

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

**Minutes of February 24, 2022 School Board Special Meeting**

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in special session at 10:33 p.m. on Thursday, February 24, 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.

Chairperson Vitale began the proceedings by reading the following statement:

*I want to begin by saying the past two weeks have been very difficult for our school district.*

*While world events may be most present on many people's minds today, our school community has been struggling through some significant challenges here at home over the past two weeks, and I don't want to diminish the impact these challenges have had on students, families and staff.*

*Our school community has been deeply impacted by the events that have taken place--from the initial accusations of derogatory and hateful language and actions at the high school, to the social media attacks that have been leveled at students, to the protest we saw by an outside group that came to our high school and took over what was meant to be a peaceful student-led walkout, and finally, to the peaceful and impactful student sit-in held on Tuesday, where several MHS students shared their own experiences.*

*Racism, hate speech and hateful actions, discrimination and bullying have no place in the Minnetonka Public School District. I believe, and I speak for the School Board when I say each of us believes, that there is important work to do in ensuring all students and staff feel safe and feel supported. We must, as a community, come together to learn from each other, to listen to our students, to support our students and each other through these difficult times, and to heal.*

*The work focused on excellence in belonging and student well-being in our district and within all of our schools is critical. The schools have taken big steps with the work of the belonging committees, the reporting tool developed with students and with efforts for staff professional development. There is more work ahead of us, and each of us here and in our district has a role to play.*

*Thank you to our outstanding administration, teachers and staff who came together to keep our community safe when it was unclear what the intentions were of the outside group that was protesting at the high school last week. Our staff's incredible work behind*

*the scenes together, along with their relationships with our local law enforcement and others, and the collaboration of student leaders, was commendable.*

*Thank you to our students, who exhibited patience, calm and order during and after the outside group's event. Thank you to the students who came together this week to share their personal experiences with the administration and with each other. And, thank you to all of the parents and community members who support our students, families and staff every day.*

*We are evolving together as a school community. Let's work to honor each other's journey as we take these steps, to move forward together, to assume positive intent ... and to listen and learn from each other.*

*This is an amazing community, and I believe there is common ground for us to find to help our community move forward.*

## **1. AGENDA**

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

## **2. APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATES FOR BOARD TO INTERVIEW**

Board member Wagner, the Chair of the Board's Superintendent Search Subcommittee, noted that earlier in the evening, the Board had received information on potential candidates from the search firm of BWP & Associates. BWP had also conducted an interview workshop with the Board. Board member Wagner explained that the next step in the process was to officially approve the slate of candidates (Candidates A-E) for the Board to interview.

Wagner moved, Becker seconded, that the Board approve the following candidates for interviews:

### Candidate A

#### Education

PHD Oakland University  
EDS Oakland University  
MPA U of Michigan-Dearborn  
BS U of Michigan-Ann Arbor

#### Experience

Superintendent  
Superintendent  
HS Principal  
MS Principal  
MS Assistant Principal  
Teacher

### Candidate B

#### Education

#### Experience

BS Black Hills State  
MA St. Cloud State  
Sixth Year St. Cloud State

Superintendent  
Assistant Superintendent  
MS Principal  
HS Principal  
Teacher

Candidate C

Education

BS U of Illinois-U-C  
MA St. Xavier University  
MS Chicago State University  
EdD U of Illinois-Chicago

Experience

Assistant Superintendent  
Deputy Chief of Schools  
Associate Superintendent  
Academy Superintendent-Charter  
Elementary Principal  
Program Coordinator  
Director/Instructional Coordinator  
Teacher

Candidate D

Education

BA Webster University  
M ED Lindenwood University  
EdD St. Louis University

Experience

Superintendent  
Superintendent  
Superintendent  
Deputy Superintendent  
Area Superintendent  
HS Principal  
HS Assistant Principal  
Teacher

Candidate E

Education

BA Weber State University  
MS Weber State University  
  
Additional Coursework  
  
Utah State University  
St. Mary's University

Experience

Superintendent-Interim  
Executive Director Elem. Education  
Elementary Principal  
Assistant Principal  
Teacher

Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

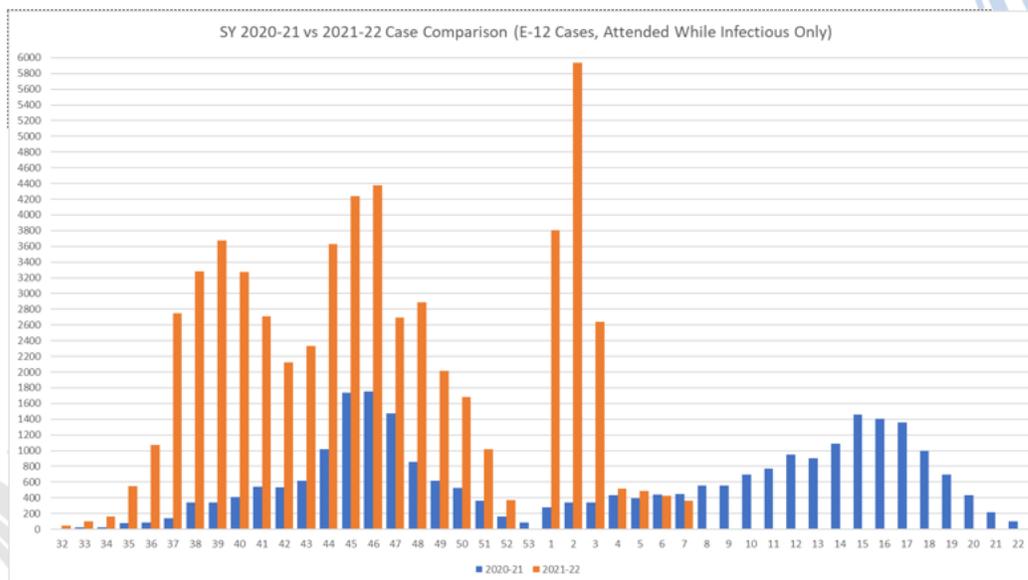
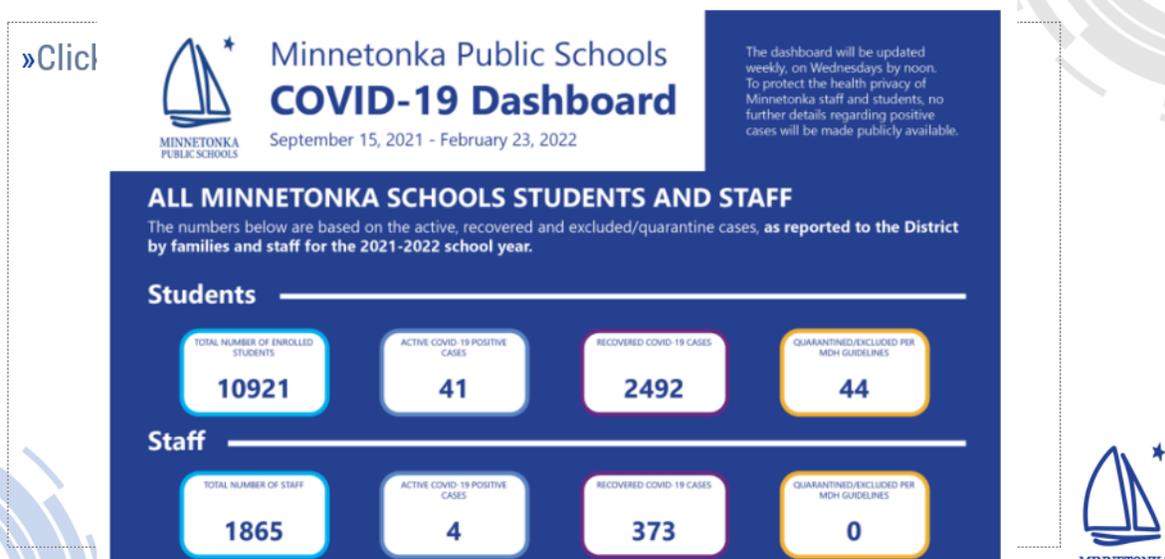
*The candidates were subsequently identified as:*

- Candidate A: Stephen Bigelow, Bay City, MI Superintendent
- Candidate B: Patrick Devine, Waconia, MN Superintendent
- Candidate C: Stephen Flisk, Osseo, MN Assistant Superintendent
- Candidate D: Eric Knost, Lewis Central Community School District, Council Bluffs, IA Assistant Superintendent
- Candidate E: Malinda Lansfeldt, Stillwater, MN Interim Superintendent

## 2. CONSIDERATION OF ANY CHANGES TO THE SAFE LEARNING PLAN

Director of Health Services Annie Lumbar Bendson presented the following information to the Board:

### DASHBOARD



## Hennepin County 14-day trends for 12/28-2/14

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City	12/28-1/10	1/4-1/17	1/11-1/24	1/18-1/31	1/25-2/7	2/1-2/14
HC Total	356.4	351.0	233.0	133.1	72.3	40.0
Eden Prairie	315.0	316.1	214.4	134.3	78.2	42.7
Edina	335.2	336.4	245.4	148.2	76.1	40.9
Hopkins	427.9	420.8	291.3	165.0	69.9	32.8
Minnnetonka	310.0	335.3	239.4	133.4	80.1	47.2
St. Louis Park	391.5	368.4	264.3	152.4	74.1	42.3
***Other W/S Suburban HC	261.8	286.1	208.0	136.0	82.4	45.9



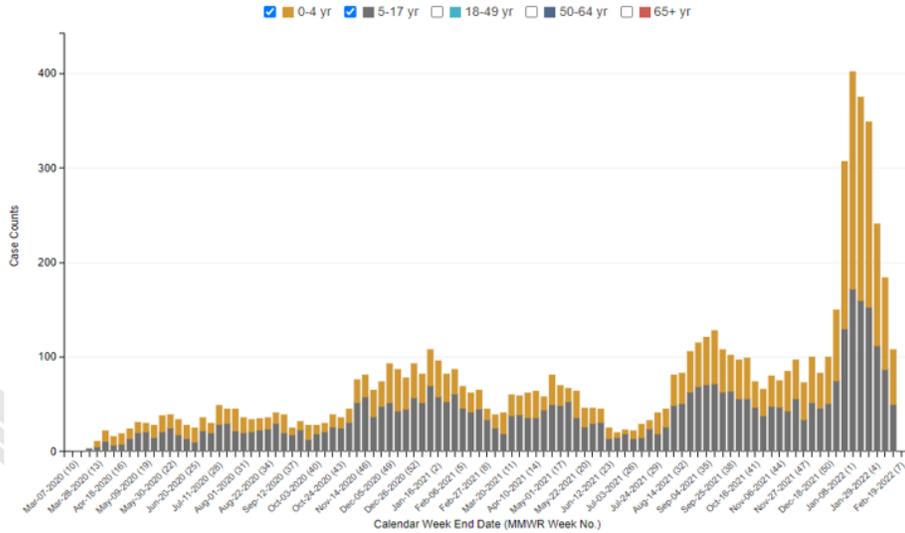
## MN Weekly Testing & Positivity by Age Band

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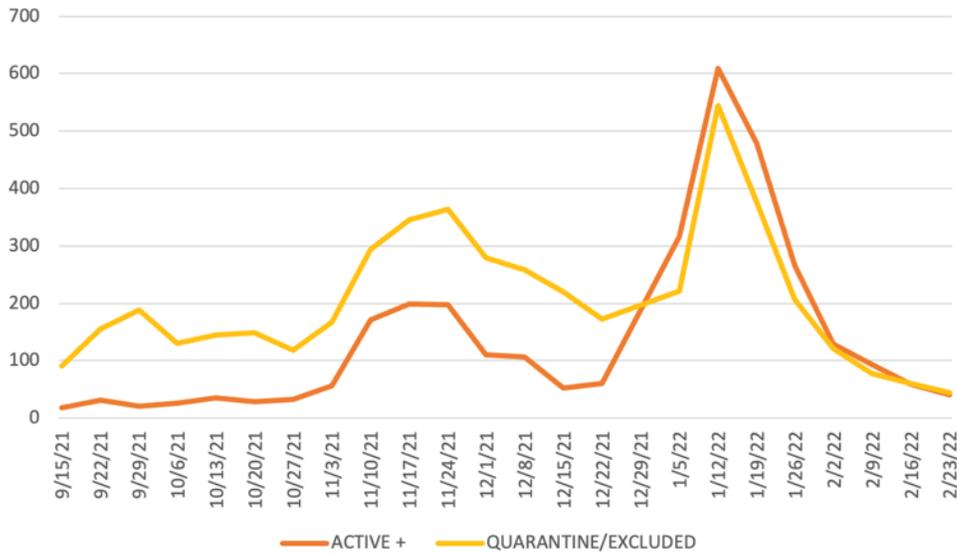
Week of:	Positivity Rates		Tests/10,000	
	1/30/2022	2/6/2022	1/30/2022	2/6/2022
0-9	15.11%	11.35%	286.3	263.6
10-19	13.60%	8.79%	264.8	242.7



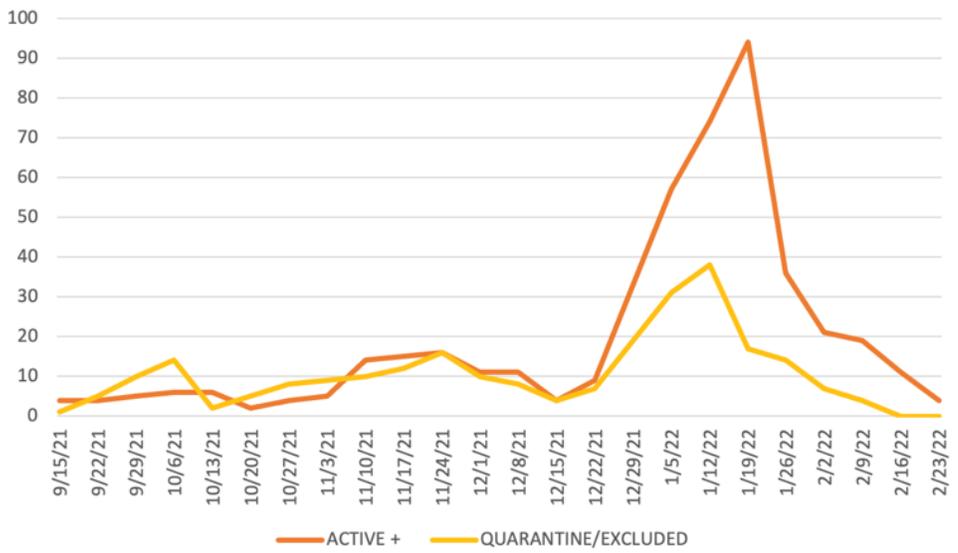
# COVID-19 Associated Hospitalizations by Age



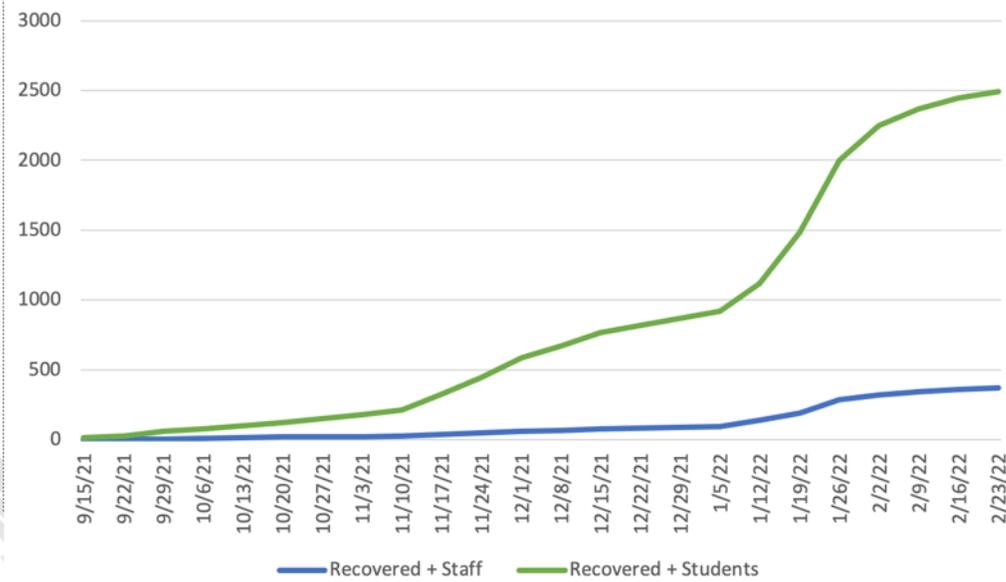
## Students 2021-22



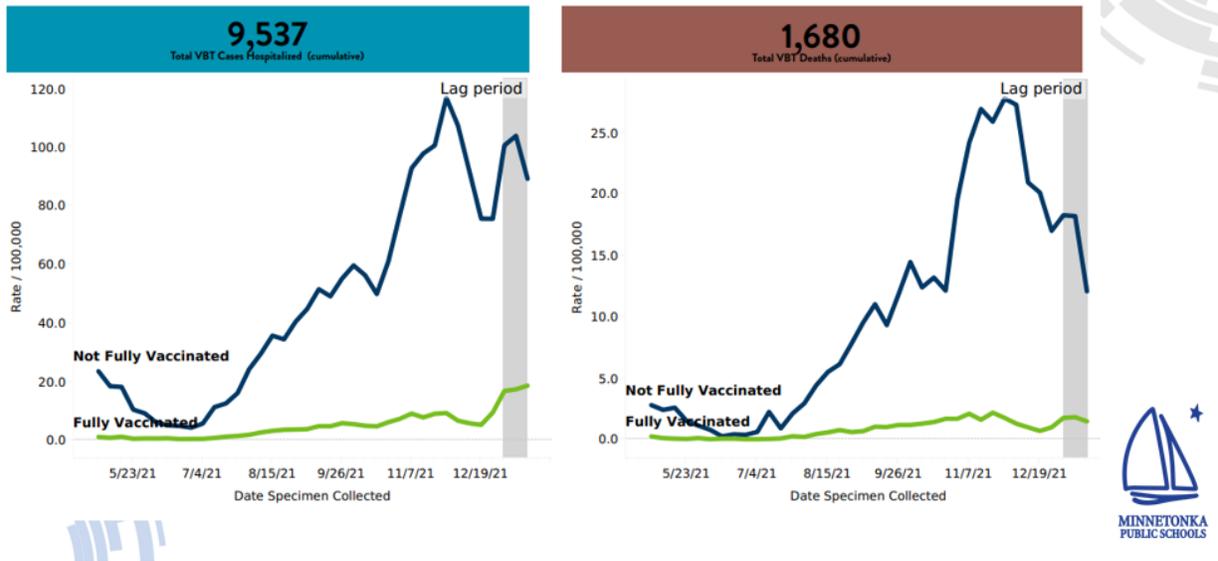
### Staff 2021-22



### Recovered Staff and Students 2021-22



## Hospitalizations and deaths in vaccinated vs. unvaccinated



Ms. Lumbar Bendson noted that the District has seen significant declines in the number of cases and absences among students and staff, in line with what is being reported across Minnesota and much of the US. As of February 23, there were 41 positive cases among the District’s students, with another 44 under quarantine. There were four active COVID-19 cases among staff. This compares to 250 students absent from school in early February due to active infection or quarantine and 538 at the beginning of January. Ms. Lumbar Bendson also reported that the District’s vaccination rate is about 53% among the student population.

Dr. Peterson then noted that the recommendation from Administration to the Board this evening was that masks no longer be required in District buildings, but still strongly recommended. He noted that this issue was very complex, with people having very strong opinions on both sides. He said that KN95 masks would continue to be available to students and staff in the District. He also talked about the District’s ventilation system, which has been in place since the onset of COVID-19. “The reality is the ventilation system is the key and we’ve had that for all the time we’ve had COVID,” he said. He also reported that earlier in the day, he had participated in a call with 35 metro-area superintendents where 18 reported having no mask requirement and 17 were still requiring masks in school buildings.

Dr. Peterson also noted that the recommendation tonight was to reduce the required isolation time to five days for students who test positive for COVID-19, which is consistent with CDC guidance that includes masking for the next five days.

According to Ms. Lumbar Bendson, the District piloted the five-day isolation period with staff. Among 60 staff infected with COVID, 21 were able to return on the sixth day, while 24 adults continued to have symptoms and were not able to return. Eight more were unable to return because they could not maintain 6 feet of distance between themselves and students.

Much of the discussion that followed centered around how to address any future changes that the pandemic might bring. Board member Lee-O'Halloran expressed his desire to have a specific set of metrics in place to make future decisions; i.e. positivity rates or incidents of COVID. Dr. Peterson responded that he is not a proponent of using metrics to determine courses of action. Board member Selinger also expressed her wish that some specific metrics be put in place, saying that her priority has always been to keep kids in school, and with specific metrics, the District could respond more quickly if case numbers change.

After considerable discussion, the Board did not agree to any specific metrics or language that would trigger any changes.

Dr. Peterson also noted that he was recommending changes to the District's Policy #810: COVID-19 Face Covering Policy, to reflect that masks would continue to need to be worn on District transportation, due to a federal mandate. He said that the changes were reflected in the carry-in item at the Board table this evening.

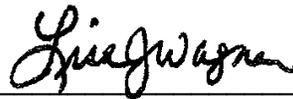
Becker then moved, Odom seconded, that the Board approve mask choice for E-12 students and staff effective February 25, the recommended changes to Policy 810, and a five-day quarantine option for staff and students.

After additional discussion, the Board agreed, via a friendly amendment, (Becker, Wagner) to change the word "quarantine" in the original motion to "isolation" and to give Dr. Peterson the authority to make any necessary changes to the Safe Learning Plan going forward.

Upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor: Ambrosen, Becker, Odom, Wagner and Vitale. The following voted against: Lee-O'Halloran and Selinger, whereupon the motion carried on a 5-2 vote.

### **3. ADJOURNMENT**

Wagner moved, Ambrosen seconded, adjournment at 11:25 p.m. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.



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Lisa Wagner, Clerk