



Minnetonka School District, ISD #276
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School Board

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AROUND MINNETONKA

SPRING 2021

NEWS FROM MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Each year, the School Board sets goals for Minnetonka Public Schools. **Here is a snapshot of the progress made by the District on the 2020-21 goals.**

GOAL 1: STUDENT WELL-BEING

The well-being of students is a continuing priority for families and the District.

Update: Efforts across schools and programs continue to foster and promote positive student well-being efforts. District leaders have worked with an outside mental health expert this school year to complete focus groups and interviews to identify leading causes of issues that have a detrimental effect on student well-being. Results from that work will be used to enhance the District's current supports and efforts in this area. A Mental Health Advisory committee of students, parents, staff and community mental health experts was established, and it provides valuable feedback to the District regarding student well-being supports and initiatives and has hosted parent webinars on mental health.

GOAL 2: EXCELLENCE AND BELONGING: DIVERSITY. EQUITY. INCLUSION.

District leaders believe a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, world-class culture and child-centered excellence strengthens Minnetonka Public Schools.

Update: The District published a Commitment to Excellence and Belonging, an Excellence and Belonging website, an action plan and a resource page. The School Board reviewed and updated several school district policies through a lens of diversity, equity, inclusion and excellence. Parents, students, staff and community members were engaged throughout the year—through listening sessions, email updates, School Board Meetings, Study Sessions and surveys. Committees on Belonging were created at all school levels, comprised of students and parents. A confidential reporting tool was developed for students to report concerning incidents. Training sessions focused on relationships and inclusion were completed by all District staff. Students attended learning sessions on empathy. A staff resource was identified in each

school to support belonging initiatives. And, the District reviewed its hiring activities to further promote hiring staff with diverse backgrounds.

GOAL 3: DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

School leaders believe in a long-term strategy with regard to space, capacity, enrollment, facilities, technology and budget.

Update: A five-year strategic plan has been developed, with a lens toward the implication of flattening enrollment and the state-imposed levy cap. This includes space and capacity plans for students, classrooms and non-instructional spaces, facility upkeep and maintenance plans for education and non-instructional spaces, a technology plan for fixed assets (infrastructure) and variable (students, staff, vendors) needs and expenses, curriculum that meets the needs of tomorrow's workforce and a District budget that considers the effects of enrollment trends, facility needs and provides options that deal with fluctuations of state/local funding and enrollment.

GOAL 4: MULTIMODAL LEARNING

Minnetonka Schools focuses on learning models that support personalized learning to meet students' unique needs, abilities and interests. This has been especially important in 2020-21, due to challenges brought on by COVID-19.

Update: The District built a schedule for instruction that encompassed the health and policy directives of the State of Minnesota/Minnesota Department of Education. It adapted District curriculum to enable students to achieve their highest potential while adjusting to the changing learning environments. Content was delivered in a multimodal fashion throughout the year. Capitalizing on the takeaways the District has from its longstanding and successful Tonka Online program, the high school's supplemental online learning platform, the District was more than ready and capable of accommodating the shifting learning models throughout the school year, despite the disruptions from COVID-19. The District also worked hard to ensure that there were additional supports in place for students who had such needs.

Want to learn more? Read about progress toward each goal at minnetonkaschools.org/GoalsUpdate



WATCH THE RECORDED EVENT:

CHILD-CENTERED EXCELLENCE AWARDS

This month, the 2021 Minnetonka Schools Celebration of Excellence awards program premiered virtually and in person. The annual event honors several of the District's outstanding staff, teachers and community volunteers.

The program is available for viewing online. Learn more about this year's award honorees and find the link to watch on the Minnetonka Schools website: minnetonkaschools.org/celebrate

Congratulations again to all 2021 award honorees!

MINNETONKA SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES 2021-22 E-LEARNING OPTION FOR K-12

Students in Minnetonka Public Schools in grades K-12 will have a new option to pursue their highest academic potential in 2021-22. Students will have the option to become part of the District's newly-approved full e-learning program.

"One of the things that Minnetonka does so well is we offer personalization. This is just another tool from that standpoint," Chris Vitale, Minnetonka School Board Chair, shared at the April 8 board meeting. "To be able to offer this to K-12 students across the board is just amazing, and I'm really excited for it."

The full e-learning program will build on the success of Tonka Online, the District's established program for supplemental online courses in high school. More details about the e-learning program will be finalized after measuring families' interest. To ask questions about the program, email communications@minnetonkaschools.org

MESSAGE from the Superintendent

The 2020-21 year has been one of a kind, and none of us will forget the challenges we have faced together and those individuals have faced within that context. We realize that each student navigated the changes in learning options that the District made throughout the school year to provide positive experiences for all students. Teachers have been extremely flexible, managing innovative learning models they never dreamed possible until this year. Throughout the year, the District assured safe environments in our schools.

The District has not only navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it has completed extensive work designed to move Minnetonka Schools forward through major goals. It is critical for excellent school districts, such as Minnetonka, to make progress on behalf of students even when other factors impact the district. There are four goals described on the other side of this report. While we have attempted to capture the extent and significance of the goals' work, there have been many reports to the public through board meetings that go in-depth on the work, and I encourage you to read more on the District website.

The mental health of students and staff has been impacted by the isolation, stress and comprehensive work required by the pandemic. We know there will continue to be fallout on the mental health of students and staff from this year. It is fortunate that the District was already in the middle of extensive efforts to support any mental health issues of students.

The important work on the goal to increase excellence and belonging for students has required considerable effort and the participation of students, staff and the community. Policies have been made more responsive to the growing diversity of the District, the need for inclusion and the powerful equity the District has driven through excellence.

The evidence is coming in through various measures which show that students have continued to reach high levels of learning, despite the changing models and the extensive use of e-learning during much of the year. Some students thrived with the e-learning model, and others were challenged. We worked hard to get every student back in school, while providing the e-learning option to a significant number of them.

We anticipate having a nearly normal year in 2021-22. Thanks to all who have navigated this school year with us.

Dr. Dennis Peterson, Superintendent

MINNETONKA SCHOOLS IMPORTANT DATES

MAY 2021

May is American Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
3-7.....National Teacher Appreciation Week
6.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
13.....Celebration of Excellence, 7 p.m.
20.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.
31.....No School K-12, Memorial Day

JUNE 2021

June is Pride Month
3.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
7.....Seniors Serve
9.....Last Day of School, K-12
9.....Class of 2021 Graduation
17.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.

JULY 2021

4.....Excelsior Firecracker Run
5.....DSC Closed, Independence Day Observed

AUGUST 2021

7.....Tour de Tonka

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For more updates from around Minnetonka, follow us on social media and read featured news stories on the District website at minnetonkaschools.org.