board member Lee-O'Halloran asked how the Leadership Profile will be used by the search firm. The firm said it uses it as a filter but added that it's rare that any candidate meets all aspects of the profile and that they also use the profile to develop questions for candidates. The search firm said the profile will be posted on the BWP website and the District website.

Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion to approve the Superintendent Leadership Profile (with the change of capitalizing the word EXCELLENCE in the profile) carried unanimously.

7. SALE OF 2022A BONDS FOR VANTAGE/MOMENTUM BUILDING

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois presented this item to the Board. He noted that at the School Board meeting of October 7, 2021, the Board had approved moving forward with the financing and construction of the VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building at 5735 County Road 101 in Minnetonka for classes commencing in September 2023, pending approval of the project from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) through the Review and Comment process. The School Board also approved issuing \$7,000,000 in 2022A Certificates of Participation Bonds pending approval of the Review and Comment. The District received a positive Review and Comment from MDE on January 5, 2022.

Mr. Bourgeois noted that the sale of the 2022A COP Bonds took place on February 2, 2022. The bonds were sold at a total interest cost of 3.30%. Mr. Bourgeois recommended that the Board approve the sale resolution as prepared by Dorsey & Whitney, LLP.

Ambrosen moved, Odom seconded, that the Board approve the sale resolution as presented. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Wagner moved, Becker seconded, that the School Board approve the recommendations included within the following Consent Agenda items:

- Minutes of December 29, 2021 Special Meeting, January 6, 2022 Regular Meeting, and January 20, 2022 Special Meeting
- Study Session Summary of January 20, 2022
- Payment of Bills
- Recommended Personnel Items
- Gifts and Donations for January 2022: \$15,000.00 from Medical Information Technology, Inc to be placed in the Minnetonka Technology and Technology Instruction Funds. \$6,900.00 from the Minnetonka Foundation to be placed in the MHS Capital Expenditure Fund. \$24,774.15 from the Minnetonka Foundation to be placed in the Minnetonka Middle Schools Lego Education Kit Funds. \$200.00 from Ulteig Engineers, Inc. and \$400.00 from Entegris, Inc., both to be placed in the MHS Tonka Hacks Program. A 2002 Chevy Impala from Lindsay Brisley to be given to the MHS MOMENTUM Program. \$750.00 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund to be placed in the Deephaven Elementary School Trust Account. \$47.77 from Brent Rickenbach, \$75.00 from Ramar Tan, \$90.00 from Xiaoshun Grant, \$50.00 from Melissa Dann, \$50.00 from Nicole Hiller, \$200.04 from Kurt Hoddinot, and \$287.00 from the Benevity Community Fund; all to be placed in the Scenic Heights Elementary School Trust Account. \$40.00 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund to be placed

in the Minnewashta Elementary School Principal Discretionary Fund. \$34.00 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund to be placed in the MMW Principal Discretionary Fund. \$50.00 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund and \$100.00 from Fidelity Charitable; both to be placed in the MME Principal Discretionary Fund. \$300.00 from Brian Kensicki to be placed in the MHS E-Sports Pizza Party Fund. \$14.00 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund and \$60.00 from US Bank Foundation; both to be placed in the Excelsior Elementary School Principal Discretionary Fund. Total Gifts and Donations thus far for 2021-22: \$231,122.55.

- Electronic Fund Transfers
- American Indian Parent Committee Resolution

Upon vote being taken on the foregoing Consent Agenda items, the motion carried unanimously.

9. **BOARD REPORTS**

Board member Lee-O'Halloran shared that he had recently met with the MMW PTO on behalf of the Board. He said they were excited to meet and have interactions with the Board, and they expressed their happiness with MMW Principal Freya Schirmacher.

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Peterson said that Administration is implementing the temporary mask mandate at the high school that the Board recently put in place. He said it's been challenging to get young people to do this who haven't done this all year and that it has had an impact on the relationships between students and staff/teachers.

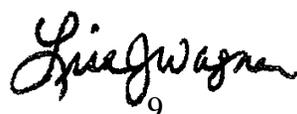
Dr. Peterson also shared that graduation had been moved to June 6 because of a change to the date by the venue, and that we needed to accept the date change by the venue because there were no venues of that size available at the last minute. He said it would still be a great celebration for our graduates.

11. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements this evening.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

Wagner moved, Odom seconded, adjournment at 9:50 p.m. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.



Lorie Wagner

Lisa Wagner, Clerk