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INSPIRE.  
EXCEL.



**2021-2022**  
annual report



MINNETONKA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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Minnetonka Public Schools warmly  
welcome Superintendent David  
Law, who began his role on July 1.

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Benjamin Mendoza's love of basketball helped the town of Jastrzebie Zdroj, Poland create a free clothing store and a summer camp for Ukrainian refugees. That's just the start of Skippers serving locally and globally.



## Superintendent's Message



Greetings to you!

I'm now nearly four months into my tenure as Superintendent of Schools for the Minnetonka Public School District, and I am honored to have been selected for this role. As is apparent in this annual report, this district has a strong reputation for academic excellence, innovation and success.

Throughout my career in public education, I have learned that reputations are built over decades with help from a committed community, supportive parents, an involved school board, dedicated staff and hardworking students. During my transition into this superintendency, I have experienced all of these things. I follow in the footsteps of a legendary leader. Dr. Dennis Peterson has left a legacy of excellence and innovation for me to continue moving forward.

This report contains a myriad of examples of world class education. Our schools are bursting with talented students participating in amazing educational experiences. Many of the programs mentioned in this publication are unique to this district, including our preschool through 12th grade Language Immersion program, advanced learning opportunities, Minnetonka Research, K-12 Tonka Online and our VANTAGE and MOMENTUM programs. We work hard to provide high quality programming to match every student's interest. As this report showcases, between highly

engaged and award-winning students in both academics and extracurriculars and accomplished staff, there is much to celebrate.

As we launch a new school year, our School Board is finalizing our annual goals. This year, we will continue to focus on academic excellence and ensuring all students feel welcome and connected and experience a sense of belonging in Minnetonka. We are also implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, a structure to ensure every student is academically challenged and growing throughout the school year. Finally, we are committed to providing excellence in leadership and in our organizational support structures for staff and students.

I look forward to all we can do together to continue to grow the exceptional opportunities for our students and to ensure that the excellence and innovation that have flourished here continue to guide our steps.

Respectfully,

David Law, JD  
Superintendent of Schools

# Update from the Minnetonka School Board

The Minnetonka Public School District is governed by its seven-member School Board. Each member is elected at large and serves alternating four-year terms.



Meet the 2021-22 Minnetonka School Board. Pictured: Katie Becker (treasurer), Meghan Selinger (director), Chris Vitale (chair), Lisa Wagner (clerk), Patrick Lee-O'Halloran (director), Dr. John Odom (director), Mark Ambrosen (vice-chair).

## District Vision

It is the duty and privilege of the Minnetonka School Board, as elected representatives, to shape the direction that the Minnetonka Public School District takes in serving families. In the 2021-22 school year, the Board undertook the task of reviewing and updating the District's vision document to ensure Minnetonka Public Schools' legacy of excellent teaching, exceptional student achievement and outstanding fiscal management will continue.

As a world-class organization dedicated to child-centered excellence, the Minnetonka School District will:

- Challenge and support all students in the pursuit of their highest levels of academic and personal achievement.
- Practice prudent and innovative management of public resources.
- Advocate for strong academic and strong co-curricular programs.
- Attract, develop and support the highest quality teachers and other educational professionals.
- Demand the highest standards of professional excellence in every level of the organization.
- Create, pursue and champion outstanding early childhood education opportunities so that all children enter Kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.
- Tailor learning experiences to the needs of individual learners.
- Create positive, enjoyable learning environments.
- Foster the development of good character and social responsibility.
- Inspire students to understand and serve the greater good.
- Celebrate students and staff of all backgrounds, cultures, experiences and identities.
- Instill an abiding appreciation for the rights, privileges and values of America's system of government.
- Produce outstanding graduates who are ready to contribute and thrive in a wide array of future pursuits and engage in life-long learning.
- Earn and maintain broad-based community support.

Download a copy of the School Board's newly revised vision document, *Our Vision for the Future*, at [www.minnetonkaschools.org/vision](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/vision).



## Talking About Board Goal Success and Opportunity with Chair Vitale

Each year, the School Board sets goals for Minnetonka Public Schools. School Board Chair Chris Vitale shared the successes of last year's goals.

**The goals in 2021-22 were *Excellence in Student Learning* and *Excellence in Student Well-being and Belonging*. How did the Board select those two goals?**

**CHAIR VITALE:** "Maximizing opportunities and ensuring excellence for students academically and also socially and emotionally were central to the School Board's thinking as we set the goals for the 2021-22 school year. Our seven-member Board is made up of parents within the school district—with kids at all age levels—whose families have a range of experiences and backgrounds and who all bring their own lens to the table as we discuss goals. We quickly found common ground together, despite those differences, when it came to ensuring we do what's best for kids. We want all students in our district to have all of the opportunities they possibly can to help them achieve their potential and pursue the pathways that will help them to thrive in school and in their futures. And, we all believe it's vitally important that each student feels connected, feels valued and feels as though they belong."

**How did the District do this year in achieving these goals?**

**CHAIR VITALE:** "The District made purposeful and meaningful strides toward both of the School Board goals. It takes the shared dedication and daily efforts of teachers, administrators, staff, students, families and community members to make Minnetonka excellent, and we are proud of the steps taken to enhance student learning, support, well-being and belonging this year, all of which will have a ripple effect for years to come."

**What were some of the successes in Student Learning?**

**CHAIR VITALE:** "The District did significant work, with the help of the U of M's Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, to identify priorities specific to individual student groups. We use this to deliver high-quality, targeted instruction for core academic subjects, as well as for social and emotional learning. The District created a three-year action plan to address these needs. Other major successes included the MOMENTUM Design and Skilled Trades expansion at Minnetonka High School, which opened for classes at the start of the spring semester. And, of course, construction of the new VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building was approved, and a groundbreaking celebration was held on May 5. Tonka Online completed its first year as a comprehensive, diploma-earning program for students in grades K-12. And, finally, the District continued to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing, reviewing and revising the Safe Learning Plan throughout the school year."



School Board Chair Chris Vitale discusses the District's future with former superintendent, Dr. Don Draayer, at the VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building groundbreaking.

**What were some of the major successes for the goal of *Excellence in Student Well-being and Belonging*?**

**CHAIR VITALE:** "Each school identified barriers that have detrimental effects on students' well-being and sense of belonging and barriers to student academic success. Each school made efforts to address the building-specific needs aligned to the District goals."

Schools' Belonging Committees allowed parents and students to share insights for ways to improve student opportunities and experiences. Teachers and staff continued training with the Search Institute on ways to powerfully impact students' lives through relationships. School Board members participated in the trainings, as well. The Human Resources department attended nine events to promote the hiring of staff with diverse backgrounds. And, three Belonging Summits were held this year to provide a venue for administrators to share the belonging efforts at their sites or in their departments in support of this District goal."

**Where can we learn more about School Board Goals?**

**CHAIR VITALE:** "It's important for all District stakeholders to be a part of making the goals a success. The community can learn more about last year's progress on the 2021-22 School Board Goals and read about the new 2022-23 School Board Goals soon at [www.minnetonkaschools.org/schoolboard](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/schoolboard)."



# Celebrating Academic Excellence

## National Merit Semifinalists



Class of 2023 National Merit Semifinalists pose with Minnetonka High School Principal, Jeff Erickson. This record-setting class represents the most National Merit Semifinalists in Minnetonka history.

Congratulations to the Class of 2023's record-setting 37 National Merit Semifinalists, overtaking the Class of 2022's record of 32. Congratulations also to the 49 National Merit Commended students from the Class of 2023. These students scored among the nation's best on the Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

Students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) in the fall of their junior year. More than 1.5 million juniors entered the competition for 2023, and of those, approximately 16,000 (~ top 1%) were named National Merit Semifinalists.

## IB Diploma Graduates



Class of 2022 IB Diploma candidates posed with their extended essays last winter. The extended essay is a project diploma candidates complete in the fall of their senior year, requiring research and analysis on a topic of their choosing.

Congratulations to the 59 students from the Class of 2022 who earned the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. Of those, 30 earned an IB Bilingual Diploma in Chinese, Spanish or French.

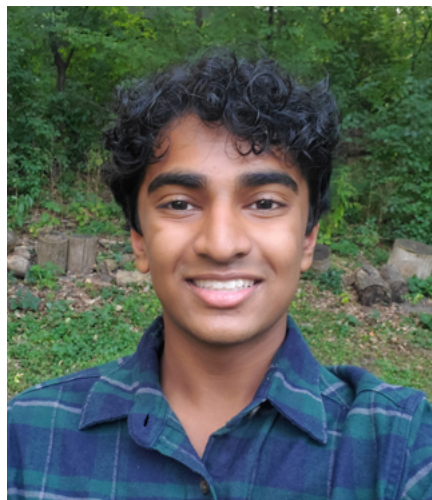
The IB Diploma Programme is recognized and respected by the world's leading universities. At Minnetonka, the IB is

an all-inclusive series of courses that uses internationally-developed curriculum to provide a deep, thought-provoking study in six areas during 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It is known for academic rigor and comprehensive curriculum, enhanced by an inquiry into the theory of knowledge, research, creativity, action, service and a capstone extended essay.



## Showing Pride in Student Achievement

Minnetonka Schools celebrates the many outstanding academic achievements of its students. Read on for a spotlight on just a few of the ways students made an impact this year with their curiosity and passion. You can find even more examples of Minnetonka students' academic achievement in the Points of Pride section on page 20.



Krish Inba Rajashankar '23 qualified for the prestigious International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). He also earned a Beckman Coulter Award for Excellence in Engineering for the project.

**"I am so grateful to have seen all my hard work pay off. I invested a huge amount of time and effort into my project, and I am very glad to have been able to go to ISEF," said Rajashankar. "If the Minnetonka Research program didn't exist, I would not have even considered undertaking a research project in high school. The opportunity to perform independent project work is really incredible and something I haven't taken for granted. As someone without any prior research experience, my instructors' advice and wisdom was extremely helpful for me in my own journey."**

Katriana Trinh '23 and Saloni Somia '23 have been honored at the state level with Minnesota Aspirations in Computing Awards, recognizing their academic excellence, leadership and future goals regarding computing and technology.

**"Winning this award validated my computing skills and the endeavors that I've worked for during my academic career—like robotics," said Trinh. "Along with the recognition, I was given the opportunity to connect with a wonderful community of people who had the same interests as me."**

**"Computing, to me, has always been about connection and problem-solving," said Somia. "There is a unique opportunity for change making and innovation that can be found in coding. This award encompasses everything that I value, and I am honored to have received it."**



Congratulations to Quinn Hughes '25 and Tyler Clair '25, who won in their category at the Sigma Xi Student Research Conference. They competed with high school and university students from across the world.

**"The Sigma Xi experience allowed me to further develop my interest in scientific research," said Clair. "Research has changed the way I solve problems. I am continuing to apply science to real-world problems through my Minnetonka Research course."**

**"This is my fifth year doing independent research, and these experiences have helped me learn so much about the application of the scientific method to many different fields of science and have helped me discover a passion for biology," said Hughes.**



# Testing Ahead of Peers

Minnetonka students experience a transformation that accelerates their learning far above the national average. By the time they reach middle school, the average sixth grader in English or Chinese/Spanish Immersion is performing beyond the 12th-grade level in reading and math compared to national norms.



## MCA III Test Results Show Solid Performance by Tonka Students

Minnetonka students, across all grades tested, are performing well in measurements collected through standardized testing. Most notably, students demonstrated solid performances in science, reading and math. In the spring 2022 MCA III assessments, Minnetonka students ranked first in science and second in math and reading among comparative schools in the Twin Cities Metro area.

### SPRING 2022 MCA III STATE READING, MATH AND SCIENCE COMPARISONS

District	Reading	Math	Science
Minnetonka	73.3	72.9	70.5
Eastern Carver County	60.6	55.6	53.8
Eden Prairie	68.1	59.2	54.7
Hopkins	51.8	41.6	34.9
Orono	73.2	68.2	65.0
Wayzata	77.1	77.8	67.6
Westonka	72.6	68.4	59.9
State of Minnesota	51.0	44.6	41.0

## NWEA Test Performance Compared to National Grade-Level Criteria

By the spring of their first year with Minnetonka Schools, Kindergarten students already begin to perform academically ahead of their peers. By the end of elementary school, the average fifth-grader is performing at a mid ninth-grade level in reading and an early twelfth-grade level in math. By sixth grade, these students are performing beyond twelfth grade in both subjects.

### SPRING 2022 RESULTS: NWEA MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Minnetonka	Reading level:	Math level:
Kindergarten	Early 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Mid 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade
Grade 1	Mid 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Early 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade
Grade 2	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 3	Mid 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Early 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 4	Early 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Early 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 5	Mid 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 6	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 7	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade



# AP by the Numbers

Advanced Placement® (AP) gives students the chance to engage with college-level work while still in high school and to earn college credit—which can save families thousands of dollars. In the 2021-22 school year alone, 2,964 AP® exams were taken by Minnetonka High School students.



85%

of all MHS students took an AP® exam and received at least a 3

93%

of the MHS students who were enrolled in an AP® course also took the AP® exam

71%

of the Class of 2022 took at least one AP® exam

34

separate AP® courses were offered at MHS

Looking for your student's name? Visit [www.minnetonkaschools.org/APscholars22](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/APscholars22) to view a complete list of AP Scholars.



## Best Wishes to the Class of 2022

On Monday, June 6, the 69th graduating class of Minnetonka High School celebrated its commencement at U.S. Bank Stadium. The 848 graduates and their families joined the District in celebrating the culmination of their K-12 school journey.



Graduates have enrolled in 210 colleges and universities in 41 different states and the District of Columbia, and 14 graduates are studying internationally. The top five colleges and universities that graduates are attending include University of Minnesota Twin Cities (84), University of Wisconsin Madison (50), Normandale Community College (38), Iowa State University (32) and University of Minnesota Duluth (27). Eight graduates are serving in the Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy or National Guard.

"You all have a story that has brought you to this day, and each of you has contributed to the story of our school," Minnetonka High School Principal Jeff Erickson shared in his commencement address. "I am grateful that I've had the opportunity to be part of and a witness to your story these last four years."

Congratulations, Class of 2022!







**99%**

of seniors graduated

**86%**

are attending colleges  
and universities

**78%**

are attending 4-year  
colleges and universities

**8%**

are attending  
2-year colleges

**32%**

are attending Minnesota  
colleges and universities

**8**

graduates have entered  
military service



## Breaking Ground to Build the Future: New Spaces for S.A.I.L., MOMENTUM and VANTAGE



School Board members, then Superintendent Dr. Dennis Peterson and Minnetonka Mayor Brad Wiersum officially broke ground for the new VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building on May 5, 2022.

Last spring, Minnetonka Public Schools broke ground for the new VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building—the crown jewel on a season marked by transformative renovations and additions for Minnetonka students.

“Minnetonka Schools is creative and forward-thinking in all it does, including its approach to facilities. The new spaces that the District opened and broke ground for during the 2021-22 school year demonstrate that drive to provide students with the best possible learning environments while being responsible stewards of community resources,” said Chris Vitale, Minnetonka School Board Chair.

New projects from the 2021-22 school year included the S.A.I.L. Transition Program Building, the MOMENTUM

addition to Minnetonka High School and the groundbreaking for the VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building. Each will increase the District’s ability to personalize educational opportunities.

“We are building the first all-new school building in the District in 55 years, and we’re doing it without raising taxes. It is going to be a landmark that the whole community can be proud of,” said Paul Bourgeois, Executive Director for Finance and Operations for Minnetonka Schools. “This is a 100-year investment that will provide incredible opportunities for generations of students to come.”

You can read more about the S.A.I.L. Transition Program and the new VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building in the Summer 2022 issue of the *Minnetonka Alumni Magazine*, available online at [www.minnetonkaschools.org/alumnimagazine](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/alumnimagazine).





## S.A.I.L. Transition Program Building

Students Achieving Independent Life (S.A.I.L.), Minnetonka's new transition program providing special education services for students ages 18-21, opened for classes in Fall 2021. It features a state-of-the-art Practical Assessment Exploration System lab for career training, as well as a video production suite, fully-functional kitchen and fully-furnished mock apartment space. S.A.I.L. is well-equipped to support students as they learn life and career skills to support their post-graduate endeavors.

"The S.A.I.L. building allows us to bring our transition students back into our community so we can maintain the high levels of academic excellence we hold throughout the rest of the District," said Christine Breen, Executive Director of Special Education. "Since the launch of the program, students have achieved higher levels of independence and functioning than many thought possible."



## MOMENTUM Addition to Minnetonka High School

The MOMENTUM addition at MHS opened for classes in spring 2022. Constructed to provide space for the design and skilled trades program expansion, it includes a four-car automotive garage specifically designed for the transportation course track, featuring classes such as Automotive Career Investigation, Automotive Braking Systems and Automotive Engine Performance. The addition also includes flexible 'makerspace' classrooms to be used for MOMENTUM's other career pathways.

"Minnetonka High School is a school of opportunities where we work to help each student find their passion and place," said MHS Principal Jeff Erickson. "MOMENTUM and VANTAGE, in particular, provide pathways for our students to broaden their horizons and apply their learning to real-life scenarios in fields that are in dire need of the next generation of workers, such as the trades."



## VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building

The VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building, currently under construction next to Clear Springs Elementary, will add specialized classroom space designated for these high school programs. VANTAGE is the High School's advanced professional studies program, offering hands-on opportunities in nine different fields: Business Analytics, Health Sciences, Design+Marketing, Global Business, Digital Journalism, Global Sustainability, Public Policy, User Experience (UX) Design and, the newest strand, VANTAGE Education. This innovative program provides students with real-world experiences where they forge connections with business leaders and work with real companies.

The new building will replace a leased space that has been used for components of VANTAGE and will provide new space for the MOMENTUM and VANTAGE programs. Classes at the VANTAGE/MOMENTUM building will begin in Fall 2023.



## Successful Search for Next Superintendent



Following a comprehensive search, the School Board and staff of Minnetonka Public Schools warmly welcomes Superintendent David Law (shown here with School Board Director Dr. John Odom and School Board Clerk Lisa Wagner).

On November 15, 2021, then Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Dennis Peterson, announced he would retire at the end of the 2021-22 school year. Following that announcement, the School Board began the process for a nationwide search for a new superintendent.

The Board formed the Superintendent Search Subcommittee made up of School Board Clerk Lisa Wagner, who has served 15 years on the Board and who has served in all Board leadership roles during that time; Treasurer Katie Becker, who has also served in all leadership roles during her seven years as a Board member; and Dr. John Odom, who was appointed to fill a one-year term on the Board after a previous Board member moved out of the District.

The Superintendent Search Subcommittee researched several search firms to assist the Board in its efforts. In December 2021, the Board selected BWP & Associates as its search firm.

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**“The Board felt that keeping the community informed about and involved with the search process every step of the way was extremely important to having a successful result.”**

- Lisa Wagner, School Board Clerk

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Throughout January 2022, at the Board's direction, BWP & Associates surveyed District students, parents, staff and community members and held input sessions with more than 500 constituents.

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**“We are thrilled with how our search ended and feel we have the best possible person to lead our district forward while ensuring the excellence and innovation that defines Minnetonka Schools is preserved.”**

– Katie Becker, School Board Treasurer

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“The Board felt that keeping the community informed about and involved with the search process every step of the way was extremely important to having a successful result,” said Board Clerk Lisa Wagner. “The input that came from the survey and from the focus groups really helped to define the leadership profile of what our district needed from our next superintendent.”

From February through April of 2022, BWP & Associates brought forth a number of candidates for first-round interviews. Of those candidates, a few were selected as finalists. The Board initially offered the superintendent role to a finalist in March, but that finalist withdrew his candidacy. In April, David Law, then Superintendent of Schools for the Anoka-Hennepin School District, the largest school district in the state, was brought forth as a candidate and then as a finalist.

On April 21, 2022, the School Board named David Law as the next superintendent of Minnetonka Public Schools. Mr. Law accepted the role and began as Superintendent of Schools for Minnetonka on July 1, 2022.

“We know that seating a new superintendent is a critical responsibility, and we took that very seriously as a school board,” said Board Treasurer Katie Becker. “We are thrilled with how our search ended and feel we have the best possible person to lead our district forward while ensuring the excellence and innovation that defines Minnetonka Schools is preserved.”



## **Dr. Dennis Peterson Retires After 21 Years as Superintendent of Minnetonka Public Schools**

Dr. Dennis Peterson officially retired as superintendent at the end of the 2021-22 school year. He leaves behind an unparalleled career in public education, including a record 52 years of service as a superintendent—21 of which were spent at Minnetonka Public Schools.

As superintendent, Dr. Peterson transformed Minnetonka into a nationally recognized district with a reputation for excellence and innovation. Today, Minnetonka is widely considered the best school district in the state and is counted among the best in the nation. This is thanks in no small part to his vision for the District, which is reflected in the outstanding teachers and staff hired, the incredible signature programs launched and the amazing student achievement supported throughout his tenure.

“Thank you, Dr. Peterson, for giving us your all ... and for the impact that you have made for our District's students, who've had the incredible privilege to benefit from the wealth of innovative programs and opportunities you have given them access to experiencing,” said School Board Chair Chris Vitale. “Be assured, we will continue on with the standard of excellence you have set for us all.”

The District invites you to honor Dr. Peterson's legacy with a contribution to the Dennis Peterson Scholarship for Excellence and Achievement fund. You can learn more about the scholarship and make a donation here: [bit.ly/legacyofexcellence](https://bit.ly/legacyofexcellence).

Want to read more about Dr. Peterson's legacy of excellence? Visit [bit.ly/petersonretires](https://bit.ly/petersonretires).



## Opportunities Abound: Signature Programs Offer Rigorous, Personalized Pathways to Excellence



Minnnetonka Schools has a strong history of providing personalized learning and support through its many signature programs.

"The connection between personalization and excellence is clear," explained Associate Superintendent Dr. Amy LaDue. "When students are engaged in subject matter that is important to them, they learn deeply and build a foundation for limitless future opportunities."

Here's a glance at some of these pathways—from the District's K-12 Immersion program and opportunities across all grade levels for advanced learning and enrichment to its specialized high school courses that give students hands-on opportunities and windows into future careers.

In addition to the programs featured here, Minnetonka Schools has many other unique options for students:

- Ready-Start Kindergarten (RSK) is a Kindergarten program designed for children who may not be ready, socially or academically, for a traditional classroom.
- Tonka Online provides an exceptional, comprehensive e-learning experience for students in grades K-12.
- Tonka <CODES> is a K-12 coding curriculum that introduces all students to the language of computer programming.
- Art and music classes start in Kindergarten, and musical theatre opportunities begin in fifth grade.
- Senior Capstone provides students the opportunity to apply for and participate in a two-week, off-campus experience at the end of their senior year.





## LANGUAGE IMMERSION

Minnetonka's Chinese and Spanish Language Immersion Program provides premiere learning experiences for students from Kindergarten through their senior year. With the state's largest Language Immersion program, the District is uniquely prepared to support the goals of students.

"This year, our Immersion program continued developing effective language learning strategies, motivating students to use their second language to communicate and interact with others, while learning about the richness and variety of Hispanic culture," shared Maria Chopite, third grade Spanish Immersion teacher at Minnewashta Elementary.

Mikayla Wong '28, a student in the Chinese Immersion program, shared that knowing a second language helps her connect with others. "There was a little girl in the nursery at my church who didn't speak English, but she spoke Mandarin, and I was able to comfort her by speaking to her in Chinese," said Wong. "I hope to use what I learn in Chinese Language Immersion to communicate with others who speak Chinese but may not know English."

"Looking ahead to the 2022-23 school year, we're excited to bring back our cross-district collaboration with high school volunteers, who will visit the elementary Immersion classes on a monthly basis," said Jodi Siegel, Immersion lead and Spanish Immersion teacher at Minnetonka High School.

"Learning a language opens so many doors for students, throughout their K-12 experience and beyond," said School Board Director Patrick Lee-O'Halloran. Lee-O'Halloran's family moved to Minnetonka for the District's Chinese Immersion program, and he also assisted the District with some legislative hurdles regarding licensing for non-native English speakers who were Immersion teachers. "Minnetonka's Immersion program helps students become global citizens, aware of different cultures and ready to make an impact in the world."

**"THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PERSONALIZATION AND EXCELLENCE IS CLEAR. WHEN STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN SUBJECT MATTER THAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM, THEY LEARN DEEPLY AND BUILD A FOUNDATION FOR LIMITLESS FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES."**

*-Dr. Amy LaDue  
Associate Superintendent*



**"I HOPE TO USE WHAT I LEARN IN CHINESE LANGUAGE IMMERSION TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS WHO SPEAK CHINESE BUT MAY NOT KNOW ENGLISH."**

*-Mikayla Wong '28  
Chinese Immersion Student*



## MINNETONKA RESEARCH

Minnetonka Research provides students the opportunity to pursue authentic research driven by their own questions and interests. By connecting students with leaders in academia and industry, this program inspires and guides students as they develop 21st Century skills including communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration.

"Our projects ranged from investigating effects on cancer cells, diagnosis of Parkinson's disease, automated robots and lawnmowers, to mental health and learning and memory," said Minnetonka Research director Kim Hoehne. "Students were able to pursue answers to the questions that they were passionate about."

This year also marked the first time that Minnetonka Research alumni, who have now graduated from college, became mentors in the program. "It was fun to begin seeing the full circle of our students giving back to the research community," said Hoehne.

"One of my biggest takeaways from Minnetonka Research will be my confidence in presenting my ideas," said Abby Hoekstra '22, who participated in the Minnetonka Research program. "It has been so helpful to learn how to present in a more technical and professional way to many different people with different backgrounds and knowledge about the topics we researched."

Looking ahead to 2022-23, Hoehne and her teaching team are excited to bring a new community together and support students in the interests and questions they decide to investigate this year. "Every year is a new year, and no year ever looks like the previous one," said Hoehne. The Minnetonka Research team also looks forward to building deeper connections with research mentors in 2022-23.



**"ONE OF MY BIGGEST TAKEAWAYS FROM MINNETONKA RESEARCH WILL BE MY CONFIDENCE IN PRESENTING MY IDEAS."**

*-Abby Hoekstra '22  
Minnetonka Research Student*

## MOMENTUM

MOMENTUM, Minnetonka High School's program for design and skilled trades, launched with expanded opportunities in technology education in the 2020-21 school year and has since grown to serve more than 700 students. Named for the hands-on, forward motion and forward thinking that is part of its work, MOMENTUM provides students with specialized tracks in construction systems, manufacturing, design and transportation.

"This past year, we incorporated unique applied learning experiences called the Mini Youth Apprenticeships. After consultation with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, we developed relationships with local businesses, which gave small groups of students in the Physics of Home Renovation unique access to job sites, corporate headquarters, factory floors and more," said Brent Veninga, coordinator for MOMENTUM.

The MOMENTUM program's offerings expanded to include automotive last spring with the addition of new classroom space at Minnetonka High School. You can read about the addition and future space expansions on page 10.

Mason Jakubik '22 was a student in one of MOMENTUM's inaugural automotive classes. "I like working on my own car, and I thought taking this course would be a great way to heighten my own skills," he shared. "During class, we learned how to put tires on rims and take them off – that was really cool, and something I couldn't do outside of this type of course." Jakubik encourages students to consider MOMENTUM regardless of their current level of knowledge. "There is always something here to learn!"

In the 2022-23 school year, MOMENTUM plans to improve and expand the number of classes, students and teachers in the program. Future plans also include investigating aerospace opportunities within the transportation track.



**"I LIKE WORKING ON MY OWN CAR, AND I THOUGHT TAKING THIS COURSE WOULD BE A GREAT WAY TO HEIGHTEN MY OWN SKILLS."**

*-Mason Jakubik '22  
MOMENTUM Student*



## THE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

The Navigator Program serves exceptionally gifted students in second through fifth grade. This unique program provides a specialized learning environment capitalizing on the unique intellectual strengths of its learners.

"By providing rigorous, meaningful work in a safe learning environment, highly gifted students develop the grit needed to try hard things, to fail and to try again," explained Diane Rundquist, Minnetonka's Director of Advanced Learning. "This is critically important to this population of learners because we don't want college to be the first time a student struggles. Through its whole-child focus, Navigator supports social and emotional development while providing the challenge highly gifted children crave."

Krithik Moorthy '29, a Navigator student now in middle school, shared, "Navigator has taught me to have a stronger work ethic, which I use every day. I have become more self-disciplined and self-motivated to get my work done. It has definitely helped me with my organization and presentation skills and improved my level of critical thinking."

Minnetonka Schools continues to develop advanced learning programs to challenge and extend students' learning in their areas of strength in grades K-12. At the elementary level, programs such as math and reading enrichment, Independent Investigations, Project Think, Academic Extension, Wings and Navigator serve students who are academically advanced and/or intellectually gifted. In middle school, there is an array of Honors and Accelerated classes to challenge a variety of academic strengths. Additionally, the Seminar program supports the social, emotional and intellectual needs of gifted learners. Once in high school, students select from many opportunities to engage in challenging work. This includes a multitude of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Honors courses, as well as specialized programs such as Minnetonka Research and Project Lead the Way.



**"NAVIGATOR HAS TAUGHT ME TO HAVE A STRONGER WORK ETHIC, WHICH I USE EVERY DAY. I HAVE BECOME MORE SELF-DISCIPLINED AND SELF-MOTIVATED TO GET MY WORK DONE."**

*-Krithik Moorthy '29  
Navigator Program Student*

## VANTAGE

VANTAGE is Minnetonka High School's advanced professional studies program, offering a unique way for high school students to apply their coursework in real-world settings. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, VANTAGE offers nine different strands and serves more than 500 high school students.

"VANTAGE provides an unparalleled experience of hands-on engagement and connection for our high school students," said School Board Vice-Chair Mark Ambrosen, who has seen the program's growth throughout his seven years on the Board. "Direct work with industry leaders, one-on-one mentorship involving local professionals combined with rigorous coursework all make this program a turning point for many Minnetonka students."

The addition of the Public Policy strand to the VANTAGE course list was an exciting and successful advancement during the last school year. "From partnerships with the City of Minnetonka police department to guest lectures from elected officials, it was a rich experience for students to see many sides of public policy in action," shared VANTAGE Director Roger Andre. In addition to Public Policy, VANTAGE offers study areas in Business Analytics, Design + Marketing, Digital Journalism, Global Business, Global Sustainability, Health Science, UX Design and VANTAGE Education.

"My favorite part of the VANTAGE program was being able to interact with the professional world and make a difference," said Maggie Rhodes '23, a student in the VANTAGE Public Policy strand. "The company projects allowed me to apply the knowledge I gained in class in a situation that has real-world consequences."

VANTAGE students partner with small, local businesses, non-profits and multinational corporations to provide recommendations and insights into a variety of authentic business development strategies.



**"MY FAVORITE PART OF THE VANTAGE PROGRAM WAS BEING ABLE TO INTERACT WITH THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE."**

*-Maggie Rhodes '23  
VANTAGE Public Policy Student*



## Skippers Serving the Greater Good: Working Together to Make a Difference in Local and Global Communities



### Three-Pointers for Ukraine

Last spring, fourth-grader Benjamin Mendoza '30 from Scenic Heights Elementary raised awareness, money and supplies for Ukrainian refugees using his love of basketball.

Benjamin's mother, Aneta Mendoza, was born in Jastrzebie Zdroj, Poland, a town that was preparing to receive roughly 200 Ukrainian refugee families. When Benjamin learned what was happening in his mother's hometown, he was drawn to help.

"At first, my brother and I didn't think that there was anything we could do," Benjamin said. "Then, my mom asked if there was anything that we feel like we can do well, and that is when the idea of selling [basketball] baskets came up. We love basketball, so we got very excited."

"We decided to give people different options to join us: to donate clothes for kids, to buy basketball shots (\$1 free throws and \$3 three pointers), to write cards to send to the Ukrainian kids to feel welcome when they cross the border into Poland or to join our team to help us raise money and shoot baskets for this cause," said Benjamin. Once the plan was made, the Mendoza family shared the project on their social media platforms. "It just took off from there," said Benjamin.

"I have been shocked by the amount of support the boys have received from neighbors, schools, friends, family and the community," said Aneta Mendoza. She explained that Benjamin originally set a \$500 fundraising goal, and he raised five times that amount on Day 1 of the project.

During the weeks that followed, the "3-Pointers for Ukraine" project grew exponentially and was even featured on ABC World News Tonight (watch here: <https://abcnews/3hJW58O>). The Mendoza family ultimately raised more than \$36,000 and was also able to share 13 bags of new, donated clothing. The project had more than 100 basketball players join, both locally from Minnesota and from around the world, including from Puerto Rico, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, France and Romania.

"The town of Jastrzebie Zdroj opened a free clothing store for the refugees on the team's behalf," said Aneta Mendoza. "They also organized a summer camp for some of the kids using our funds." Remaining donations were used to purchase backpacks and supplies for school, as well as to fund school lunches.

Reflecting on the experience, Benjamin is most proud of what a large impact one idea made. "My mom showed me the photos from the free refugee clothing store and summer camps that we funded, and it makes me feel really good to see what we accomplished together," said Benjamin. To other kids looking to make a difference, he says, "Even if your goals or ideas seem crazy or impossible to others, do not give up. You never know what will happen until you try."



## Seniors Serve

Before they donned their caps and gowns to cross the stage at U.S. Bank Stadium and receive their diplomas, Minnetonka High School seniors took part in the 19th annual Seniors Serve—a yearly tradition that gives students the opportunity to spend their final days as a Skipper giving back to the community that supported them throughout their school years (pictured right).

More than 700 seniors voluntarily worked on more than 80 different projects during the two-day event. Volunteer locations included Minnetonka elementary and middle schools, Bethesda Thrift Shop, Opportunity Partners, Reach for Resources, Sojourner, The Humanity Alliance, Deephaven Woods Senior Center, The Glenn, Trouvaille Homes, the Excelsior Fire Station, South Lake Minnetonka Police Department, Gale Woods Farm, PROP, the City of Chanhassen and the City of Excelsior, among others. Read more about students' experiences on the District website at [bit.ly/3mCs50Q](https://bit.ly/3mCs50Q).

## Service Across the District

Seniors weren't the only ones making a difference last year. Students, parents and staff across the District made an impact on countless lives.

- During Heart Week at MHS, Student Government raised more than \$45,000 for Minnetonka Family Friends.
- The Class of 2022 Legacy Project raised awareness of environmental issues. The project included fundraising for environmental efforts, volunteering at events, and hosting speakers to advocate the importance of environmental care.
- Minnetonka staff raised nearly \$94,500 through the annual employee Charitable Giving Campaign, the highest yearly total in the more than 20-year history of the project. Altogether, staff have raised more than \$1 million over the years to support those in need.
- 234 students and adults were recognized through the President's Volunteer Service Award program. Together, the honorees reported 47,483 hours of service to local and global communities. 123 Bronze, 37 Silver and 74 Gold Awards were awarded.
- 29 MHS students earned varsity letters in Community Service.

## Celebration of Service

An important part of Minnetonka Public Schools' mission is to inspire kids as young as five to understand and serve the greater good. Each fall, the Tonka Serves office hosts a Celebration of Service to recognize students and community members who have made an impact in their community by earning the President's Volunteer Service Award or MHS Varsity Letter in Community Service. This year's event will be held on November 15, 2022. Learn more and find ways to volunteer in the community by visiting [www.tonkaserves.org](https://www.tonkaserves.org).





## 2021-22 District Points of Pride

The outstanding achievements of individual students, student groups, teachers and staff showcase the hard work, dedication and passion the Minnetonka Public Schools community pours into its every endeavor. As a district driven by child-centered excellence, the accomplishments achieved in 2021-22 and the exceptional effort put forth every day to earn these awards and honors are celebrated.

### Academics

- Minnetonka High School Class of 2022 Highlights:
  - 32 National Merit Finalists, 38 Commended Students and seven additional recognition awards from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.
  - 14 students received the top score of 36 on the ACT.
  - 136 full-program Immersion students continued their coursework through their senior year—19 students in Chinese, 117 students in Spanish.
  - 59 students earned an IB Diploma, out of which 30 earned a Bilingual IB Diploma—23 students in Spanish, six students in Chinese and one student in French.
  - 59 students earned a Minnesota World Language Proficiency Certificate, 107 earned a Gold Bilingual Seal, 177 earned a Platinum Bilingual Seal and five earned multilingual seals.
  - 238 students graduated summa cum laude, 64 magna cum laude and 85 cum laude.
- 1,172 MHS students were honored with academic letters. The Class of 2022 earned 301 letters, the Class of 2023 earned 378 letters, the Class of 2024 earned 236 letters and the Class of 2025 earned 257 letters.
- Minnetonka's AP® exam pass rate (3 or higher) is 85%. As of publication, 744 students in grades 9-12 had earned one of four AP® Scholar designations.
- 736 students took a total of 1,379 IB exams. 95% of students scored 4 or higher.
- Two students, Luke Patefield '22 and John Hultgren '23, earned top scores of 1600 on the SAT, the first Minnetonka students to do so since the 2016 SAT score system change.
- Minnetonka Research Highlights:
  - 57 Minnetonka Research students participated at the Regional Science and Engineering Fair.
  - 39 high school students and one middle school student were state qualifiers for the Minnesota State Science and Engineering Fair.
  - 19 research awards were earned at state.
  - Krish Inba Rajashankar '23 was named a Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair Finalist, and seven other MHS students were selected as alternates.
- Twelve MHS students earned high marks in the National French Contest.
- Four MHS students earned high marks on the National German Exam.

### Activities

- The Minnetonka Debate Team had five students who were state competitors: Kruthica Dama '22, Robert Ballsrud '24, Tommy Robben '24, Jin Bang '22 and Molly Welch '22. Welch was also the state champion in the Lincoln Douglas division.
- DECA sent 95 students to the State Career Development Conference; 32 Minnetonka students qualified to compete at DECA Internationals, 12 of whom were seniors.
- Five of Minnetonka's Destination Imagination teams qualified to compete at the state tournament, and one team, the Manimaplatycats, also qualified for globals.
- In Fencing, the Men's Foil Team placed 2nd overall, and the Women's Saber team placed 3rd overall. Individually, Nolan Chez '22 placed 2nd in Men's Foil, Elizabeth Molnau '22 placed 4th in Women's Saber and Melissa Nelson '24 placed 4th in Women's Foil.
- Team Spike+, a FIRST Lego League team made up of students from Excelsior Elementary and MMW, qualified for state and earned three team awards.
- The Minnetonka High School Knowledge Bowl team placed 5th in state.
- The Music Listening Club at Minnetonka High School had six students qualify for the national Music Listening competition as two teams of three students. Tyler Wasielewski '22, William Walker '22 and Sarina Webster '22 won the national competition.
- Minnetonka's Chicken Bot Pie robotics team finished in 7th place at state, in addition to their best overall finish at the 10,000 Lakes regional competition, finishing 2nd.
- The Minnetonka High School Science Bowl Team placed 3rd in state.
- The Minnetonka High School Science Olympiad placed 6th in state, earning many individual medals, as well.
- Aarya Dev '22 qualified for the state Speech tournament, where she placed third in the Discussion category.
- Students from all six of the District's elementary schools competed in Minnetonka Community Education's first Tonka Top Chef competition. Grayden Diessner '30 (Groveland Elementary), Maggie Larson '30 (Groveland Elementary) and Josie Miklethun '29 (Minnewashta Elementary) won 1st, 2nd and 3rd place respectively.





Students from all six of the District's elementary schools competed in Minnetonka Community Education's first Tonka Top Chef competition.



The Destination Imagination team, the Manimaplatycats from MMW, competed at state as well as the Destination Imagination Global Finals in Kansas City. The team placed second overall and first in the "Instant Challenge" category.



DECA sent 95 students to the State Career Development Conference, and 32 Minnetonka students qualified to compete at DECA Internationals. Above, DECA students pose with their awards at the International Career Development Conference.





Minnetonka Theatre's Fall Musical "Chicago" earned 20 Spotlight awards, including Outstanding Achievement in Musical Theatre, Outstanding Overall Production and Outstanding Overall Performance.



Girls Tennis won the team state championship. Additionally, Sarah Shahbaz '23 won the state singles title and Karina Elvestrom '24 and Annika Elvestrom '22 won the state doubles title.



Nick Gilles '23 made history when he became the first Minnetonka athlete to win an individual state cross country championship title. His effort led Boys Cross Country to finish 4th at state.



Minnetonka Public Schools received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International for the 27th year in a row.



In 2022, Niche ranked Minnetonka Public Schools #1 in Best School District, Best High School, Best Teachers and Best Places to Teach in Minnesota categories.



Minnetonka High School was ranked as the 5th best high school in the state by *U.S. News & World Report*.



The District is recognized for the 9th year in a row as one of the best communities in the nation for music education by the NAMM Foundation.



# 2021-22 District Points of Pride

## Athletics

- Eighteen seniors signed National Letters of Intent to compete in their sports at the collegiate level.
- Annika Elvestrom '22 won the Athena Award for 2021-22 in Girls Tennis.
- Boys Alpine Skiing team won the Section 5AA championship as well as their seventh state title.
- Girls Alpine Skiing team won the Section 5AA championship and Class AA state championship.
- Unified Basketball earned 2nd place in the first Minnesota State High School Unified Basketball tournament.
- Middle School Cheerleading qualified for state and took 3rd place overall.
- Varsity Cheerleading was the runner-up at state and earned 3rd place at nationals.
- Boys Cross Country earned 4th place at state. Individually, Nick Gilles '23 earned 1st place.
- In Girls Cross Country, three athletes qualified for state.
- Boys Varsity Golf had one athlete qualify for state.
- Girls Varsity Golf had two athletes qualify for state.
- In Gymnastics, Elena Cantwell '23 and Emma Callahan '24 advanced to the Class AA Individual state championship and were both named All-Lake Conference.
- Girls Varsity Hockey earned 2nd place at the Class AA state championship.
- In Nordic Skiing, three varsity boys team members and four varsity girls team members qualified for state.
- Minnetonka Swimming and Diving had 16 seniors selected for the National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association All America Academic Team.
- Boys Swimming & Diving earned 3rd place at state and were True Team state champions. Individually, Carson Witte '22 earned 1st place.
- Girls Swimming & Diving were Minnesota High School League state champions and True Team state champions.
- All eight Minnetonka Synchronized Swimming team members qualified for state.
- Boys Varsity Tennis had three athletes qualify for state.
- Girls Tennis won the team state championship. Sarah Shahbaz '23 won the singles title, and Karina Elvestrom '24 and Annika Elvestrom '22 won the doubles title.
- Boys Track & Field team had 14 athletes qualify individually to be part of the Minnesota State High School League Tournament.
- Girls Track & Field won the MHSCA True Team Class AAA state title and placed 2nd at the Minnesota State High School League state championships.
- In Boys Varsity Wrestling, four wrestlers advanced to the Class AAA Individual state tournament, including Marco Christiansen '24 who recorded his 100th win.
- In Girls Varsity Wrestling, Emma Seper '24 and Phoebe Kunerth '24 were 5th and 6th at the first-ever Girls Wrestling Individual section tournament.

## Arts

- Marching Band placed 4th in state.
- The MBDA All-State Honor Band student is Christian Garner '27.
- MMEA (Minnesota Music Educators Association) All-State Choir students in 2021-22 were Emily Bodeau '24, Kyra Martin '24, Juliet Siikarla '24 and Samuel Vallancourt '25.
- MMEA All-State Band 2021-22 students were Parker Griswold '22, Claire Huang '22, Ruby Martin '23, Adam Rickman '23 and Tyler Wasielewski '22.
- MMEA All-State Orchestra students in 2021-22 were Claire Acheson '22, Chaehyun Lee '22, Meiling Mathur '23, Sonia Pillai '24, Lauryn Schreifels '24, Alexandra Wagner '22, Elizabeth Wang '22 and Gabriella Wiese '22.
- Scholastic Art Awards:
  - Overall, 16 individuals submitted a total of 28 pieces. Two Gold Keys, 10 Silver Keys and 15 Honorable Mentions were awarded.
- Scholastic Writing Awards:
  - Aileen Dosev '23 was one of only five regional nominees for the American Voices award. Her pieces will move on to consideration for national awards.
  - Overall, five individuals submitted nine pieces. One Gold Key, three Silver Keys and five Honorable Mentions were awarded.
- Minnetonka Theatre's Fall Musical "Chicago" earned 20 Spotlight awards, and the spring musical "Mamma Mia!" earned 19 awards. Each received awards for Outstanding Achievement in Musical Theatre, Outstanding Overall Production and Outstanding Overall Performance.

## District And Staff

- Jennifer Matejka (science teacher at MMW), Alex Johnson (math teacher at MHS) and Janna Aune (Spanish teacher at MHS) earned the National Board Certified Teacher distinction in 2022.
- Jingbo Wang (social studies teacher at MMW) was named the Minnesota Council on Economic Education's Educator of the Year for Grades 6-8.
- Minnetonka Community Education received a Project Award from the Minnesota Community Education Association for the MCE Minute video series.
- Joe Cosette (science teacher at MHS) has been named a Local Teacher of the Year by the Physics Teacher Education Coalition.
- The Minnetonka Schools Communications Team earned 12 national awards recognizing outstanding work in communication from the National School Public Relations Association.
- Sue Rockers, school nurse at Scenic Heights Elementary, was nominated for the Lifechanger of the Year Award.



# Minnetonka Community Education

2022-23 marks the 50th year of Minnetonka Community Education (MCE). MCE will be celebrating throughout the school year by honoring families, volunteers and staff. MCE is excited to start off the new school year with a brand new playground and an updated Outdoor Learning Center. Both projects were completed during the summer of 2022.

During the 2021-22 school year, MCE ran more than 1,600 classes, a 15% increase from the previous year. Youth Programs registration was at an all-time high, welcoming 17,607 participants into classes, programs and events, up 34% over the previous years.

## Explorers Childcare Program

Explorers Childcare offers a safe childcare environment where children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships and grow in confidence and independence. Explorers provided before and after-school childcare programming for 1,219 students this past year, from Junior Explorers (ages 4-5) through fifth graders. More than 900 students were served in Explorers over the summer.

## Preschool & ECFE

Minnetonka Preschool and ECFE provide a place for the youngest learners to dream, create, wonder and discover. Minnetonka Preschool is rated at the highest level (Four-Stars) by Parent Aware and follows the Pyramid Model framework which promotes children's healthy social and emotional development. New additions to the 2022-23 Minnetonka Preschool program include Spanish Immersion Preschool, Nature Adventure Preschool and the Harbor Room.

## Adult & Youth Programs

MCE serves children from birth through adulthood, before school, after school, in the evening, on weekends and on non-school days. MCE provides opportunities for all learners to pursue their passions, develop their talents and build relationships in a safe, enriching environment. MCE provides enrichment and recreation programs, music lessons, Adult Basic Education and programming for adults with disabilities in its Project SOAR program.



The Tour de Tonka bike ride has become a staple of the west metro community, growing from 819 riders in its inaugural year of 2006 to nearly 3,500 riders annually. Nearly 600 volunteers helped it run smoothly in 2022.

## Events

MCE events such as Tour de Tonka, Firecracker Run, Minnewashta Mud Run and the Youth Triathlon continue to be popular, family-friendly favorites. Tour de Tonka has now hosted riders from 45 different states in its 17-year history.

## Volunteering with MCE

Each year, MCE counts on thousands of volunteers to help its programs and events run smoothly. Beyond major and recreational events, Project SOAR, Holiday Family Giving and Rake-a-Thon also rely heavily on the amazing support of volunteers from service organizations, sports teams, businesses and families.

"Volunteering is such a wonderful way to get involved with the community, and our Community Education team provides such a wealth of volunteering roles for their various events and programs that there is something for everyone," said Meghan Selinger, who began her role as a School Board Director in January of 2022. "I volunteered this summer at Tour de Tonka, and despite it being rainy and wet, my fellow volunteers and the thousands of enthusiastic riders all had an incredible day. Events like that really help to build community—and in a fun and memorable way!"

To learn more about the many ways to get involved with MCE, visit [www.minnetonkacommunityed.org](http://www.minnetonkacommunityed.org).



MCE students participated in a week-long musical theater camp, learning music and choreography from "Encanto" and creating their own musical to perform for friends and family at the end of the week.



## K-12 Tonka Online School Launch

For 10 years, Minnetonka Schools has offered supplemental online learning to Minnesota students in high school through Tonka Online. Last fall, the District began a new chapter in this program by offering its first K-12 fully online school experience.

"We were pleased to begin offering comprehensive online education to Minnesota students statewide in K-12 beginning the first semester of the 2021-22 school year," said Dr. Amy LaDue, Associate Superintendent. "Families enrolled in Tonka Online can expect the same high academic standards, District-developed curriculum and commitment to excellence that the Minnetonka School District is known for providing to its in-person students. Our amazing teachers are dedicated to partnering with families to support each student in this unique learning environment."

K-8 Tonka Online courses have been specifically designed to provide personalized instruction and to better support learners through a blend of synchronous and asynchronous instructional models.

"The kids quickly integrated into the program and even had access to more opportunities than at a normal school, even though they were online. This includes independent investigations, special art classes, book club and coding club," said Jon Ryan Knotts, a Tonka Online parent. "All the teachers were just fantastic."

High school students in Tonka Online have access to the same courses they would have previously taken as part of



Exceptional teachers made all the difference for the Knotts family, ensuring that their children's learning experience felt just as impactful as an in-person class would be.

the supplemental program with the addition of new core curriculum courses that will round out their graduation requirements. Students at Minnetonka High School and students who are out-of-District can still take advantage of supplemental courses, as well.

"I took AP Comparative Government and American Popular Music over the summer," said Zoë Coler, an out-of-district student in the supplemental program. "The courses aren't available at the small high school I attend, but I was very interested in the topics. I love the self-paced aspect of asynchronous online courses. I would highly recommend them to students looking for variety, challenge, or both."

Tonka Online teachers, such as Wendi Bottinger, know that individualized learning is critical to student success. Bottinger taught first grade in Tonka Online last year and is thrilled to continue supporting her students' learning as a second grade teacher for the 2022-23 school year.

"Our online classroom is a little family," said Bottinger. "I love getting to know the students early and continuing a journey of togetherness all year long. I have a lot of time for connection in our schedule so students can build strong relationships with one another. Getting to know students and having them make strong connections with one another is a passion of mine. Making connections online is not as hard as one might think."

Learn more about online learning for all grades at [www.tonkaonline.org](http://www.tonkaonline.org).



**"OUR ONLINE CLASSROOM IS A LITTLE FAMILY. I LOVE GETTING TO KNOW THE STUDENTS EARLY AND CONTINUING A JOURNEY OF TOGETHERNESS ALL YEAR LONG."**

*-Wendi Bottinger  
2nd Grade Tonka Online Teacher*





# Preparing the World's Best Workforce

2021-22 Summary Report

**T**his World's Best Workforce (WBWF) report summary, in accordance with 2013 Minnesota Statutes, shares Minnetonka Public Schools' progress toward the state's goal of creating the world's best workforce. This includes student achievement goals, the strategies and initiatives that Minnetonka engaged in to meet those goals, and the progress made by the end of the 2021-22 school year.

Assessment in 2021-22 was again impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which reduced the number of students taking exams across the state.

Minnetonka Public Schools continues to evaluate and refine its plan to address the following five, state-identified goals:

1. All children are ready for school;
2. All third-graders can

- read at grade level;
3. All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed;
4. All students graduate from high school;
- and 5. All students are ready for career and college.

Since these achievement goals were set in the 2013 Minnesota Statutes, Minnetonka Public Schools has made progress toward achieving each one, as measured by national, state and local assessments.

The full World's Best Workforce report, which includes student achievement goals and the strategies and initiatives that Minnetonka engaged in to meet those goals, will be available on the District website at [www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf) following the November 3, 2022 School Board meeting.



## WBWF Goal: Children Are Ready for School

The District measures this goal in two ways—by increasing the screening of children at age three and by monitoring social and emotional learning objectives with Minnetonka Preschool PreK4 students.

**159** children were screened. This was an increase of 2% over the number of children screened in 2020-21.

For details about social-emotional learning results, visit the District's World's Best Workforce website: [www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf)

## WBWF Goal: Third Graders Can Read at Grade Level

In 2021-22, Minnetonka third grade students surpassed the state average by more than 16.3%, with **64.8%** meeting or exceeding proficiency on the MCA-III test, compared to **48.5%** of third graders statewide.

## WBWF Goal: Closing Achievement Gaps

The District remains committed to its work in closing achievement gaps in reading and math. As measured by the MCA-III (and detailed below), the gap between white and non-white students at Minnetonka is much smaller than the gap reported statewide.

### READING

**MINNETONKA:** **74.1%** of white students and **70.1%** of non-white students met or exceeded proficiency on the MCA-III Reading test. The gap is **4.0%**.

**STATE AVERAGE:** Of the state's white students who took the MCA-III in Reading, **59.7%** were proficient. Of the non-white students, **37.1%** were proficient. The gap is **22.6%**.

### MATH

**MINNETONKA:** **73.7%** of white students and **68.7%** of non-white students met or exceeded proficiency on the MCA-III Math test. The gap is **5.0%**.

**STATE AVERAGE:** Of the state's white students who took the MCA-III in Math, **54.6%** were proficient. Of the non-white students, **26.3%** were proficient. The gap is **28.3%**.

## WBWF Goal: Students Graduate

The four-year graduation rate for Minnetonka High School students, as determined by the Minnesota Department of Education, is **96.4%** for the Class of 2021.\* In Minnesota, 83.3% of students in the Class of 2021 graduated in 2021.\*

## WBWF Goal: Students are Ready for College and Careers

This goal is measured using ACT scores from the Class of 2022. Note: Only 639 students from the Class of 2022 took the ACT exam, which represents **76.5%** of the graduating class.

**93.9%** of Minnetonka High School seniors who took the ACT met or exceeded the College Readiness Benchmark Composite Score (18). Statewide, **72.7%** of Minnesota graduates in 2021\* who took the ACT were considered college-ready.

*\*Graduation rates and other statewide data are not finalized until MARSS end-of-year data is finalized in January. Typically data is updated at the end of February/early March. This is why Class of 2021 data is used in this goal.*

## District Advisory Committee

### 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

**Krista Adewumi**, Parent,  
Community Member

**Mark Ambrosen**, School Board  
Member (ended December 2021)

**Christine Breen**, Executive  
Director of Special Education,  
Parent

**Maria Chopite**, Minnewashta  
Spanish Immersion Teacher,  
Spanish Immersion Department  
Chair

**Kruthica Dama**, MHS Student, '22  
**Serena Harad**, Parent, Community  
Member

**Paule Hocker**, Parent, Community  
Member, Scenic Heights  
Elementary Paraprofessional  
**Sara Hunt**, Parent, Community  
Member, Instructional Technology  
Coach

**Stephanie Johnson**, Parent,  
Community Member

**Paige Koehnen**, Clear Springs  
Elementary Grade 1 Teacher

**Erin Kopischke**, Groveland  
Elementary, Wilson Reading  
Specialist

**Dr. Amy LaDue**, Associate  
Superintendent

**Bryan McGinley**, Deephaven  
Elementary School Principal

**Julius Nurse**, MHS Student, '22  
**Matt Rega**, Parent, Community  
Member, Director of Assessment

**Diane Rundquist**, Parent,  
Community Member, Director of  
Advanced Learning

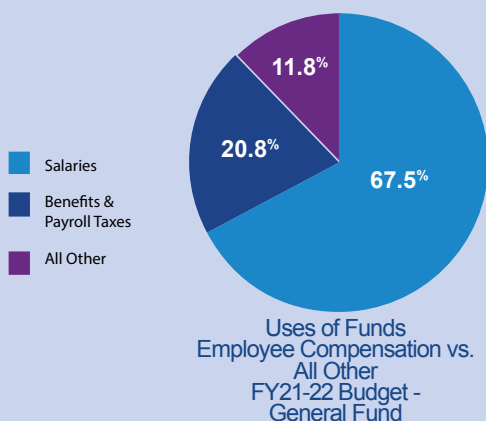
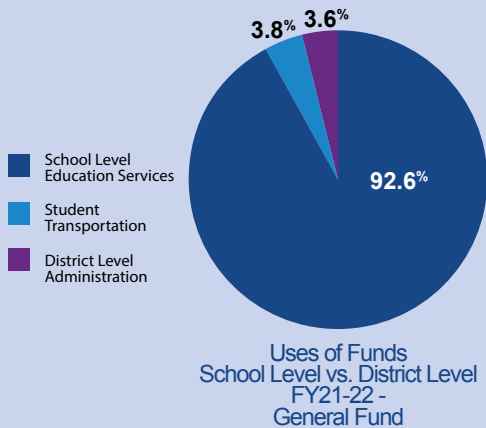
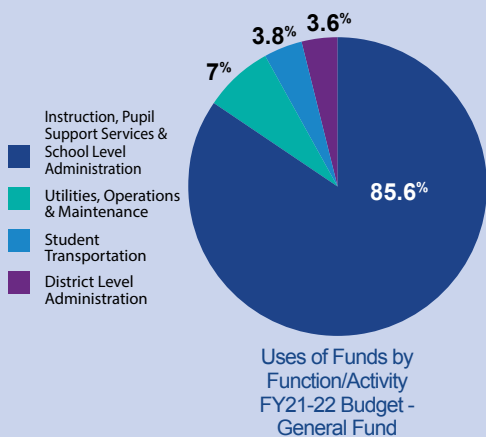
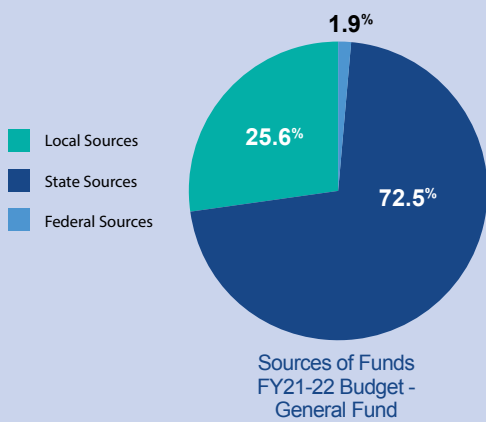
**Justin Sawyer**, MHS Assistant  
Principal

**Steve Urbanski**, Director of  
Curriculum

**Lisa Wagner**, School Board  
Member (starting January 2022)

**Sara White**, Director of Teacher  
Development





## Prudent Financial Management

One of the Minnetonka School Board's critical roles is to be a conscientious steward of taxpayer funds. Board members take great pride in this responsibility, looking to taxpayers for support only as a last option. In Minnetonka, state funding makes up 72.5% of the annual operating budget, federal funds account for 1.9% and 25.6% is local funding. Of the 25.6%, nearly two-thirds is voter-approved referendum funding. The other local levies are based on formulas set in statute and approved by the School Board.

The Minnetonka School Board has worked diligently over the years to keep property tax levies as low as possible, and some years have seen no increase. The School Board has supported the District in pursuing the refinancing and restructuring of capital bonds to lower interest rates and in spreading the cost of capital over the life of the assets to the benefit of taxpayers. This has resulted in significantly lower annual bond payments, which, in turn, has translated into lower property tax levies than would have otherwise been possible.

District General Fund	Unaudited Actuals 2021-22	Adopted Budget 2022-23
Beginning Assigned Fund Balance	\$ 1,658,033	\$1,748,042
Beginning Unassigned Fund Balance	\$24,086,695	\$22,335,967
Revenue	\$ 144,469,946	\$148,099,474
Expenditures	\$ 146,130,665	\$147,840,176
Difference	(\$1,660,719)	\$259,298
Transfer to Operating Capital	—	—
Ending Assigned Fund Balance	\$1,748,042	\$1,748,042
Ending Unassigned Fund Balance	\$22,335,967	\$22,595,265
Unassigned Fund Balance %	15.3%	15.3%
Student Enrollment	11,223	11,372

\*FY22 amended budget estimate.

## Efficiency Excellence in Per-Pupil Spending

Minnetonka Public Schools provides exceptional and innovative programs for students and hires top teachers in the Metro Area\*\* while keeping its costs low. The 2021-22 school year was impacted by COVID-19, and the District spent part of its "rainy day fund" to keep elementary grades in in-person learning at 15 students per staff member. As a result, in FY 21-22 Minnetonka spent \$141 per pupil above the state average, but it still spent \$1,580 below the cumulative average of its neighboring districts.

\*\*In the 2022 rankings, teachers in the Minnetonka Public School District were ranked #1 in Minnesota by Niche.com.

\*\*\*MDE Profiles. Information reflects the most recent comparable data available (General Fund Operating Expenditures).

2020-21***	Cost Per Pupil
Eden Prairie	\$13,665
Edina	\$13,350
Hopkins	\$14,303
Minneapolis	\$17,876
<b>Minnetonka</b>	<b>\$13,407</b>
Osseo	\$14,506
St. Louis Park	\$15,738
St. Paul	\$16,969
Wayzata	\$13,494
State	\$13,266



# Consolidated Financial Statement

For the past 27 consecutive years—every year since 1994—Minnetonka Public Schools has received the Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. It is also one of just a few districts with an Aaa bond rating from Moody's. The District's financial team includes a Certified Public Accountant, and District financials are audited annually by the firm of CliftonLarsonAllen.

The District's FY 2021-22 budget was impacted by the ongoing effects of COVID-19. Last year, the District expended money from its "rainy day fund" to purchase additional personal protective equipment for workers and to address COVID-19 learning challenges.

District General Fund	2021-22 Unaudited Actuals	2022-23 Budget Amounts	2022-23 % of Total
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Property Taxes	\$34,472,177	\$34,555,067	23.3%
Earnings on Investments	\$293,934	\$900,000	0.6%
Other	\$3,162,010	\$2,408,277	1.6%
Local Sources	\$37,928,121	\$37,863,344	25.6%
State Sources	\$102,297,335	\$107,378,914	72.5%
Federal Sources	\$4,244,490	\$2,857,215	1.9%
Total Revenue	\$144,469,946	\$148,099,474	100.0%
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
School Level Administration	\$4,493,464	\$5,095,572	3.4%
Elementary & Secondary Regular Instruction	\$85,137,832	\$83,777,813	56.7%
Vocational Education Instruction	\$1,222,296	\$1,364,436	0.9%
Special Education Instruction	\$22,939,192	\$24,716,214	16.7%
Instructional Support Services	\$5,811,692	\$6,321,959	4.3%
Pupil Support Services	\$5,669,692	\$5,254,167	3.6%
Sites & Buildings	\$8,815,641	\$7,815,987	5.3%
Fiscal & Other Fixed Cost Programs	\$1,178,154	\$2,525,305	1.7%
District Level Administration	\$875,041	\$925,173	0.6%
District Support Services	\$4,566,034	\$4,444,660	3.0%
Transportation	\$5,421,627	\$5,598,890	3.8%
Total Expenditures	\$146,130,665	\$147,840,176	100.0%
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$(1,660,719)	\$259,298	
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>			
Beginning of Year	\$25,744,728	\$24,084,009	
Transfer to Operating Capital	—	—	
End of Year	\$24,084,009	\$24,343,307 *	

\*FY23 amended budget estimate.

District General Fund: Includes General Fund Operations, Transportation & Activities. Note: Does not include Operating Capital, Arts Center, Dome Operations & Pagel Center.

This financial information provides only a snapshot of the District's unaudited finances. The audit firm of CliftonLarsonAllen will complete the external audit in November, and the District's Comprehensive Financial Audit Report will be posted to the District website once it is complete. Please view additional financial documents and reports at: [www.minnetonkaschools.org/finances](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/finances).



## Finance Advisory Committee

2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

### Community Members

Matt Chapman  
John Groton  
Jill Howe  
Deirdre Keller  
Jessica Reader  
Charlie Steingas  
Matt Weight  
Rob Wolter

### School Board Representative

Katie Becker

### District Administration

Paul Bourgeois  
Jessica Hulitt  
Dr. Amy LaDue  
Ashwin Muni  
Dr. Dennis Peterson





★ Minnetonka Public Schools  
David Law, JD, Superintendent  
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