I see four apples.

I see five apples.
MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Dr. JacQueline Getty, EdD & MFA
Executive Director of Communications

Daniel Campbell, MFA
Creative Director

Mary Cornelius, MA
Communications Specialist

Andy Smith
Audio Visual Production Specialist

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The District’s Annual Report and the World’s Best Workforce Annual Report are required by statute and prepared and paid for by Minnetonka Public Schools, ISD #276.
2020-21! That was the year to remember ... and some parts to forget. The full school year was spent trying to maneuver with COVID’s constant threat. It took the teamwork of students, staff, parents and our great community to get through the year successfully.

We were under Governor Walz's order throughout the year, and we created learning models that served our students as successfully over the course of the year as they could. That is not to say that it was easy for everyone. The virtual learning part of the model did not work for all students, but some thrived with it. Overall, Minnetonka’s virtual learning plan enabled students to achieve at high levels.

Despite being controversial for some parents and students, the innovative model to have Fourth and Fifth Graders at the High School for first semester enabled younger students to have a successful year learning spread out in smaller pods. Middle school students were in school part of the time and e-learning part of the time. Our high school students received instruction virtually for half of the year and were gradually brought back into the school over the last few months. As you will see in this Annual Report, students at all levels showed strong achievement, as there was a high level of support provided for academic and mental health.

Fortunately, the extensive use of iPads for regular instruction in most classrooms prior to the pandemic had placed our students in a great position once they had to do e-learning away from their schools. Even when we had most students e-learning, many students came to their schools to access the instruction.

Financially, the District spent several million dollars on additional ways to keep students and staff safe at school, though there was some help from the Federal government to off-set some of the impact. In the end, the District was able to hold the damage to the budget to just about $1.5 million, and the District’s financial position remains strong.

Overall, 2020-21 was a successful year. We learned a great deal, remained creative and nimble, saw outstanding student achievement and enjoyed extraordinary support from parents and the community. We are grateful to each parent, student, teacher or staff member and community member for all you do to make this a strong and thriving place to live, work and raise children.

Respectfully,

Dennis L. Peterson, Superintendent
Update from the Minnetonka School Board

The Minnetonka Public School District is governed by its School Board. Each member is elected at large and serves alternating four-year terms. Elections are held in years ending with an odd number.

District Vision

Defining the direction in which to lead the Minnetonka Public School District is the duty of the School Board, as elected representatives of the District. Its hard work in crafting and fostering fulfillment of the vision ensures Minnetonka Public Schools’ legacy of excellent teaching, exceptional student achievement and outstanding fiscal management will continue. Please download a copy of the School Board’s Our Vision for the Future, which defines the District’s commitment to world-class, child-centered excellence in education for every student at www.minnetonkaschools.org/vision.
Recapping Success of the 2020-21 School Board Goals

Each year, the School Board sets goals for Minnetonka Public Schools. Here is a snapshot of how the District achieved each of the 2020-21 goals. Read more about the completion of these goals at [www.minnetonkaschools.org/GoalsUpdate](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/GoalsUpdate).

**Goal 1: Student Well-Being**

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

Efforts across schools and programs continue to foster and promote positive student well-being efforts. District leaders have worked with Dr. William Dikel, M.D., an outside mental health expert, to conduct focus groups, interviews, and complete surveys. They aim to identify leading causes of issues that have a detrimental effect on student well-being. Results from this 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. The District has hosted parent webinars on mental health and you can learn about the resources and supports for student well-being through Minnetonka Schools’ Well-Being Guide website ([www.minnetonkaschools.org/wellbeing](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/wellbeing)).

**Goal 2: Excellence and Belonging: Diversity. Equity. Inclusion.**

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

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, School Board Study Sessions, and surveys. Committees on Belonging were created at all school levels, composed of students, parents, and administrators. 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. 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 the budget.*

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 needs and expenses (students, staff, vendors), curriculum that meets the needs of tomorrow’s workforce, and a District budget that considers the effects of enrollment trends, facility needs and 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 the challenges of COVID-19.*

The District built a schedule for instruction that encompassed the health and policy directives of the State of Minnesota/Minnesota Department of Education, adapting District curriculum to enable students to achieve to their highest potential while adjusting to changing learning environments. Content was delivered in a multimodal fashion throughout the year. Capitalizing on the experience the District has had with Tonka Online, the High School’s supplemental online learning program, the District was capable of accommodating shifting learning models throughout the school year, despite disruptions from COVID-19. The District also worked to ensure that there were academic supports in place for students who had such needs.
The ACT is designed to measure college and career readiness by testing students across a variety of subjects. As a result of test site cancellations during the COVID-19 pandemic, many colleges have put a pause on requiring ACT test scores in their admissions review and are instead using these scores as part of a ‘whole-student’ approach for accepting applicants. How long the trend will last is unknown, but for high school students, an ACT score is still an important way that students can influence admissions, scholarships and more.

The charts below show how well Minnetonka students have done compared to their state and national peers and the steady progress District students have made over the last several years as a result of the District's intentional focus on providing a world-class education.

ACT® Achievement

The ACT is designed to measure college and career readiness by testing students across a variety of subjects. As a result of test site cancellations during the COVID-19 pandemic, many colleges have put a pause on requiring ACT test scores in their admissions review and are instead using these scores as part of a ‘whole-student’ approach for accepting applicants. How long the trend will last is unknown, but for high school students, an ACT score is still an important way that students can influence admissions, scholarships and more.

The charts below show how well Minnetonka students have done compared to their state and national peers and the steady progress District students have made over the last several years as a result of the District’s intentional focus on providing a world-class education.

ACT SCORES BY SUBJECT*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Minnetonka</th>
<th>Minnesota</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACT AVERAGE SCORES

[Test scores by MHS graduating class]

Class of 2021 Top Scorers

Four seniors earned a top score of 36, 23 seniors earned a score of 35 and 27 seniors earned a score of 34. Congratulations to the following class of 2021 seniors who earned a top score of 36.

**Achieving a 36 on the ACT is an incredible experience, and it is extremely satisfying to see 12 years of hard work pay off. I am going to the University of Minnesota to study computer science as well as acting through the University’s Guthrie Theater BFA.”

- Nathan Turcotte '21

Looking ahead, 13 juniors have already earned a top score of 36, with many more expected to reach that number by this time next year.

**The other three Class of 2021 seniors who scored a 36 were highlighted in the 2020 Annual Report.
National Merit Semifinalists

Congratulations to the record-setting 32 National Merit Semifinalists (overtaking the Class of 2020's record of 31) and 38 National Merit Commended students from the Class of 2022. These students scored among the nation’s best on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) taken during their junior year.

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 2021, and of those, approximately 16,000 (~ top 1%) were named National Merit Semifinalists.

IB Diploma Graduates

Congratulations to the 33 students from the class of 2021 who earned the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. Of those, 12 earned an IB Bilingual Diploma in Chinese or Spanish.

Samuel Ackerson
Nikolaos-Christos Bakritzes
Colette Benoit*
Sidney Dickinson*
Lillian Buhman
Charlotte Burton
Xena Dameh
Owen Finch
Allison Gammill*
Anna Geldert*
Austin Hunter
Solveig Lee
Quinn Lee-O’Halloran*
Crystal Lin
Lissa Mizutani
Virginia Morrow
Ellie Muench*
Lindsey Muench
Eleanor Petrin
Lucas Pfaendtner*
Elianne Retzlaff
Maya Ryan*
Mara Sandberg
Elianna Schimke*
Aspen Schrupp
Leyden Streed
Annika Tamte
Lydia Turnquist*
Fiona Walker
Isabella Williams*
Jordan Wipson*
Paige Wipson
Kiana Yusefzadeh

*IB Bilingual Diploma
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 2021 MCA III assessments, Minnetonka students ranked second among comparator schools in the Twin Cities Metro area that had most of their students tested, as Minnetonka did. In science, Minnetonka students were 67.9% proficient, in reading they were 67.8% proficient and in math they were 74.5% proficient.

NWEA Test Performance Compared to National Grade-Level Criteria

As shown in the table to the right, by the spring of their first year with Minnetonka Schools, Kindergarten students are already performing academically at a mid-1st grade level. By the end of elementary school, the average fifth-grader is performing at a mid 9th-grade level in reading and an early 12th-grade level in math. By spring of their 7th grade year, they are performing beyond 12th grade in reading and math.

How are Immersion students doing on tests administered in English? For students enrolled in the Chinese or Spanish Immersion program in Minnetonka Schools, direct instruction in English begins in third grade. Minnetonka’s Immersion students score as well in reading and math as their peers enrolled in the English program.

SPRING 2021 MCA III STATE READING, MATH AND SCIENCE COMPARISONS

The following data shows aggregate results for all grades tested. Comparisons are with comparable Metro districts and the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnetonka</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Carver County</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Prairie</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orono</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westonka</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Minnesota</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPRING 2021 RESULTS: NWEA MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minnetonka</th>
<th>Reading level:</th>
<th>Math level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Mid 1st Grade</td>
<td>Mid 1st Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Mid 2nd Grade</td>
<td>Early 3rd Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Early 4th Grade</td>
<td>Early 4th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Mid 5th Grade</td>
<td>Early 6th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Early 7th Grade</td>
<td>Early 8th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Mid 9th Grade</td>
<td>Early 12th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Beyond 12th Grade</td>
<td>Beyond 12th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Beyond 12th Grade</td>
<td>Beyond 12th Grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advanced Placement® (AP) gives students the chance to engage with college-level work while still in high school and to earn college credit and placement—which can save families thousands of dollars. In the 2020-21 school year alone, 2,942 AP® exams were taken by Minnetonka High School students.

- **80** AP® courses were offered at MHS
- **91%** of students enrolled in an AP® course also took the AP® exam
- **85%** of the Class of 2021 took at least one AP® or IB exam
- **79%** of all MHS students took an AP® exam and received at least a 3
AP SCHOLARS WITH DISTINCTION**

CLASS OF 2021

CLASS OF 2022

CLASS OF 2023

CLASS OF 2022

CLASS OF 2023

CLASS OF 2024
Samira A. Ahmed

** NOTE: National AP Scholars: Students who receive an average score of at least 4.0 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on 8 or more exams. As of 2020-21, the AP Scholar Program no longer distributes National AP Scholar Awards. Only students who already received this award are noted.

*** AP Scholars with Distinction: Students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on 5 or more exams.

**** AP Scholars with Honor: Students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on 4 or more exams.

**** AP Scholar: Students who receive scores of 3 or higher on 3 or more AP exams.
99% of seniors graduated

Best Wishes to the Class of 2021!

77% attending 4-year colleges and universities

9% attending 2-year colleges

34% attending Minnesota colleges and universities

86% are college-bound

10 students entering military service

*749 graduates out of 797 have reported their post-secondary plans include two- or four-year college. Six percent of graduates have not reported their plans.

99% of seniors graduated
Top Eight Colleges & Universities Graduates are Attending

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (89)
University of Wisconsin-Madison (39)
Normandale Community College (28)
University of Minnesota-Duluth (27)
Iowa State University (23)
University of St. Thomas - St. Paul (18)
University of Iowa (14)
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (13)

Alexandria College (2)
American Univ.
Arizona State Univ.-Tempe (7)
Augsburg Univ. (2)
Austin Peay State Univ.
Baylor Univ. (3)
Belmont Univ.
Bemidji State Univ. (4)
Berklee College of Music
Bethany Global Univ.
Bethel Univ. (6)
Boston College
Brigham Young Univ.-Idaho (3)
Brigham Young Univ.-Provo (3)
California Institute of the Arts
California Polytechnic State Univ.-San Luis Obispo (3)
Carleton College
Carthage College
Case Western Reserve Univ.
Century College (2)
Chapman Univ.
Clark Univ.
College of Charleston
College of Saint Benedict (5)
Colorado Christian Univ.
Colorado College
Colorado State Univ.-Fort Collins (9)
Columbia College
Chicago (2)
Columbia Univ. in the City of New York (2)
Cornell Univ. (2)
Creighton Univ. (2)
Dartmouth College
DePaul Univ. (4)
Drake Univ. (4)
Dunwoody College of Technology (5)
Ellsworth Community College
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Univ.-Daytona Beach
Emory Univ.
Florence Design Academy
Florida International Univ.
Florida State Univ. (2)
Fort Lewis College
Front Range Community College
Gallatin College
Montana State Univ.
George Washington Univ.
Georgetown Univ. (2)
Georgia Institute of Technology
Gonzaga Univ.
Grand Canyon Univ. (3)
Grinnell College (3)
Grove City College
Gustavus Adolphus College (4)
Hamline Univ. (4)
Hartwick College
Harvard Univ.
Hennepin Technical College (3)
Hennepin Technical College - Eden Prairie
High Point Univ.
Hood College
Illinois Institute of Technology
Indiana Univ.-Bloomington (11)
Iowa Central Community College
Iowa State Univ. (23)
Kenyon College
Lafayette College
Lake Superior College (3)
Lawrence Univ.
Lewis & Clark College
Liberty Univ. (5)
Louisiana State Univ. and Agricultural & Mechanical College
Loyola Marymount Univ. (2)
Loyola Univ. Chicago (6)
Loyola Univ. New Orleans
Luther College
Macalester College (5)
McGill Univ. (2)
Mesabi Range College
Metropolitan Univ. of Applied Sciences
Metropolitan State Univ.
Miami Univ.-Oxford (11)
Michigan State Univ.
Michigan Technological Univ. (3)
Middlebury College (2)
Minnesota College of Art and Design (2)
Minnesota School of Beauty
Minnesota State College Southeast
Minnesota State Univ.-Mankato (2)
Montana State Univ. (10)
National Univ. of Ireland
New York Univ.
Normandale Community College (28)
North Dakota State College of Science
North Dakota State Univ. (9)
North Hennepin Community College (2)
North Iowa Area Community College (4)
Northeastern Univ. (4)
Northern Michigan Univ.
Ohio Northern Univ.
Oregon State Univ.
Pepperdine Univ.
Purdue Univ. (3)
Radford Univ.
Rhodes College
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (2)
Saint Cloud State Univ (4)
Saint Johns Univ. (2)
Saint Louis Univ. (2)
Saint Mary's Univ. of Minnesota (3)
Saint Paul College
San Diego State Univ. (4)
Scottsdale Community College
Scripps College
Seattle Univ.
South College
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
South Dakota State Univ. (4)
Southeastern Community College
Southern Methodist Univ. (3)
Southwestern Community College
St Bonaventure Univ.
St Catherine Univ.
St Cloud Technical and Community College
St Olaf College (8)
SUNY at Purchase College
Syracuse Univ. (3)
Tallahassee Community College
Texas Christian Univ. (2)
United States Military Academy (2)
United States Naval Academy
Univ. of Alabama (5)
Univ. of Alaska Fairbanks
Univ. of Arizona (4)
Univ. of California-Berkeley (2)
Univ. of California-Davis (2)
Univ. of California-Los Angeles (3)
Univ. of California-San Diego
Univ. of California-Santa Cruz
Univ. of Chicago
Univ. of Colorado Boulder (4)
Univ. of Colorado Denver
Univ. of Delaware
Univ. of Denver (4)
Univ. of Edinburgh
Univ. of Florida (2)
Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2)
Univ. of Iowa (14)
Univ. of Kansas (5)
Univ. of Manitoba (2)
Univ. of Massachusetts-Amherst
Univ. of Massachusetts-Boston (2)
Univ. of Miami
Univ. of Michigan-Ann Arbor
Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth (27)
Univ. of Minnesota-Morris (3)
Univ. of Minnesota-Rochester
Univ. of Minnesota-Twin Cities (89)
Univ. of Missouri-Columbia
Univ. of Montana
Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln (9)
Univ. of New Mexico
Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Univ. of North Dakota (7)
Univ. of North Texas
Univ. of Northern Iowa
Univ. of Northwestern-St Paul (2)
Univ. of Oregon (7)
Univ. of Puget Sound
Univ. of South Dakota (3)
Univ. of South Florida
Univ. of Southern California (2)
Univ. of St. Thomas - St. Paul (18)
Univ. of Utah
Univ. of Vermont (4)
Univ. of Virginia
Univ. of Washington-Seattle (2)
Univ. of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (13)
Univ. of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse (5)
Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison (39)
Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Univ. of Wisconsin-Stout (2)
Univ. of Wyoming
Vanderbilt Univ.
Virginia Military Institute
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Univ.
Viterbo Univ. (2)
Western Washington Univ.
Westmont College
Wheaton College
Winona State Univ. (3)

Note: The number of students attending is one unless noted in parentheses.
Throughout the summer of 2020, Minnetonka Public Schools prepared for a school year ahead unlike any other by working tirelessly to develop a return-to-school plan. The focus of that plan was to ensure the District continued to offer excellent educational opportunities for all students, to meet their individual needs and to provide them with the best possible—and safest—learning experience given the realities and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 500 parents, teachers, staff and administrators helped to develop seven possible plan options for the District to consider.

“It was impressive to see our community come together and to bring their creativity and passion to develop the return-to-school plan options,” said Dr. Dennis Peterson, Superintendent of Schools. “We knew that no plan would fully satisfy everyone, but I’m grateful that teachers and families made the best of a difficult situation and supported each other and the District as we implemented what we believed to be the best possible solution.”

The District began the year with a hybrid learning model that ensured the youngest students could learn safely, socially-distanced within school buildings. Middle school students had the option of being in-person two days per week, with both virtual and in-person learning experiences. High school students, and those K-12 families who preferred their student begin the year virtually, entered into e-learning.

Whether teachers engaged their classes virtually, in-person or through a combination of the two, they were flexible in adapting to ensure every student felt valued and received the individual attention needed.

“Incredible levels of collaboration happened between teachers, building administrators and the teaching and learning team last year,” said Dr. Amy LaDue, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. “By working together, we ensured consistent opportunities to sustain high levels of learning while meeting individual student needs during the various instructional models. I also want to acknowledge the extraordinary patience and flexibility our parents and students showed throughout the year as we shifted models.”

In early February, the District adjusted its learning model so that grades 9-12 had the opportunity to begin their second semester at Minnetonka High School in a hybrid format. MHS students attended in-person classes two days per week until March 15, when full in-person learning resumed for all grades. The transition to hybrid and, later, to full in-person learning was only possible thanks to the dedicated efforts of District staff—from the teachers and classroom paras to
the school nurses and health paras to the facilities staff, and more.

“The District did an incredible job adapting its response to the pandemic to ensure the health and safety of both students and staff,” said Annie Lumbar Bendson, Director of Health Services for Minnetonka Schools. “By focusing on multiple layers of mitigation and health and safety protocols, the District provided a safe learning environment, which allowed all students to return to school in some capacity.”

These safety measures included temperature checks, social distancing, contact tracing, upgraded HVAC systems, the addition of medical-grade HEPA air filter systems in all classrooms and common areas and enhanced cleaning protocols throughout schools and buildings.

Having a safe learning environment was a critical step in providing all students with a return to normal, but it wasn’t the only one Minnetonka students needed. Principals across the District worked closely with teachers and staff to strengthen community connections in their schools and to support a welcoming atmosphere.

“Once we came back, I knew we had to really focus on our students’ connection to each other and give them each a strong sense of belonging in our community,” said Minnetonka High School Principal Jeff Erickson. “We especially needed to honor and celebrate our seniors by providing as many opportunities for the class to come together before graduation as we could. While the work of welcoming our ninth grade class will continue into this fall, I am hopeful that they, too, already feel like they belong at MHS. I am excited to see how our community continues to come together.”

Despite the many challenges throughout the school year that COVID-19 presented, the silver lining in it all was that collaboration, creativity, innovation and communication helped to strengthen ties within the community. Many of the lessons learned in 2020-21 will help to inform future decisions and to provide flexibility in 2021-22.

“2020-21 was one of the most challenging times that our District has faced,” said Chris Vitale, Chair of the Minnetonka School Board. “It was also an example of the incredible accomplishments that can happen when we come together to support each other. I am so proud of the work that students, teachers, staff, principals, administrators and parents did- and continue to do today—to provide a safe, positive learning environment that will prepare our students for success in the future.”
Since 2007, Minnetonka’s Language Immersion program has provided premiere learning experiences in Chinese and Spanish for students from Kindergarten through their senior year.

“Our program is a discovering journey where students experience a passion of language learning while developing an inter-cultural competence, to become lifelong language learners with an active participation as world citizens,” explained Maria Chopite, third grade Spanish Immersion teacher at Minnewashta Elementary.

In Grades K-5, curriculum parallels the District’s traditional English language program, with all subjects taught in the Immersion language. In middle school, students follow a ‘flex-schedule’ module where portions or their day are taught in their Immersion language with their program cohort, but students also have full access to English language courses, including honors courses, support programs and all electives. At Minnetonka High School, Immersion students may enroll in Advanced Placement language and culture courses during their freshman year. Advanced literature and other courses continue language fluency development through high school. Those who continue through 12th grade have the option to take international proficiency exams, apply for a Minnesota Bilingual Diploma and/or complete the International Baccalaureate Bilingual Diploma.

The learning model shifts necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges but also fostered space for new learning opportunities to grow.

At Groveland Elementary, fifth grade Spanish Immersion teacher Jennifer Santamaria sought opportunities to encourage students’ Spanish language fluency in a real-world, experiential way by partnering with former Minnetonka Schools Student Teacher Dorian Garri who is teaching in Chile. Together, the teachers created a pen pal exchange for their classrooms.

Elementary Music Teacher David Davis helped his third grade Chinese Immersion students create their own virtual musical, performed entirely in Mandarin Chinese. In addition to learning about digital music creation and growing their collaboration skills, the musical also became a place for students to discuss inclusivity. “Students wanted the musical to take place in China so that they could use their language skills,” said Davis. “They also wanted to bring in other cultures [as part of the story].”

“Immersion students are not only learning the language, but also learning to understand culture and look at things from different perspectives,” said Weiyi Qian, fifth grade Chinese Immersion teacher at Excelsior Elementary. “They are not only getting knowledge but also given opportunities to expand their minds, insights and hearts as global citizens through their journey as Immersion students.”

Learn more about Chinese and Spanish Immersion options: www.minnetonkaschools.org/Immersion
Now in its eighth year, the Tonka Codes program at Minnetonka Schools provides computer science opportunities for students from Kindergarten through their senior year. The program was one of the first of its kind when it launched, and it continues to provide cutting-edge learning experiences for students across the District.

Elementary students begin by learning coding in an ‘unplugged’ format, creating sample code using paper arrows, explained Tiffany Miley, media specialist at Clear Springs Elementary School. Students then transfer their skills to their iPads, which are used to program coding robots named Dash and Dot. Classes use other apps to expand their skills.

“Coding in elementary gives our students a foundation for their future STEM and robotics courses in middle and high school,” said Miley. “It also provides a way to think critically and troubleshoot problems. It has a huge impact on their growth mindset as they learn that it’s okay to make mistakes and just need to tell themselves, ‘I can do hard things. I can’t do this yet, but I’m going to keep trying.’”

The middle school years are critical to building a strong foundation in and love for computer science. There, students in every grade have the opportunity to select computer science courses. During 6th grade, students may take Computer Science Foundations, which introduces them to many ways code is seen in daily life, such as in games and animation, physical computing and through apps.

In subsequent 7th and 8th grade courses, students can choose whichever computer science areas they would like to learn more about. A key creative project for middle schoolers is creating “Tonka Doodles,” where students work together in teams to code animations in celebration of monthly holidays. Some of the designs are featured on the Minnetonka Schools website. District elementary and middle schools also sponsor coding events and clubs to enrich learning in high-interest areas for computer science.

At Minnetonka High School, there are a variety of electives in the area of coding, including AP Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Cybersecurity, Video Game Design, as well as the VANTAGE User Experience (UX) Design track. Additionally, extracurricular activities in robotics offer more opportunities to learn. In the spring of 2021, two seniors were recognized by the National Center for Women in Informational Technology for excellence in the field through the Minnesota Aspirations in Computing Awards program.

The Minnetonka Schools Foundation often provides support for coding education through its annual Teacher Grant Program. In 2020-21, coding tools were provided for Scenic Heights Elementary students, including a set of Dash Robots and tactile Unruly Splat systems.

Learn more about K-12 computer science curriculum: www.minnetonkaschools.org/TonkaCodes
VANTAGE, Minnetonka High School’s signature program for advanced professional studies, celebrated its eighth year in 2020-21 with 338 students across seven program strands. As part of VANTAGE, students are offered a unique opportunity to apply their coursework in real-world settings through experiential learning. Students spend half of their school day (morning or afternoon) in their VANTAGE strand. Focus areas in 2020-21 included Business Analytics, Design + Marketing, Digital Journalism, Global Business, Global Sustainability, Health Sciences and User Experience (UX) Design. VANTAGE launched its eighth strand, Public Policy, in the fall of 2021.

“As part of VANTAGE, each student is paired with a mentor with whom they meet monthly to ask questions and discuss goals.”

“We were able to provide the whole VANTAGE experience in spite of the pandemic,” said Andre. “All VANTAGE strands ran the same projects and had almost the same number of guest instructors, and VANTAGE students did a great job managing their mentor relationships. The VANTAGE teachers changed their operating model four times as the pandemic protocols changed, and they never missed a beat.”

Despite changes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the program’s hallmarks of hands-on, project-based assignments, guest instruction and community mentorship continued to enrich student learning in 2020-21. Students completed 150+ projects for companies and organizations across the Twin Cities, including Best Buy, United Health Group, Caribou Coffee, Faribault Woolen Mills, American Giant, General Mills, The Good Day Cafe, Gale Woods Farm and more.

“VANTAGE students develop comfort and confidence about their future,” said Roger Andre, director of VANTAGE. “Through the experiences they have at VANTAGE, they build professional skills like leadership, team collaboration, communications, problem-solving and professionalism that most people don’t develop until their mid to late twenties.”

Between program mentors, guest instructors, project partners, site visit hosts, judges for internal competitions and project coaches, more than 1,000 volunteers come together each year to make VANTAGE a success. “Project partners and mentors don’t just impact the program, they are the program,” said Andre. “More than 85% of our mentors come back most years, and more than 95% of our project partners want to do it again.” Andre explained that volunteers find connecting with Minnetonka students fun and inspiring. “My favorite quote from a mentor and project partner is that the experience left them more confident about the future,” he said.

“My favorite part of the program has been visiting real business environments across the cities and getting real-life experience helping companies,” said Conlan Sykes ’22. “[If you take it,] VANTAGE will be the most exciting part of your high school career.”

Learn more about VANTAGE or get involved as a mentor or project partner: www.minnetonkaschools.org/VANTAGE
Minnetonka Research, the District’s inquiry-based collaborative research program, marked its fifth year in 2020-21. Forty-eight students participated in the year-long course, with seven students returning for a consecutive year in the program.

As part of Minnetonka Research, students develop their own research questions from an area of personal interest and spend the year executing the steps to test their hypotheses.

“Students participate in a wide array of projects, from biochemistry and astronomy to computer sciences, exercise science and psychology,” said Minnetonka Research Director Kim Hoehne. “The interests and creativity of student-designed projects is, for me, one of the highlights of being a part of this program. Students become the experts in their project and can speak to their topics with incredible depth.”

Students researched a wide variety of topics in 2020-21. Edible packaging for food, the effects of meditation on adolescents, how a species of mushroom could mediate heavy metals and a computer science model that addressed language processing for courtroom semantic analysis are just a few of the projects completed.

Hoehne is amazed by the resilience students display each year. “Given some of the limitations we have had around in-person school [in 2020-21], our students have been extraordinarily resourceful in their ability to design projects that creatively answer their questions.”

Finding their own research mentors is a growth opportunity for students, who engage mentors from top companies, research institutions and universities, including Cargill, Yale University, Brown University, Medtronic and more.

When students complete their projects, they have several opportunities to share their research with the community. All 48 Minnetonka Research students presented at the Twin Cities Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Thirty went on to qualify for state-level competition, and five were named as state alternates. Thirteen students earned 20 state awards, and three students—Peyton Crest ‘21, Austin Hunter ’21 and Kyla Fung ‘22—were named Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair Finalists.

In addition to the poster sessions at various science and engineering fairs, students wrote academic articles to summarize their research for the *Journal of Minnetonka Research*. They also participated in a virtual year-end research symposium to showcase their learning.

“Few experiences are truly transformative. My experience with Minnetonka Research was one of them, exposing me to real-world challenges, pushing me to take tough risks and building my passion in research as a way to better the world.”

-KYLA FUNG ’22

“Minnetonka Research has not only provided me the tools needed to excel within a future lab, but it has provided me with the confidence to do so, which makes me very excited for the future,” said graduating senior Peyton Crest ’21.

Learn more about Minnetonka Research and student projects: www.minnetonkaschools.org/research
For Jaxen Iverson ’21, taking the Physics of Home Renovation during his senior year was an incredible opportunity to follow his interests and to learn in engaging and motivating ways. He was inspired to choose the course by family members with experience in the trades and by his mother, who works in home renovation. “I’ve been around the trades my whole life and really saw the sense of accomplishment and joy when my mom would finish a project,” said Iverson.

The class, offered for the first time during fall 2020, is an interdisciplinary two-period course that infuses physics lessons with hands-on technical construction projects, site visits with local businesses and volunteer opportunities within the community. It’s just one offering from Minnetonka High School’s growing MOMENTUM program, focused on design and skilled trades. The program provides opportunities for students to explore pathways in manufacturing, construction, architecture, engineering & design and engine & automotive careers.

The vision for the MOMENTUM program began as a reimagining of the High School’s technical education department. “As we dreamed about what MOMENTUM could become, we looked to the success of other signature programs at MHS, such as VANTAGE and Minnetonka Research,” said Principal Jeff Erickson.

“We saw the passion in our students to learn about the trades in an experiential way, and we saw the opportunity to partner with businesses and organizations in our community to provide authentic learning and mentoring as part of the courses. It’s been amazing to see the excitement that students, staff and community members have brought to the table,” said Erickson.

In the Physics of Home Renovation course, students were able to hear from guest instructors including RJM Construction, HGA Architects, Bonfe Heating and Plumbing and ATS&R Planning, Architecture and Engineering. Students also participated in a volunteer construction project through Habitat for Humanity, where they were able to learn carpentry skills and put those skills into practice.

Iverson is proud to have been part of MOMENTUM’s inaugural year and looks forward to what the program will continue to bring to MHS. “We used applied learning, problem-solving and logic to accomplish some pretty amazing things,” he said. “I think classes like this will help a lot of kids who prefer hands-on projects and critical thinking. It’s a great chance for them to really succeed.”

During 2020-21, 472 students took a class through MOMENTUM. From freshmen to seniors, the program’s launch has inspired many students to take a technical education course for the first time. The number of freshmen who took one tripled, the number of sophomores doubled, the number of juniors tripled and, in total, 56 seniors took a technical education course for the first time. In addition to the Physics of Home Renovation course, which fulfills students’ required physics credit, a new Metal Sculpture course was offered. Metal Sculpture fulfills .5 of a student’s required arts credit.

“I think classes like this will help a lot of kids who prefer hands-on projects and critical thinking. It’s a great chance for them to really succeed.”

- Jaxen Iverson ’21

The MOMENTUM program will have new, expanded program space beginning in the spring semester of 2022. A 10,300-square-foot addition to the Pagel Center will house a six-car automotive shop for students to utilize in automotive maintenance courses, and flexible-use maker spaces will provide dedicated classrooms for other MOMENTUM opportunities. “We know that the space a class uses can encourage how learning happens, how engagement happens and how students collaborate,” said Erickson. “A dedicated facility for the skilled trades will enhance the opportunities we can offer at MHS, so we can truly support every student toward achieving personal success.”

To learn more or to register as a program partner, visit www.minnetonkaschools.org/MOMENTUM

Opposite page: MOMENTUM students toured the Plymouth Creek City Center as part of a site visit with professionals from RJM Construction and HGA Architects.

Right: Jaxen Iverson ’21 and his class participated in a volunteer project with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity.
2020-21 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 2020-21 and the exceptional effort put forth every day to earn these awards and honors are celebrated.

Academics

- The class of 2021 had 13 National Merit Finalists, 15 Semifinalists and 36 Commended Students
- Emil Liden ’21 was a National Hispanic Scholar
- 80 full-program Immersion students continued their coursework through their senior year—17 students in Chinese and 63 students in Spanish
- 33 students earned an IB Diploma, with 12 earning a Bilingual IB Diploma in Chinese or Spanish
- 66 students earned a Minnesota World Language Proficiency Certificate, 99 earned a Gold Bilingual Seal, 19 earned a Platinum Bilingual Seal and 2 earned Multilingual Seals
- 218 students graduated summa cum laude, 70 graduated magna cum laude and 63 graduated cum laude
- Lucca Carlson ’21 and Ming Ying Yeoh ’21 were named state semifinalists in the US Presidential Scholar Competition
- 48 Minnetonka Research students participated at the Regional Science and Engineering Fair; two students carried out independent research projects
- 34 high school students and two middle school students were state qualifiers for Minnesota State Science and Engineering Fair (MSSEF)
- 32 special awards were earned at the MSSEF competition
- Four students were Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) Finalists: Peyton Crest ’21, Kyla Fung ’22, Xander Hughes ’22 and Austin Hunter ’21
- At the ISEF, Kyla Fung ’22 earned a special award from NC State College of Engineering for a scholarship to attend NC State’s “Engineering a Sustainable Future” summer camp

Activities

- VANTAGE’s 2019-20 Digital Journalism team placed first in the Commercial category of the 2021 National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences’ National Student Production Awards: Christina Hansen ’20, Cole Komisar ’21, Katie Rohling ’21, Michelle Senescall ’21 and Drew Sigel ’21
- For the Minnesota Aspirations in Computing Awards, Catherine Borisova ’21 was a state winner and Maya Moy ’21 won a certificate of distinction
- Destination Imagination had four teams qualify for the Globals Competition
- The Minnetonka Debate Team had three students who were state competitors: Molly Welch ’22, Lincoln Douglas (section champion); Steven Wang ’21, Lincoln Douglas (section runner-up, state quarter-finalist); Kruthica Dama ’22, Congressional DECA sent 77 students to the State Career Development Conference; 27 Minnetonka students qualified to compete at DECA Internationals, nine of whom were seniors.
- The Supermileage Challenge is a fuel economy competition hosted by the Minnesota Technology and Engineering Educators Association. In 2020-21, the Minnetonka Supermileage Team received the award for state runner-up in the modified class. Its car got 313 miles per gallon while competing at the state contest
- Elisabeth Polingo ’22 was crowned as the State of Minnesota’s Miss Amazing Teen Queen for the 16-19 national age group.
- The Minnetonka High School Math Team placed third in state
- The Minnetonka High School Science Bowl Team place third in state
- The Minnetonka High School Science Olympiad Team earned 12th in state

Minnetonka Supermileage team took state runner-up in the modified class.
John Browne ’22, a Minnetonka High School teen author, was honored with a 2020 Moonbeam Children’s Books Award Bronze Medal for his picture book, *Quacky Smacky & Tacky*, in the Best Book by Youth Author (under 18) category. John is currently working on another children’s book, *Bee at the Beach*.

Eli Hooker Reese ’21 earned national recognition for choral composition when he was named a winner of the inaugural King’s Singers New Music Prize.

Scholastic Art Awards: 15 individuals submitted a total of 34 pieces. Six Gold Keys, 14 Silver Keys and 14 Honorable Mentions were awarded. Emil Liden ’21 earned a national Gold Medal and American Visions Medal for his work.

Scholastic Writing Awards: 13 students submitted 27 pieces. Five Gold Keys, 11 Silver Keys and 11 Honorable Mentions were awarded to our students.

Five students were a part of the Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA) All-State Choir for 2020-21: Atmos Andolshek ’22 (tenor), Owen Murphy ’21 (tenor), Virginia Morrow ’21 (alto), Jane Williams ’22 (soprano) and Maya Silver ’21 (soprano).

Five students were a part of the MMEA All-State Band for 2020-21: Claire Huang ’22 (flute), John Karl Schmid ’21 (flute), Benjamin Tang ’21 (clarinet), Owen Finch ’21 (piano) and Parker Griswold ’22 (bassoon).

Three students were a part of the MMEA All-State Honor Band for 2020-21: Adam Rickman ’23, River Stine ’26 and John Linden ’26.

Four students were a part of the MMEA All-State Orchestra for 2020-21: Elizabeth Wang ’22 (violin), Chaehyun Lee ’22 (violin), Alexandra Wagner ’22 (violin) and Meiling Mathur ’23 (violin).

Dominic Bradburn ’21 was named a finalist for Spotlight Education’s Technical Theater Career Pathway recognition.

Three students were named Hennepin Theater Trust Spotlight Education “Triple Threat” finalists: Maryn Reader ’21, Zachary Sullivan ’21 and Nathan Turcotte ’21. Turcotte was named a Triple Threat award winner, and Sullivan was chosen as one of the state’s nominees for the National High School Musical Theatre Awards (Jimmy Awards).

Minnetonka Theatre’s Spring Musical, *Something Rotten!*, earned 21 Spotlight Awards, including Outstanding Achievement in Musical Theatre, Overall Production and Outstanding Overall Performance. The Minnetonka Theatre program also performed three other musicals over the 2020-2021 school year, *Broadway Here I Come*, *Blithe Spirit* and *Subject to Change*.

Emil Liden ’21 earned both a Gold Medal and an American Visions Medal from the Scholastic Art Awards.
Athletics

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state tournaments were not held in Fall 2020. However, many teams did exceptionally well and would have qualified for state tournament berths, had those competitions been held. Those teams include: Girls Soccer (Section 2AA Team Champions), Girls Swimming & Diving (Section 2AA Team Champions), Girls Tennis (Section 2AA Team Champions), Girls Cross Country (Section 6AA Team 2nd Place) and Boys Cross Country (Individual Athletes). The District congratulates all Fall athletes for exceptional work in an unprecedented season.

- 18 seniors signed National Letters of Intent to compete in their sports at the collegiate level
- Abby Kapeller ’21 competed at the US Olympic Team Trials in the 100m backstroke.
- Minnetonka Girls Soccer earned the Gold Academic Award with a 3.89 GPA average.
- Cheerleading: State champions (25th consecutive state title), national runners-up
- Gymnastics: Elena Cantwell ’23 finished 15th overall in the all-around division
- Hockey (Girls): Advanced to the Class AA state semifinals. Rory Guilday ’21 was named the MHS Athena Award Winner for 2021
- Alpine Ski (Boys): State qualifier JD Landstrom ’23 finished 9th overall
- Alpine Ski (Girls): State qualifiers Isabella Kelly ’22 and Stella Stinnett ’25 finished 15th and 48th overall, respectively
- Nordic Ski (Boys): State qualifier AJ Hemink ’22 finished 36th overall
- Nordic Ski (Girls): State qualifiers Elena Hicks ’23 and Maya Mor ’23 finished 77th and 101st overall, respectively
- Swimming & Diving (Boys): Section champions, 4th place team at state tournament
- Wrestling: State preliminary qualifiers included Charlie Palm ’24, Michael Giovinco ’22, Alex Shanesy ’21, Diego Pitt ’22, Gabe Schumacher ’21, Marco Christiansen ’24, Alejandro Torbenson ’22, Carter Roth ’21, Quinn Sell ’21 and Peter Barrett ’22
- Baseball: 4th place at state tournament
- Track and Field (Girls): 3rd place overall. Individual qualifiers were Ruby Pajibo ’23 (110m hurdles – 2nd Place), Claire Kohler ’24 (300m hurdles – 3rd place), Winona Stone ’23 (high jump – 2nd place). The 4x800m relay team took 2nd place, the 4x400m relay team took 2nd place and the 4x100m relay team took 5th place
- Track and Field (Boys): Individual qualifiers were Austin Hunter ’21 (800m – 4th place) and Chase McPherson ’21 (400m). The 4x400m relay team took 7th place
- Adapted Bowling: Individual qualifier Hugh Kelly ’24 won the singles title for the state tournament
- Golf (Boys): Individual qualifiers Ian Meyer ’21 and Carson Herron ’21 took 2nd and 7th place, respectively
- Esports: In their inaugural season, Minnetonka Esports teams took 1st and 3rd place in the state championship for Rocket League

Baseball took 4th place at the state tournament.

Hugh Kelly ’24 won the singles title at the Adapted Bowling state tournament.

Cheerleading won the state championship (25th consecutive) and were national runners-up.
The Class of 2021’s Legacy Project focused on physical & mental health. (Image taken Fall 2019)

- The Class of 2021 Legacy Project focused on promoting physical and mental wellness. Donations went to American Heart Association, Hope House, Minnesota Children’s Hospital, People Reaching Out to People, Project Life-Cycle, and National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Sarah Erickson ’25 from MMW was the state winner of the Prudential Spirit of Community Award for middle grades. Ava Chen ’22, Josie Frandrup ’21, Katherine Lew ’21 and Erickson won Certificates of Achievement at the school district level. Virginia Morrow ’21 and Phoebe Hanson ’22 won Certificates of Merit at the district level
- In the President’s Volunteer Service Award Program, 206 students and adults were recognized. Together, honorees reported 27,964 hours of service. 104 Bronze, 39 Silver and 63 Gold Awards were awarded
- 37 MHS students earned varsity letters in Community Service
- During Heart Week at Minnetonka High School, Student Government led Heart Week activities and raised more than $20,000 for Minnetonka Family Friends

Staff Achievement

- Anna Bjork, EL teacher at Groveland and MME, was named to the International Literacy Association’s 30 Under 30 list for 2021
- Several District teachers earned the National Board Certified Teacher distinction in 2021: Jennifer Breidenbach (MHS), Becky Holscher (MME), Allison Lundquist (MHS), Heather Richins (MHS), Sarah Strauss (MHS) and Qian Xia (Excelsior Elementary)
- Minnetonka staff raised nearly $77,400 through the annual employee Charitable Giving Campaign, the highest yearly total ever raised. The money raised supports a variety of nonprofits in Minnesota
- Minnetonka High School Head Baseball Coach Paul Twenge was named to both the Minnesota State High School Baseball Coaches Association and the National High School Baseball Coaches Association halls of fame in 2021.
- Minnetonka Schools and ATS&R’s work on the Loft at MHS earned the Grand Prize Award in Learning by Design Magazine’s Fall 2020 Architectural Showcase.

Minnetonka Public Schools received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International for the 26th year in a row.

In 2021, Niche ranked Minnetonka Public Schools #1 in Best School District, Best High School, Best Elementary School and Best Teachers in Minnesota categories.

Minnetonka Community Education received a Project Award from the Minnesota Community Education Association for the Tonka Virtual Family Challenge

The District is recognized for the 8th year in a row as one of the best communities in the nation for music education by the NAMM Foundation.
Minnetonka Community Education

Minnetonka Community Education (MCE) is a dynamic part of the Minnetonka Public School District, serving the lifelong educational, social and recreational needs of the entire community. MCE programs and events bring the community together—from infants through older adults. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, 71% of regular MCE programs ran during the 2020-21 year with 28,805 registrations.

A 7,000-square-foot addition to the MCEC building in Deephaven was completed in December of 2020. It provided space for two preschool classrooms, two junior Explorers classrooms, a new conference room for staff use and adult enrichment programming, a music practice room, a new exercise studio and restrooms.

MCE launched a short-format video series to promote exciting new programs, tease upcoming events and connect with the community. So far, The MCE Minute’s 11 episodes have reached more than 5,000 people. Watch episodes on the MCE Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MCEYouth

Minnetonka’s high-quality educational program offers Early Childhood Family Education and Minnetonka Preschool. These programs support families and help children discover and learn during important developmental years. The Preschool curriculum aligns with the District curriculum, smoothing the transition to Kindergarten.

MCE also offers school-age childcare through Explorers, hundreds of after-school enrichment, academic and recreation programs for E-12 students and high-quality music instruction with MCE’s Minnetonka Music Academy. There are a wide variety of classes and programs for adults, as well, catering to those who are active, eager to learn new skills or interested in connecting with the community. Community events continue to attract District residents—as well as people from across the country—for Tour de Tonka, Fall de Tonka, the Firecracker Run, Mud Run, Tonka Trail Trot and Tonka Youth Triathlon.

Learn about MCE programs and sign up at: www.minnetonkacommunityed.org

Tonka Online Expanding K-12

Tonka Online, now in its 9th year, was initially developed as a supplemental learning program for grades 8-12 to support students who thrive in a more independent learning environment and to increase flexibility for students’ schedules. Year-over-year, the program has grown. With the increased need for flexibility during the COVID pandemic, Minnetonka Schools is expanding Tonka Online to offer full-time e-learning for all grade levels during the 2021-22 school year.

Students enrolled in the Tonka Online full e-learning program can expect the same high academic standards and commitment to excellence that the Minnetonka Public School District is known for providing. 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. High School students in the e-learning program will have access to the same Tonka Online courses they have previously utilized as part of the supplemental program, in addition to new core curriculum courses which will round out their graduation requirements. Additionally, High School students who are in-person learning may continue to take supplemental Tonka Online courses.

Learn more about online learning for all grades: www.tonkaonline.org
Open Enrollment Update
Minnetonka’s Model Fuels the Cycle of Excellence

Minnetonka Schools’ strategic approach to enrollment attracts both resident and open-enrolled students. This grows the District’s revenue and allows it to meet more than its core costs. Most fixed expenses are covered by revenue brought in by resident students. Therefore, much of the revenue raised by adding open-enrolled students is used to fund signature programs, lower class sizes and improve teacher compensation. **Ultimately, Open Enrollment plays a significant role in fueling Minnetonka Schools’ cycle of excellence.**

**Attract Students**
Open enrollment brings new students into the District. Many of these families eventually move into the District and become residents.

**Grow Financial Resources**
New students bring additional revenue from local, state and national funding sources.

**Meet Core Costs**
A portion of the money is spent on core costs (teachers and staff, technology, buildings, support services, business services, transportation and others.)

**Fuel the Cycle of Excellence**
Remaining funds deepen signature programs, enhance student experiences, develop innovative teaching and learning, and retain teachers and staff.
This 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 2020-21 school year.

Assessment in 2020-21 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, is available on the District website at www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf
WBWF Goal: Children Are Ready for School
The District measures this goal in two ways, by increasing the screening of children by age three and by monitoring literacy objectives with Minnetonka Preschool PreK4 students.

156 children were screened. While Minnetonka resumed screenings in 2020-21, many parents were uncomfortable bringing their children to non-essential appointments, resulting in a 20% decrease from 2018-19 (47% decrease statewide).

For details about literacy results, visit our World’s Best Workforce website: www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf

WBWF Goal: Third Graders Can Read at Grade Level
In 2020-21, Minnetonka third grade students surpassed the state average by more than 11%, with 66.6% meeting or exceeding proficiency on the MCA-III test, compared to 54.8% of third graders statewide.

WBWF Goal: Closing Achievement Gaps
The District aims to close 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. In 2020-21:

Reading
MINNETONKA: 75.5% of white students and 69.8% of non-white students met or exceeded proficiency on the MCA-III Reading test. The gap is 5.7%.
STATE AVERAGE: Of the state’s white students who took the MCA-III in Reading, 59.4% were proficient; of the non-white students, 37.0% were proficient. The gap is 22.4%.

Math
MINNETONKA: 68.2% of white students and 66.0% of non-white students met or exceeded proficiency on the MCA-III Math test. The gap is 2.2%.
STATE AVERAGE: Of the state’s white students who took the MCA-III in Math, 52.2% were proficient; of the non-white students, 26.4% were proficient. The gap is 25.8%.

WBWF Goal: Students Graduate
The four-year graduation rate for Minnetonka High School students, as determined by the Minnesota Department of Education, is 97.7% for the Class of 2020. In Minnesota, 83.8% of students in the Class of 2020 graduated in 2020.

WBWF Goal: Students are Ready for College and Careers
This goal is measured using ACT scores from the Class of 2021. Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only 587 students from the Class of 2021 took the ACT exam, compared to more than 680 in a typical year.

94.4% of Minnetonka High School seniors who took the ACT met or exceeded the College Readiness Benchmark Composite Score (18). Statewide, 70.9% of Minnesota graduates in 2020 who took the ACT were considered college-ready.

Minnetonka Public Schools continues to evaluate and refine its plan to address the five, state-identified goals.
Prudent Financial Management

One of the Minnetonka School Board’s critical roles is to be conscientious stewards 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 71.7% of the annual operating budget, federal funds account for 2% and 26.3% is local funding. Of the 26.3%, 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.

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<th>District General Fund</th>
<th>Unaudited Actuals 2020-21</th>
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<td>Beginning Unassigned Fund Balance</td>
<td>$26,500,354</td>
<td>$24,224,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>$140,574,961</td>
<td>$141,135,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
<td>$142,097,305</td>
<td>$139,401,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>($1,522,344)</td>
<td>$1,733,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to Operating Capital</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending Assigned Fund Balance</td>
<td>$1,652,075</td>
<td>$910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending Unassigned Fund Balance</td>
<td>$24,224,514</td>
<td>$26,700,058*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unassigned Fund Balance %</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
<td>11,050</td>
<td>11,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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. Through careful planning and efficiency, Minnetonka Schools spent $136 less per pupil than the state average in 2019-20*** and $1,679 below the spending average for the eight neighboring districts listed in the chart to the right.

**Teachers in the Minnetonka Public School District are ranked #1 in Minnesota by Niche. com (www.niche.com/k12/d/minnetonka-public-school-district-mn)

***MDE Profiles. Most recent comparable data available is from the 2019-20 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019-20***</th>
<th>Cost Per Pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anoka</td>
<td>$12,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Prairie</td>
<td>$13,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edina</td>
<td>$12,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td>$14,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>$16,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Park</td>
<td>$14,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>$15,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata</td>
<td>$12,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>$12,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnetonka</td>
<td>$12,339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Consolidated Financial Statement

For the past 26 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 a Triple A bond rating from Moody’s. The District’s financial team includes three Certified Public Accountants, and District financials are audited annually by the firm of CliftonLarsonAllen.

The District is in the sixth year of a 10-year financial plan following the 2015 referendum. Therefore, revenues are budgeted to exceed expenses for fiscal year 2021. This will allow the new voter-approved referendum funding to be stretched over multiple years, as promised to voters.

### District General Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020-21 Unaudited Actuals</th>
<th>2021-22 Budget Amounts</th>
<th>2020-21 % of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Taxes</td>
<td>$33,952,598</td>
<td>$33,991,111</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings on Investments</td>
<td>$435,910</td>
<td>$720,000</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$2,150,637</td>
<td>$2,382,558</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Sources</td>
<td>$36,539,145</td>
<td>$37,093,669</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Sources</td>
<td>$98,888,664</td>
<td>$101,184,440</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Sources</td>
<td>$5,147,152</td>
<td>$2,857,215</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$140,574,961</td>
<td>$141,135,325</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENDITURES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Level Administration</td>
<td>$3,476,890</td>
<td>$3,801,080</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary &amp; Secondary Regular Instruction</td>
<td>$85,386,455</td>
<td>$77,930,255</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education Instruction</td>
<td>$1,116,234</td>
<td>$1,071,277</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Instruction</td>
<td>$21,538,534</td>
<td>$22,822,250</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Support Services</td>
<td>$5,952,347</td>
<td>$5,812,817</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Support Services</td>
<td>$4,724,077</td>
<td>$4,401,225</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>$7,702,605</td>
<td>$7,501,419</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal &amp; Other Fixed Cost Programs</td>
<td>$1,308,715</td>
<td>$2,520,941</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Level Administration</td>
<td>$846,611</td>
<td>$773,077</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Support Services</td>
<td>$4,827,766</td>
<td>$4,507,939</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$5,217,071</td>
<td>$5,566,756</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td>$142,097,305</td>
<td>$139,401,856</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Change in Fund Balance</strong></td>
<td>$(1,522,344)</td>
<td>$1,733,469</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fund Balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2021-22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of Year</td>
<td>$27,398,933</td>
<td>$25,876,588*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to Operating Capital</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End of Year</strong></td>
<td>$25,876,588</td>
<td>$27,610,058*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FY22 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).

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**Finance Advisory Committee**

2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

**Community Members**

John Groton  
Deirdre Keller  
Matt Chapman  
Matt Weight  
Jill Howe  
Rob Wolter  
Brad Honey  
Charlie Steingas

**School Board Representative**

Lisa Wagner

**District Administration**

Dr. Dennis Peterson  
Ashwin Muni  
Jessica Hulitt  
Paul Bourgeois
2021 Parent Survey Results

- 94% of parents say the education provided by Minnetonka Schools is excellent or good
- 95% of parents say teachers really care about their child
- 94% of parents say the community receives a good value from its investment in our schools
- 96% of elementary school parents would recommend their child’s school to a friend or neighbor
- 92% of middle school parents would recommend their child’s school to a friend or neighbor
- 90% of high school parents would recommend their child’s school to a friend or neighbor

Percentages are based on survey responses. You can view the full parent survey results online at minnetonkaschools.org/PS2021