



2019
INNOVATION
YEARBOOK





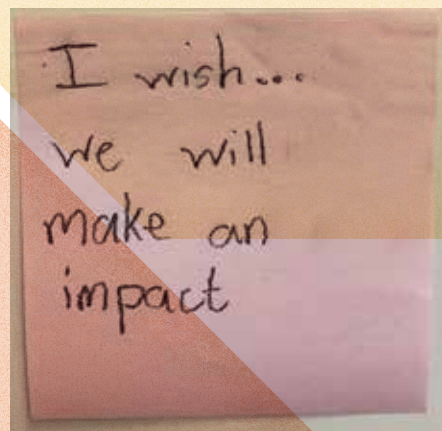
introduction

Eric Schneider

ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT

Welcome to Minnetonka's 2019 Innovation Yearbook! This annual publication captures the top stories of innovative thinking from this year's Big Hunt for Ideas and recognizes courageous leadership from staff who believe in our collective ability to improve learning for our students. The people and the ideas represented in this yearbook are a part of Minnetonka's culture of innovation, a culture that helps make Minnetonka one of the best places to live, work, and learn!

In this year's collection of top ideas, you'll find a wide range of creative solutions; but even more importantly, you'll notice a careful process for testing ideas, collecting data, and growing the ideas that offer the best chance for success. This is the secret to Minnetonka's culture of innovation...our unique ability to carefully test, measure, and grow ideas before scaling. This toolkit not only allows Minnetonka to stay at the forefront of education, it is also an important part of our work with students – providing 21st century preparation for a world that needs creative and innovative problem solvers!

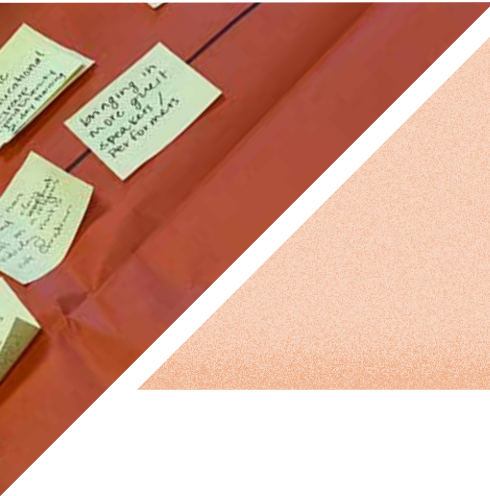


perspective

Dr. Dennis Peterson
SUPERINTENDENT

The District's structured approach to innovation, through the Big Hunt for Ideas, demonstrates our commitment to giving every District employee a voice in how the District can better serve students and improve employee satisfaction. Whether submitting an idea, voting on which ideas move forward or supporting planning and implementation, each of us is invited to invest in continuing to move the District along the path to excellence. Education leaders around the country view Minnetonka as a model for how to quickly turn ideas into high-impact opportunities for students. Some of the ideas are very visible—like VANTAGE, Minnetonka Research or Tonka Online, while others are smaller and make a difference in the lives of our students every day. Thank you to everyone involved in our important and ongoing innovation work.





Did you know?

In 2010, the Minnetonka School District set five goals: create a culture of innovation, launch an innovation website, use crowdsourcing to choose ideas, implement a “gaming” aspect, and build a reward/ recognition program.

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the big hunt for ideas

Nicole Snedden
DISTRICT INNOVATION
COORDINATOR

What is the Big Hunt for Ideas?

The Big Hunt for Ideas is a crowd-sourced innovation platform Minnetonka Public Schools has been using for the past eight years to engage front-line staff in the conversation of how we can make education better for students. Instead of the traditional strategic planning process that many school districts use today, Minnetonka committed in 2011 to using Innovation as the new plan to drive ideas and solutions forward for the future.

The Big Hunt for Ideas starts in the fall of the school year. Staff submit meaningful thoughts and conversations which turn into ideas. The top ideas are then brought to an Idea Workshop phase, which brings Human-Centered Design together with Lean Startup. In the spring of the year, ideas are prototyped, data is captured, innovators are celebrated, and the culture grows.

Human Centered Design is an innovative process that includes, “building deep empathy with the people you’re designing for; generating tons of ideas, building a bunch of prototypes; sharing what you’ve made with the people you’re designing for; and eventually putting your innovative new solution out in the world.”

David Kelley, IDEO

What’s new this year?

This year, staff participated in a newly structured hunt that leveraged the latest in innovative thinking.

Leading with Empathy

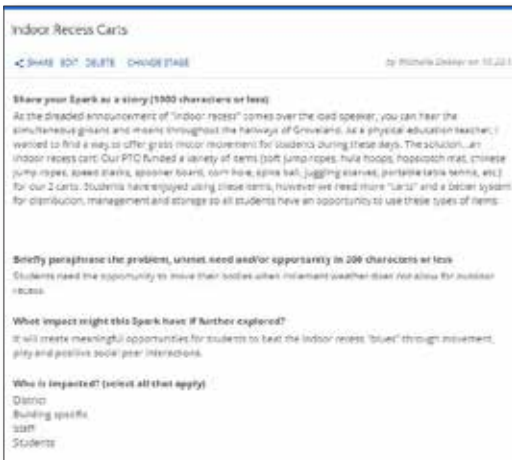
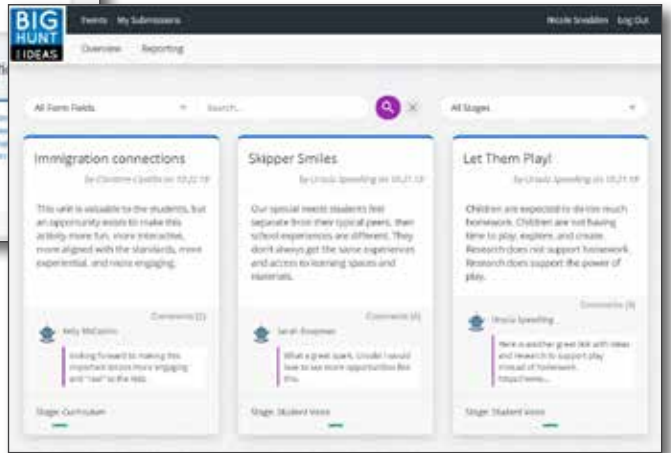
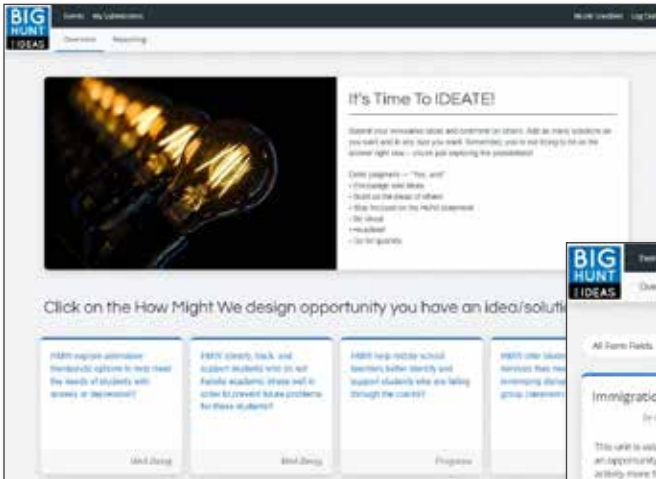
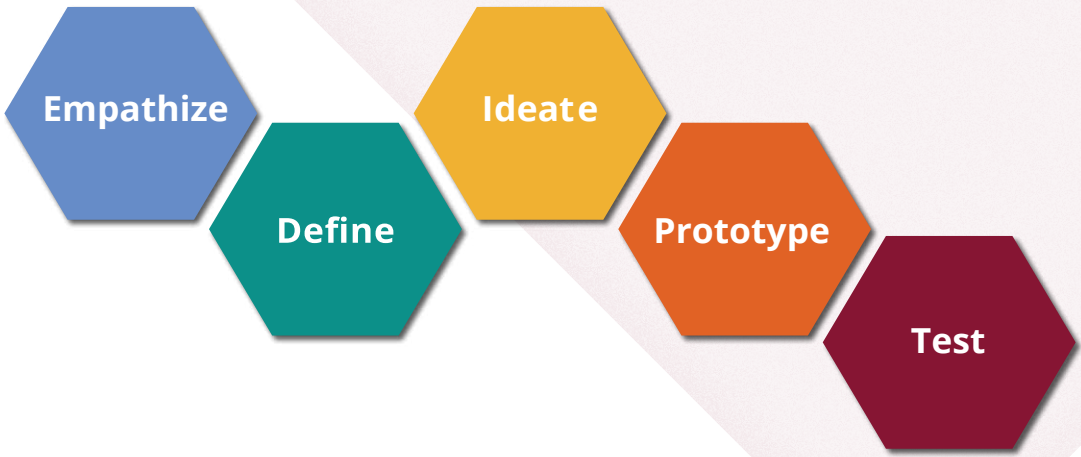
Minnetonka staff had the opportunity to share what mattered most and told their story through empathizing first instead of ideating. Well known and respected Stanford d. School states, “To create meaningful innovations, you need to know your users and care about their lives.” We want to listen in order to learn more about what problems, opportunities or unmet needs our staff has, so we can design powerful solutions for Minnetonka Staff and Students. We’ve asked staff to **“Submit a Spark”** to get the conversation started.

During this process staff:

- ▶ Embraced New Mindsets
- ▶ Began with Empathy
- ▶ Evoked a Passion for Change
- ▶ Addressed Barriers
- ▶ Ideated on What Matters
- ▶ Cultivated Creativity
- ▶ Collaborated Courageously with Colleagues

What is a spark?

- ▶ a story
- ▶ a problem
- ▶ an opportunity
- ▶ an unmet need
- ▶ a pain point
- ▶ an experience
- ▶ the start of a conversation
- ▶ not the idea
- ▶ not the answer
- ▶ not the solution



guiding team & innovation coaches

The Minnetonka Innovation Guiding Team (gt) is a group of thought leaders and educational designers who are innovators of their craft and committed to creating a sense of urgency around innovation in education. This

team meets quarterly to problem-solve, offer feedback, storytell and explore how innovation is transforming students' lives in Minnetonka.

nicole snedden:
innovation coordinator



eric schneider : gt
assoc. superintendent



julie baeb : gt



michelle brunik : ic



matt breen, ic



liz anderson : ic



tarah cummings : ic



ann kaste : ic



paula hoff : gt



qingling mendenhall : ic



paige koehnenn : ic



mike dronen : gt



lyssa campbell : gt

The Innovation Coaches (ic) provide energy and excitement to the face and voice of innovation in the District. Each school has a dedicated coach who builds positive relationships with staff through staff meetings, after-school events and gatherings, classroom visits, email communication, and other forms of interaction. Innovation coaches also provide feedback, guidance, and structure to staff at

their site who submit ideas to Minnetonka's Annual Big Hunt for Ideas event, which takes place each fall. Coaches work primarily with small ideas from the hunt and carefully help navigate to get prototypes off the ground at their dedicated site. An emphasis on storytelling—and providing opportunities for staff to develop their creative and innovative mindsets—is also an aspect of their work.

bhuvana nandakumar : gt



kendra voigt : ic



phil rader : gt



lisa reed : ic



jake sturgis : gt



lisa zimmerman : ic



melissa streit : gt



sara hunt : ic



jenny van aalsburg : ic



pam wertjes : ic



don pascoe : gt



design team

nicole snedden



eric schneider



julie baeb



The Innovation Design Team (d.) is a small, collective group of innovators of their craft, consisting of educators, consultants, and community partners who have a high level of knowledge in the area of Human-Centered Design and whose job is to grow the internal capacity of the District to incubate and accelerate new ideas.



Similar to Innovation Coaches, d. Team members also work individually with staff, but focus on the medium and big ideas that are submitted to Minnetonka's annual Big Hunt for Ideas event. Using interpersonal skills, project management, lean start-up and

rapid prototyping, these practitioners take ideas from proof-of-concept to scale. They work on helping district staff grow innovative mindsets and supporting teachers with their craft in Design Thinking efforts.

sara hunt



lisa reed



matt breen



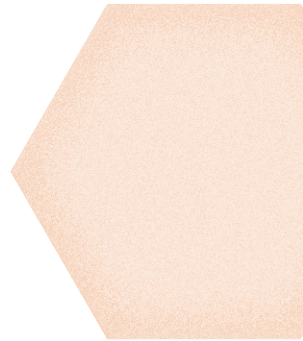
ann kaste



heather koehnen



pam wertjes



site sparks

Site Sparks are problems, opportunities, or ideas submitted during the first phase of the Big Hunt for Ideas. These Sparks were determined to be site-specific and therefore they were not voted upon during the districtwide pairwise but instead incubated and accelerated at their respective sites.



Inter-generational Programs with Early Childhood and Senior Citizens

SUBMITTED BY **Lindsay Gaddam**

Original Submission

It would be great to get our early childhood programs (Minnetonka Preschool and Explorers) involved in activities with the elderly who reside in the many senior living buildings/apartments around the area. Having a program to get senior citizens out and interacting with youth would also be beneficial for our early childhood students who could interact/do activities with a different generation.

Update

Lindsay and Kendra have worked together to start a "grand-friends" day in one of the eExplorers classrooms.

They asked classroom families to invite any grandparents or family friends to join the class for fun activities. The volunteers will complete a survey to help evaluate their willingness to return weekly, biweekly or monthly; to have grand-friends day with other classes; and to learn more about their satisfaction with the event.



An Empathy Deficit & Tech Education for Non-English Speaking Parents

SUBMITTED BY Sara Lueth & Heather Daldoul

Original Submission

The Clear Springs site innovation team started the year by looking at two ideas that came through this year's Big Hunt for Ideas. One is "An Empathy Deficit" by Sara Lueth and the other is "Tech Education for Non English Speaking Parents to Increase Student Success" by Heather Daldoul.

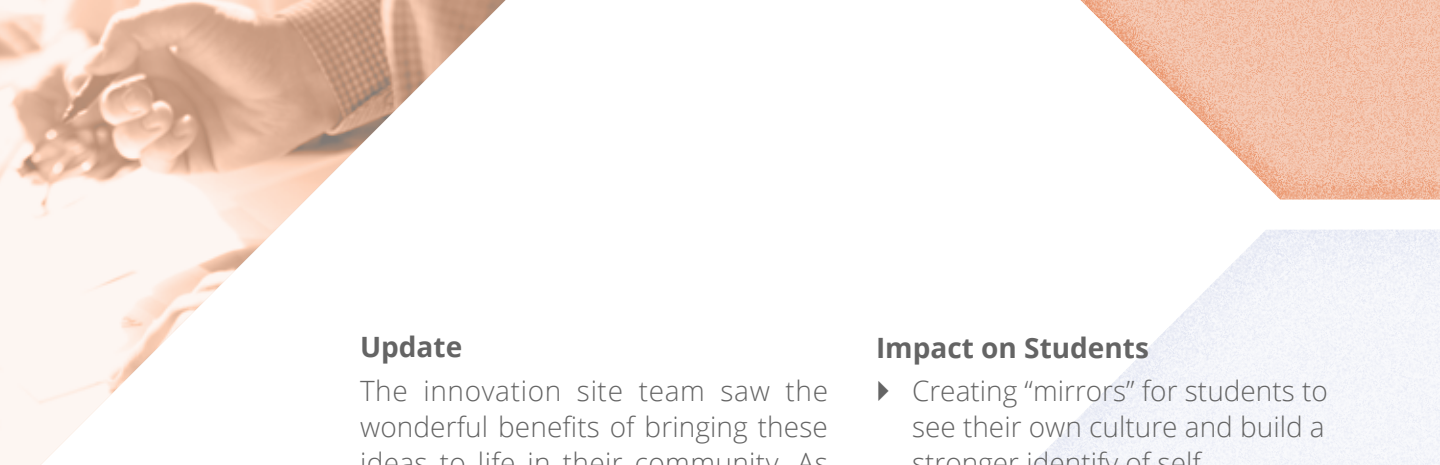
Sara's original spark:

Through research and observation, I feel there is a lack in empathy among today's students. As an elementary teacher, I do what I can to embed examples and models of empathy into teaching curriculum, but I fear it is not enough. We all have so much on our plate – I know 'one more thing' is not what is needed – but I feel the empathy deficit will lead to a population that can't succeed despite top notch instruction and curriculum. I'm on our school's Social Thinking team, and love the training and tools we have for this. Is there anything similar to this for empathy? How can we address this empathy deficit? I'd love to explore the best options to meet this need.

Heather's original spark:

Families who are not fluent in English want to support their children in school as much as English-speaking parents; however, they have trouble understanding Schoology, Skyward and school procedures. I would like to have a technology information night for parents at different grade levels to show parents how to follow their student's academic progress using Schoology and Skyward, and answer commonly asked questions from parents who are often unfamiliar with Minnetonka Schools and the educational system in the United States. We could do this at the beginning of the year for different grade levels: Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle and High School. We could also offer topic-specific meetings throughout the year. Non-English speaking parents may not understand how to access their student's information or school protocols and procedures. ▶





Update

The innovation site team saw the wonderful benefits of bringing these ideas to life in their community. As they started with a Human-Centered Design focus, two ideas started to merge during the empathy stage. They identified the user, focusing first on their staff's needs in helping strengthen their understanding regarding students of different cultures. Next, the ideation stage brought many creative ideas to strengthen their goal. Their next steps are to survey Clear Springs teachers to learn and gather data that will inform their work next fall.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Creating “mirrors” for students to see their own culture and build a stronger identify of self.
- ▶ Creating “windows” for students to learn about other cultures and experiences from ones own.
- ▶ Build empathy among students.



deephaven | k-5

Coat Closet Clutter

SUBMITTED BY **Stephanie Glaser**

Original Submission

Third-grade teacher Stephanie Glaser sparked the conversation in the fall of 2018 that her students were experiencing “Coat Closet Clutter.” She shared that when students come into her classroom in the morning, the first thing they have to do is hang up their jacket and backpacks; however, she quickly noticed the lack of hooks for each child and the size of the space was too small, leaving items crammed in and students feeling frustrated. Further, when winter comes along (with bigger jackets, snow pants, gloves and hats), the problem gets exponentially worse. Stephanie shared how students would report feeling bullied because their jackets would end up on the ground three days in a row, when in reality, what was happening was the racks were too full and items would simply fall down.

There are health concerns if there is ever a lice problem in the class as there would be no way of keeping individual students’ items separated. A solution is needed.

Update

In January 2019, Stephanie, with the help of Innovation Coach Liz Anderson, worked with students to brainstorm solutions. Students broke into groups to ideate on ways to improve the current system. After creating a list of the top ideas generated, they reviewed them on their effectiveness, potential new problems the solution might create,

and what problems might still remain after implementing the solution.

In April, the laundry bag “solution” arrived. Eight students volunteered to use the bags. Within a week, all but two had asked to stop using the bags. The students determined the bags made access to their backpacks more difficult and took up more space than their things separately thereby creating new, unexpected problems.

Liz and Stephanie will be meeting with the students in the next few weeks to reflect on what they have learned from this process and to discuss new solutions. Data will be collected and retained for next year’s students to learn from as well.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students were given a voice in identifying the problem
- ▶ Students were empowered as change agents in ideating solutions
- ▶ Students have been collecting data and advocating for a solution based on their findings
- ▶ Students are learning empathy for those affected by the problem





Childcare during Curriculum Night

SUBMITTED BY **Jennifer Peters**

Original Submission

During Curriculum Night presentations, it would be beneficial if both parents/guardians had the chance to attend the presentation. Many feel the need to send only one parent due to the need to stay home with children. If there was a way to provide childcare for one hour in the gyms, perhaps more parents would be able to attend. This might be an opportunity for high school groups to perform a service project for this hour.

Update

Deephaven Innovation Coach Liz Anderson met with Jennifer to create a list of possible ways to address this issue. After meeting with Jennifer, Liz then met with Nicole Snedden and a discussion ensued around the need to collect data that supports

childcare as the main reason parents aren't attending Curriculum Night before creating a solution for that perceived problem. At this point, Liz and Jennifer are working to find a time to meet again to address the need for data and hope to get a survey out to parents soon.

Impact on Students

Students do better when all adults in their world are connected to the homeroom teacher and know the plan for the school year. Getting 100 percent parent/guardian participation will increase the level of communication between school and home and give students better support across the board.



Expanding Our Academic Space

SUBMITTED BY Erin Cárcamo

Original Submission

At Excelsior, we have the need for small groups to meet to differentiate and enhance learning. Our auditorium often goes unused during the day because the space between one of the gyms and the auditorium is separated only by a curtain. The sound from a Physical Education class, including high activity and music, makes using the large auditorium for small groups impossible because of the distraction and inability for an instructor to be heard.

Update:

A soundproof wall in the space between the stage and gymnasium would be cost-prohibitive. The Innovation Coach met with custodians to brainstorm possible solutions. They agreed a heavy curtain which could cordon off the back half of the auditorium below the balcony could be a leaner prototype that would still give quality, somewhat private space for group work. They prototyped this by bringing in wheeled partitions to see if groups could meet in a peaceful setting. Unfortunately, the test happened shortly before winter break, and the space was not utilized as frequently as they had hoped. In addition, the partitions were often in the way of the custodians who frequently set the room for various events. They had to return the

partitions to the schools who originally loaned them. They would like to re-test again at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year to see if they can schedule some groups to meet in that space on a daily or weekly basis.

Impact on Students

- ▶ More quality spaces for small group work would be a huge benefit to students who now have to try to focus in heavily trafficked hallways or entryways.
- ▶ Teachers, paraprofessionals, and specialists would not have to worry about distractions and could better focus on students and their learning.
- ▶ A calm, quiet space that is generally empty in our building would be utilized more efficiently and would be a benefit to student learning, assuming the gymnasium noise could be controlled.



E-5

THE USER:

experiencing
- Parent pressure

"over-wired"

overstimulated

- I'm not good enough

- showing signs of stress

- NO IEP / add'l services

- "School is stupid"

- Disengaged @ school

- "I'm not very smart"

How might we...
- Identify
- Support student who
- will struggle academically
- who requires accommodations?

E-5 Student

Needs:

- To Play
- To Sleep
- To have downtime
- To feel successful
- To feel I am enough!
- To not be compared.
- A voice

What is the cost of academic success for an E-5 student?

Hmw support help provide E-5 students feel balance in/out of school?

Hmw help E-5 students feel successful while minimizing stress?

Hmw provide balance for E-5 students who do not handle acad, stress well?

Physical

illness
physio ill
lack of sleep
increased repetitive behaviors
fear
anxiety
fear of fail
fear of not being
loss of enjoyment in school
feelings of cant measure up
lack of interest
increasing emotional tool box

Family

Parents piling extra work tutoring to help kids get ahead
lack of family time
Parent Pressure
panicked in parents
High expectations from parents
Learning for the test vs Comprehension
Too many tests
Accelerator vs regular math
Unstable family structure
parent confusion where to start?
Pressure from parents to get into accelerated math-4thgr
Peer pressure
Resenting parents
parents upset & seeking tools/ideas to support child
lose sight of goal of success
Competitive (academic) mindset starts at an early age
monetary costs



Let the Students Speak for Themselves

SUBMITTED BY **Tim Ketel**

Original Submission

This spark was created regarding the desire for students to curate and share their own work with classmates, teachers, and families. Tim Ketel found a need in his classroom for a technology platform that would allow students to post examples of work they were proud of and wanted to share with others. The current tool the district uses is accessible to teachers only and does not allow students to be part of the sharing process.

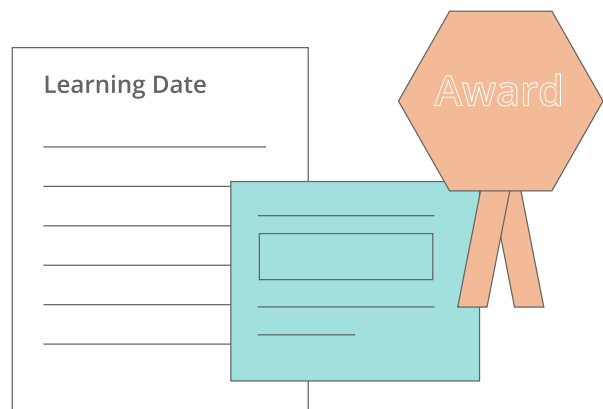
Update:

The Tech Department brainstormed with the Excelsior Innovation Coach regarding platforms that could meet these needs sufficiently. A decision was made that at this time, the district will stay with the tool it is currently using. Students have opportunities to share work among themselves by using the Google Suite and Schoology discussion boards and comments. In the future, there may be more flexibility to use a different platform for student sharing.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students will feel enabled and engaged by creating learning portfolios to highlight their best work.
- ▶ Time and pressure is taken off the teacher to make consistent posts when students can share their own work with each other and with families.
- ▶ Parents can feel more connected to the learning students are doing in the classroom.

Learning Portfolio





Parent Education for Immersion Families

SUBMITTED BY **Tarah Cummings**

Original Submission

Immersion students start third-grade with varying levels of English skills and readiness. Often, parents comment there is not adequate consistency or clarity of English exposure expectations for families in grades K-2. This Spark emerged to address whether the district could create some clarity, consistency, and tools for families.

Update:

The Excelsior Innovation Coach has met with various stakeholders to gather meaningful data surrounding this Spark. The ELT's, principal, and Director of Assessment have all shared valuable information to help create a plan of action. Tarah has partnered with Groveland Elementary staff who are doing a test with immersion students to identify those who will need support before third grade. They have talked about creating a newsletter with tips and strategies for immersion families to give them more support along the way. All of these ideas are still in process.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students will come to third grade prepared to learn important English skills that will help them learn and grow through school
- ▶ Families will receive a more consistent and helpful message about how to expose their children to English to set the students up for success in school
- ▶ English Literacy Teachers will be able to go deeper with students in their English instruction instead of starting with the very basics (phonics, etc.) at the third-grade level; student achievement will grow as a result



Indoor Recess Carts

SUBMITTED BY **Shelly Dekker**

Original Submission

What if students were able to select from a variety of indoor movement games/activities during recess on inclement days?

Update

A cart with new engaging indoor activities was created for students to use during rainy or cold weather days. Indoor playground paras were trained on its use and classrooms rotated the

the equipment. These high-interest activities provided indoor movement options that previously were not available to students. They were a hit with both students and staff.

Impact on Students

New, engaging indoor activities challenged students in a variety of ways, providing indoor movement options for students

No More Lanyards

SUBMITTED BY **Sheri Simpson**

Original Submission

What if we were able to streamline lunch check-out without the use of cards on lanyards to reduce time and germs using something similar to the library check-out system?

Update

The team met with Nutrition Services to explore some possible no/low tech

options they can test this spring.

Impact on Students

- ▶ less wait time
- ▶ quicker check out
- ▶ less germ transfer



TED-Ed Club

SUBMITTED BY **Christine Castillo**

Original Submission

What is a TED-Ed Club? Students will meet to discuss ideas, explore passions, research, learn presentation skills and share their big ideas in the form of short, TEDstyle talks which are video-taped and uploaded to the TED-Ed website.

Update

This idea was previously submitted and implemented by Christine Castillo in a recent school year. The idea was well-received by students and families, and revisited this school year. To obtain funding for the current school year's offering, she partnered with Minnetonka Community Education to build out a TED-Ed Club for the spring

at Minnewashta. The TED-Ed Club is in process, to date, and meets after school on Tuesdays.

Impact on Students

A small group of grade 3-5 Minnewashta students who are passionate thinkers, doers, explorers, innovators and want to be videoed sharing a big idea are currently part of the Minnewashta TED Ed Club. At their last meeting, students will share their work with each other and electronically through the TED-Ed platform.



minnewashta | k-5

Aquí hablamos español: We Speak Spanish Here

SUBMITTED BY **Kendra Dahlbacka**

Original Submission

Let's celebrate our bilingualism! Studies have shown that increasing the presence of the immersion language in schools boosts student morale about the language and encourages their second language use. When students reach the upper grades, they are often reluctant to continue speaking Spanish.

What if we sometimes had the morning announcements or pledge in Spanish? Had an assembly in the beginning of the year to kick off speaking Spanish in the classrooms? Or a bilingual YouTube channel where the news is broadcast by our students? What if all signage throughout the school and in front of the school were bilingual? All of these would be validating to our immersion students!

It also promotes the global learning strand on our Minnetonka Framework for the entire school community. Students will often hear other languages and this will help their cognitive flexibility by being comfortable with not immediately understanding everything they see and hear!

Update

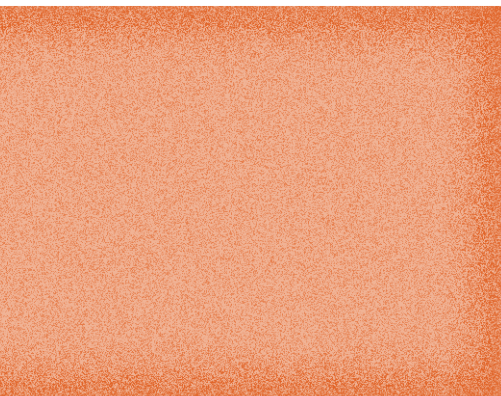
Kendra and her Innovation Coach, Jenny Van Aalsburg, have met throughout the school year to continue to move this idea forward. Kendra has also been working on this idea as the

focus of her West Metro Leadership Academy project. To date, Kendra has surveyed both staff and students to gather insights and feedback. Together, with fourth-grade teacher Carolyn Suarez, Kendra is asking students to research areas of the school that could be positively impacted with bilingual signage. Students are working in teams to take photos and create electronic presentations about their findings. Kendra is presenting her initial findings from the surveys and student research in her West Metro Leadership Academy presentation. Following that presentation, Kendra will work with her principal to determine next steps for Minnewashta.

Benefits to Students

- ▶ All of our students would benefit from being further exposed to another language
- ▶ Our immersion students would likely have a better morale about being bilingual
- ▶ Our non-immersion students would have an opportunity to experience linguistic diversity





Monitoring Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health

SUBMITTED BY **Lisa Reed**

Original Submission

How might we better monitor student social emotional and behavioral growth and communicate the information to families?

Update

There has been district review of health curriculum and the addition of social and emotional health standards. A cross-district work group, at the elementary level, supported this work in creating essential learnings from which the standards were derived. In addition to the existing health curriculum, lessons have been added to meet the social and emotional district health standards.

Minnewashta School Psychologist, Mandy Mattke and third-grade teacher/District Health Chair, Kelly

McCashin, are currently piloting a rubric derived from the CASEL model. The rubric is cross-referenced with the district essential learnings and emotional health standards. The rubric could be used to monitor student social and emotional health and decision-making over time and across grade levels.

Benefit to Students

- ▶ More concretely and with more detail, communicate social and emotional growth to families
- ▶ Monitor student growth and help us identify when further interventions or student study is needed



STOP

Making Bus Safety Instruction Better

SUBMITTED BY **Jenny VanAalsburg**

Original Submission

Students in grades K-10 spend time each fall engaging in bus safety training. They pile into buses, listen to a driver share information about being a safe bus rider, and practice a bus evacuation drill. Bus safety instruction is a requirement and is an important experience, as it helps our students learn information and practice routines that will make the bus riding experience function well and safely for all.

Since instruction takes place in a bus, students are distracted by the space, peers, etc. It's difficult for students at the back of the bus to hear instruction. Message delivery is inconsistent. We could use other avenues for bus safety instruction that we could revisit throughout the year, for classes or individuals, thus making bus safety less of a "one-and-done" experience, and turning it into an ongoing tool, when necessary.

Update

The idea champion has met with the Transportation Department for the district and researched the bus safety requirements that must be included in a bus safety program. There have also been conversations with the elementary, middle and high school staff who help lead bus safety

instruction at the individual sites. A common angst has been felt across levels with the current model and the gaps in instruction and/or student learning of the necessary skills and concepts for safe bus ridership.

The next step, this spring, is creating a small video that could be used with certain grade levels at one site. They'll be collecting pre- and post-data, so they can quantify the learning that their students gain. They're also looking into the possibility of having students review the video upon regaining the privilege to ride the bus, after having that privilege removed. Once piloted, they will evaluate how they can expand on this at other sites and for other grade levels.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Bus safety might be more consistent when clear messaging is sent.
- ▶ Less time may be needed on actual buses with a different model, and, as a result, First Student won't be as impacted.
- ▶ Students could know the bus safety expectations better, and in turn, implement them more effectively.

Deep Breathing for Well-Being

SUBMITTED BY **Julie Baeb**

Original Submission

Julie Baeb, a ProjectTHINK Para with Minnetonka Schools, sparked a conversation about the potential role(s) of deep breathing in the facilitation of students' well-being. She shared in the Big Hunt for Ideas in fall 2018 how she had really enjoyed a recent staff development session on "Yoga Calm." She believes this could be beneficial for all K-12 students, and that its likelihood for adoption and success was high because it is so simple to do.

Update

In February 2019, Julie Baeb, Melinda Barry (Scenic Heights Media Specialist), Qingling Mendenhall (Innovation Coach), and a parent (Patti Wolter) met to discuss how to ways to introduce the Deep Breathing for Well-Being to Scenic Heights students.

First steps chosen and advanced included:

- ▶ At a staff meeting, Julie and Qingling shared the deep breathing idea and Kira Willey's "Bite-Sized Mindfulness" Ted Talk
- ▶ Patti, a certified yoga instructor, began weekly broadcasts with KRTS (the school's news station) to teach students deep breathing methods (e.g., Hoberman Sphere, imagination balloon)
- ▶ Julie created and distributed a teachers' survey to assess ongoing interest for implementing deep breathing exercises in the classroom and need for additional resources

Impact on Students

- ▶ A third-grade classroom has been implementing deep breathing exercises after lunch for four weeks (as of 3/23/19)
- ▶ Students appear to be more focused on post-lunch learning/lessons
- ▶ A parent shared with Qingling how her child has begun using breathing exercises at home to calm herself down when distressed
- ▶ Julie and Qingling are now discussing ways to assess the impact of regular deep breathing and "mindful moment" exercises



Game Cart

SUBMITTED BY **Brian Streitz**

Original Submission

Brain Streitz of MME suggests that too much iPad time and limited social interaction is becoming an issue at the middle school level.

Update

A game cart would be a great way to give students a chance to grow through game play as well as increase social interaction during the school day. Many advisors offer students a "free day" during the week, often on Friday, so having a game cart that advisors could check out and offer during free days would be a great opportunity to test this idea.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students get a break from screens
- ▶ Students have a chance to interact socially with peers who have a common interest (both enjoy the same game)
- ▶ Students use strategy, problem solving skills, applied math, and more in a competitive and fun environment





Workshop Days: Where are Your Children?

SUBMITTED BY **Andrea Hoffman**

Original Submission

Spark submitter and Minnetonka parent, Andrea Hoffman, recognized a pain point for any teacher who works in the district and also relies on Explorers for childcare: teachers lack childcare for their school-age children during certain teacher workshop days. Andrea suggests that if we can find a solution for this it would relieve teachers from the stress of finding childcare and free them up to focus on their work. Our workshop days are valued time for teachers; therefore, being sure they have coverage for their own kids would not only benefit teachers, but indirectly benefit students by allowing their teachers time to prepare for and wrap up the year.

Update

Our team has identified June 7, 2019, as a great day to run a prototype for this spark. June 7 happens to be a day in which Explorers will not run; however, teachers are required to report. We have currently identified at least two MME teachers' families who are in need of childcare on June 7 (four children total).

In collaboration with Michelle Seets, Minnetonka Schools Community Service Specialist, we have created and posted a request for high school students interested in earning service hours to help watch the school age kids of teachers at MME on June 7. We currently have two high school students committed to volunteering their time. These two students will meet with Lisa Reed in May to develop a plan for the day and design activities to entertain the kids.

Impact on Students

Indirectly benefits students by allowing teachers to focus their energy on their work.

Science Lab Setup Help Needed

SUBMITTED BY **Marissa Rangel**

Original Submission

I am not a Science teacher, but I see the amount of work and planning it takes to get an interactive lab up and running for students. Students love labs and are completely engaged. Science teachers are the originators of student engagement. Let's help them out! This spark addresses the lack of science storage, shared materials that are prone to breakage or are very heavy, lack of time for prepping for labs, and lack of time for clean up.

Update

At the high school level Carol Erickson has served in a science lab setup/takedown position for the last 10 years, and the position existed even before she started. She has helped us understand the responsibilities of the role, which entails setting up labs, taking them down, ordering lab supplies, shopping for consumables,

and performing some department tasks. This information is instrumental in providing a model for how this position can be run at the middle school. We're currently in the process of creating our proposal for the FTE ask at MME in hopes of piloting this idea next fall.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students are offered more lab opportunities
- ▶ More authentic learning experiences with a hands-on approach to learning
- ▶ With more lab experiences comes more fun and interest in the science discipline





Hello.
A little about me...



Welcome to my Digital Portfolio. This website includes all of the work that I have completed this year in Honors English. It displays the growth and the progress that I have made, as well as the assignments of which I am most proud. Over the past eight months, I have put time, energy and effort into my tasks and have learned more than ever because of it. Reflecting on my work has shown me how far I have grown as a student and a person.

Eighth Grade Celebration for All

SUBMITTED BY Lisa Reed

Original Submission

This idea was originally submitted to focus on celebrating learning. The idea itself has adapted and changed into one small- and one medium-sized prototype.

Update

The Campus Press Digital Portfolio pilot will allow students to develop individual portfolios using the Word Press platform. This pilot is planned for next school year. It is in its planning stage now. Teachers are incorporating this digital portfolio process into their courses.

The other pilot we tested was a strategy of students emailing projects that they are proud of home to parents. This was a quick, direct way of celebrating student learning. Feedback from this prototype is that "it is simple and builds more connection between

school and home." More testing is occurring and will be explored further.

Impact on Students

Students are positively impacted by the learning opportunity presented when they are prompted to develop the skills of curating and reflecting on their work. The added positive effect is connecting those student reflections to their families in a meaningful way. Both of these prototypes shined a light on student learning in a slightly different way than is currently being done. We can always gain new strategies and techniques to help all students celebrate their learning.

Small Group Testing at MMW

SUBMITTED BY **Jody Eischens**

Original Submission

Many students need a quiet space to take their assessments. Often, students are in need of supervision or assistance when completing these assessments as well.

Update

Now with the Small Group Testing Center, students are able to go to a quiet, smaller space to help focus and take the time needed to do their best on assessments. Paraprofessional Shelley Slator is there to assist the students with tests being read aloud, making sure students have settled in

so that they do their best, or find the right setting for each student.

Impact on Students

Students are accessing the testing center every day, every hour. As of the end of Quarter 3 over 1,300 tests have been taken in the testing center this year! Students are happy to have a space that helps them focus and get what they need. Teachers are happy to provide another option for their students so that they can show what they know.

Transforming Classroom Storage

SUBMITTED BY **Stephanie Battista**

Original Submission

In thinking about maximizing the space in our classrooms, Stephanie submitted this spark to get us thinking about ways to provide more space for students to use for learning.

Update

Design for Learning is leading much of this work. It is a more elaborate process in time and commitment than simply making changes in a classroom. Classrooms are often shared, so designing the space for one user may not meet all needs. In moving forward with this idea, we have discussed the physical changes and the impact those could have on the other needs of the room. We have partnered with the custodial staff to discuss possible

changes and the future of storage plans at MMW.

Impact on Students

- ▶ The more space in the classroom, the more availability of space to work collaboratively and create deeper meaning with their learning



Update the Middle School Locker Rooms

SUBMITTED BY **Mary Schafer**

Original Submission

The middle school locker rooms are in need of a facelift. As the building has gradually been updated (such as the media center, hallways and classrooms), the locker rooms have been untouched for many years. We want our students and community to value this space as much as any other space in the building.

Update

This spark really became a discussion about communication of systemic change over time. In digging deeper we found that there is a plan to update the locker rooms but it is not slated for this year. Overall, as our district

has grown, it is helpful to make sure information is shared so that we invest our innovative thinking on items not in the works, but new ideas needed to push the district forward.

Impact on Students

Updating the locker rooms will make them more functional for our modern day needs. In taking care of the space and updating it, students and the community will see the value we show to all content areas in our school. Community members who use the space on evenings and weekends will also benefit from a more functional space.

After School Wellness/Exercise Opportunities

SUBMITTED BY **Jeanne Sammelson**

Original Submission

This spark came from the experience of working with students in Brightwatch, which is an after-school homework work group held in the media center. Students want to move and perhaps have a release after school but don't necessarily want to join a sport in order to fulfill that need.

Update

So far this need can be met through a variety of opportunities already provided through Community Ed and beyond. Currently, this item is exploring opportunities around supervision. If given the right timing, participation, and support, there might be room

to embed this spark in the current Brightwatch program. Currently, we are working on choosing items to test in a small pilot this spring. If a few smaller items can be incorporated into the current system we would be so happy.

Impact on Students

Students will have a chance to have brain break/exercise opportunities to encourage them to stay focused while working on their homework after school.



Grandma Bench

SUBMITTED BY **Laurelle Adkins**

Original Submission

This spark was written to support all students' emotional and mental health needs. Kids are learning and growing so fast during the middle school years. They are experiencing changes with friend groups and stress balancing life and more. Laurelle was inspired by the Grandma Bench concept originating in Zimbabwe as a means to give young people a chance to connect with someone who can help them talk through their problems or needs.

Update

This idea is merging with a few other innovation ideas. A group of teachers working toward the board goal of Student Well-being chose Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as their focus area. They have been asking students

to check in about how they feel at the beginning of each hour. Students are connected with others, as needed, to make sure all students are supported. We will continue with this work to expand and then evaluate if more support like the Grandma Bench are needed in the future.

Impact on Students

Students are able to share how they feel in a private way. They are able to have their teachers understand how they are currently feeling. They also get the opportunities they need to get extra support and understanding to be as successful as they can be.

Rec It Challenge

SUBMITTED BY **Jon Guimont**

Original Submission

The Rec It Challenge is a fun competition between students and staff at MMW to see who can do the best job sorting between composting, recycling, and trash. The game is centered around recycling and becoming a green school. Students are encouraged to help each other so that they can earn the most correctly sorted bins. The bins turn into points and the points are added up at the end of the month. The lunch group that earns the most correctly sorted bins will earn a reward. The challenge is a fun way for students to understand the importance of composting and recycling.

Update

Students have been very active in this challenge. They have found success! They are being more intentional with their recycling/composting/sorting efforts. They are seeing the impact on the environment with their good habits. The staff working hard with this challenge are ready to share their success so that other schools can also reap the benefits of this challenge.

Impact on Students

Students are building good habits in a fun way with this challenge.



Keep It Clean

SUBMITTED BY **Paula Hoff**

Original Submission

As our population grows, so does the use of the bathrooms. There are more students and staff accessing the bathrooms each day which is creating more paper towel waste.

Update

In working out this issue, two pilots have moved forward. The first is collecting data to see how much of an issue this is in our school. Second is to post signs to remind students and staff to keep it clean.

Impact on Students

The more we take care of the learning environment, the more focused we can all be on what is most important, *learning*.



Kids Coding for Parents

SUBMITTED BY **Christopher O'Brien**

Original Submission

Students are learning more and more about coding in school. Parents are looking for opportunities to learn more about an area they might not have much experience with personally.

Update

In working through this idea, we unearthed really important aspects for a lot of areas: What type of learning do parents want and for which topics do they want more opportunities? A survey was developed to find out more. The survey was sent to parents in hopes of learning the topics for which they need support and the best timing to support busy families.

Impact on Students

- ▶ The more we can inform parents on the work we are doing at school, the better partners we become.
- ▶ The more confident parents are on what is being taught and expected at school, the better they can support that work at home.





Congestion in the Commons

SUBMITTED BY **Ramona Anderson & Matt Breen**

Original Submission

As students or teachers move from the academic wings on the first floor to the opposite side of the Commons, or from the main office to the Port, the trek often contains many detours around the groups of socializing students.

Update

Original conversations around this spark centered on markings that could be added to the floor to designate areas where you could not stand still, or directional lanes to organize traffic. This, however, turned out to not be an option based on the rules regarding the maintenance of such markings. It was decided at that point to focus more on the messaging

regarding the congestion. This could include a Beyond 140 video, more paraprofessional control over certain spaces, First Mates' communication during freshmen tours, or birds-eye illustrations outlining the "movement-only zones." First among these is the Beyond 140 video that, while not yet in the works, is a step that has received tentative approval.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Easier to make one's way through the Commons
- ▶ Save time during limited passing time
- ▶ Fewer individuals running into each other and fewer requests to ask others to move

Mindful Space

SUBMITTED BY **Geri Murphy**

Original Submission

How might we transform the MHS counseling office to a more comforting space?

Update

The Student Innovation Team took on this problem, interviewing staff and students. They have done some prototyping and design work, developing ideas for making the space more welcoming. The students displayed posters in the office, asking peers which wall pattern and musical choices they preferred. Based on this

empathy work, the District painter has been supportive of students painting the walls in an appealing pattern.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students will feel more welcomed and relaxed in the Counseling office if the paint color and atmosphere are warmer & softer.
- ▶ Through their empathy work, students found that the space has a bit of a hospital feel, and these ideas will help transform the atmosphere.

Cove Open for Conferences

SUBMITTED BY **Kayleigh Vranish**

Original Submission

Staff work a full day and need to stay late for conferences on Thursday. Parents are typically coming directly from work. There is limited time to grab a snack or even dinner. It would be nice if the Cove could be open for the arena conference times on Thursday night and Friday morning.

Update

Having the Cove open during conferences had been tried once before and was not successful. The idea of having it open was originally met with some resistance, but was reconsidered locally and brought forward to the district. It was decided that the lack of success in the previous try was simply too indicative of what could happen with opening again. For that reason, it was decided that it

would likely still not be a cost-effective decision.

Impact on MHS Community

- ▶ This is more about the impact on staff and parents
- ▶ Staff would be able to get food, particularly on that Thursday evening in the 80 minutes between the school day and the beginning of evening conferences
- ▶ Parents would have the opportunity to grab a bite to eat, knowing that conferences can span up to about 90 minutes based on teacher availability
- ▶ Parents would also get introduced to the banana bread that so often drains their son's or daughter's lunch account

O P E E



Hallway Helpers During High School Conferences

SUBMITTED BY **Michelle Ketchum**

Original Submission

How might we provide information to ease parent confusion and stress during high school conferences? Minnetonka First Mates and Student Government representatives are great teams who can help guide parents to the right place during conferences.

Update

The spark was submitted based on the amount of parent questions that arose

on the Friday conferences, especially when teachers are in their classrooms.

Impact on Students

The impact on students is that their parents will feel part of the Minnetonka community if they feel that someone is helping them. This is helpful for the whole family as they move through the years at MHS.

Quiet Zone: Brains at Work

SUBMITTED BY **Jani Pankoff**

Original Submission

How might we reduce noise levels in the hallway at MHS?

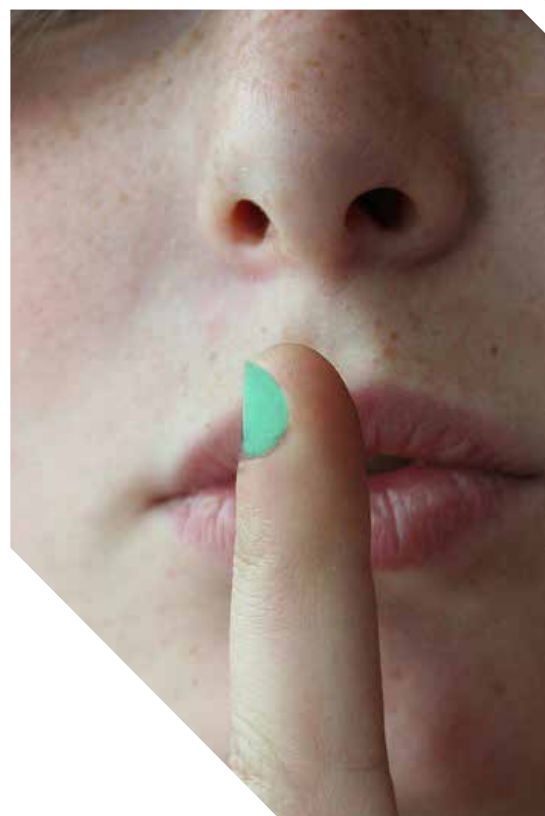
Update

This spark was reviewed by the Operations and Culture committee. It was not considered a huge issue, but they were open to supporting some signage to encourage quiet in the hallways.

Currently we are working with a vendor to get the signage created and installed to say "Academic Space: Quiet Please."

Impact on MHS Community

This will assist students who are in class to be able to focus on what is happening in the classroom instead of what is happening in the hallway.



Create a Sloped Curb at the MHS Main Entrance Door

SUBMITTED BY **Lyssa Campbell**

Original Submission

Ramp access to the MHS entrance is many feet east of the front door, requiring individuals in wheelchairs (or staff with carts) to travel a long way to and from the building. While this might be helpful during the busy drop-off and pick-up times—moving those who need a little more time further ahead in the drop-off lane—it would be great to create a sloped curb right at the front door for easy access. Also, in inclement weather, wheelchair users would have a shorter trip from their vehicle to the warm building.

Update

Early on, this idea was widely supported based on experiences from many who had struggled rolling in items from the parking lot. And

while there was certainly agreement that it would be helpful, it ended up not being possible based on the slope requirements directly out from the main entrance. Because of this obstacle, this spark is on hold for the time being but could hopefully be considered if there is future construction to the main entrance.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Staff, students and/or visitors in wheelchairs would have more direct access to the main entrance
- ▶ Staff or individuals from outside organizations entering our school with dollies would not have to make the relatively sharp turn as is currently the case



Rest Well to Test Well

SUBMITTED BY **Maggie Dow**

Original Submission

How might we as a school district provide students with the opportunities to employ anxiety-reducing strategies and skills, particularly around test time?

Update

This spark was more specific to providing opportunities to practice meditation and relaxation techniques for students undergoing stress and anxiety. It was very similar to the idea that was workshopped in the Big Hunt for Ideas on “How might we offer alternative therapeutic options for students suffering from anxiety

and depression?” After meeting with Maggie Dow, we decided to roll this spark into the larger workshop.

Impact on Students

This spark is being explored in many ways by many groups in the district. The desired impact on students is to help them to learn how to manage stress and anxiety. There seems to be an uptick in students suffering from these feelings, and staff is very interested in helping students learn how to manage them in healthy ways.

E.F.S. Extra Flexible Seating for Studying and Dining at MHS West Entry

SUBMITTED BY **Jeremy Peacock**

Background

How might we adapt spaces to allow for dining and studying at MHS?

Update

MHS administration has reviewed this idea and is currently looking for the ‘just right’ furniture configuration to go in this space. In the meantime, the custodial staff has been great at putting different pieces of furniture in spaces to see what students like, use, and need.

Impact on Students

This will add seating for students and increase options for flexible learning time. Currently there are times during the day, especially during lunches, where seating for students who would like to eat and study at the same time is limited. This will increase the availability and options for students who do not want to sit in the lunch room or other flexible spaces.

A Shadow of a Day

SUBMITTED BY **David Surver**

Original Submission

My daughter is in college right now and trying to decide what she wants to do when she grows up. I wish she had the chance to take a day in high school each year to shadow one professional for the day. Or even better—students could shadow two, a doctor in the morning and a zoologist in the afternoon! During freshman, sophomore and junior year alone she may have had the chance to check out six careers if we had a day like this! If we take a day in the fall we could have teachers collaborate on that day —thus filling another “spark” need for us as teachers. If we implement this, I could see a typical student being able to rule out a career that they thought they were interested in, and find one that really fits their passions. This knowledge could, in turn, help students choose the right college and save the pain and tuition of taking classes that were headed in the wrong direction.

Update

There was an original hope that this idea could be encompassed in the Capstone opportunity that seniors have in the last two weeks of high school; however, the goal of the spark was to have it apply to all high school students. There was a conversation about creating a database of names of professionals willing to host one of our students. While there would undoubtedly be many in our district who would be willing to be in this database, the difficult element would be vetting all of these people. In order to work with our students, the

list would need to be followed strictly and consist of only those who have completed a background check. It was decided in the end that encouraging students to shadow a professional could increasingly become a part of our building messaging, but that the specific opportunities should be coordinated by families and simply be a personal day for attendance.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students have the opportunity to “test” their interests in high school
- ▶ Can be helpful in future decision making, including which college to attend, which classes to take, and ultimately which jobs to pursue
- ▶ If shadowing early in one’s high school career, the experience could influence high school registration decisions, i.e. VANTAGE or Minnetonka Research



MHS Friday Conference Fix

SUBMITTED BY **James Donald**

Original Submission

These stories happen almost every Friday during conferences. A parent arrives at 11 a.m. and is trying to get through their child's conferences. After a couple of longer waits to meet with instructors, it is now 11:55 a.m. and they have two more teachers with whom to meet. Noon comes, all the teachers leave for lunch, and the parent has to wait for an hour to attend those last conferences.

A teacher is kind enough to stay a little longer to finish up a conference by 12:05 p.m., but it still takes them 20-30 minutes to get through the lunch line so they only have 15-20 minutes to sit down and eat.

With this in mind, what if half the staff left for lunch at 11:30 a.m. while the rest left for lunch at noon (or noon and 12:30 p.m.)? This could reduce the lunch line for teachers, and also help parents plan their time and know that there will only be a 30-minute window with no teachers available.

Update

This spark seemed like an easy fix at first glance, but there were concerns primarily with the response of teachers based on having arena-style conferences in the morning and the less busy classroom conferences in the afternoon. It would also have to

be approved by the parent group that serves lunch on these days, which would likely be a smaller hurdle if we reach that point.

Primarily, because of the potential teacher concern, the idea was brought to the Operations and Culture team at the high school. This team agreed that this idea could be helpful, and the positives for parents and teacher lunch lines could outweigh the potential issue with teachers being on different schedules. With this conclusion from the team, the spark is now being considered for implementation in the 2019-2020 school year.

Impact on MHS Community

- ▶ Parents would be less likely to have conferences interrupted by teachers' lunch if they map out their plan based on a teacher's schedule.
- ▶ The teacher lunch line would be shorter with only half of the staff eating at one time, which would leave more of the hour for eating and other prep work.

districtwide sparks

Currently we are testing eight Design Challenges that arose from our annual Big Hunt for Ideas crowdsourced innovation platform.

These eight “sparks” were submitted by staff and immediately started to grow into deeper conversations, districtwide. In the winter of 2019 each ideas was brought to a Design Workshop where design team facilitators and staff, using Human-Centered Design and Lean Start-Up, worked together to further ideate and prototype possible solutions to these challenges. Data is currently being captured and analyzed to determine next steps for these possible opportunities.





Encouraging Play Among Elementary Students

How might we encourage and support play during and after school to promote social, emotional and physical well-being among our elementary students?

SUBMITTED BY **Ursula Speedling**

Original Submission

One day, I decided to Let Them Play! I shared a "Home Fun" slide in my Curriculum Night Presentation. Instead of homework, I wanted children to play, explore, discover, create, and just be children when they got home from school. My slide showed families lots of ideas for what their child should do after school. I encouraged them to read each night to their child for 20 minutes as part of their family time together. I also shared the best way they could prepare their child for school was to make sure they had this time to play, but also a meal as a family, and a good night's rest. I assured parents they would NEVER look back and say, "Gee...I really wish our child had done more homework in second grade." They may look back and say, "I wish we would have slowed down more and spent more time together as a family exploring, creating, playing, and reading together." Parents were relieved and happy to no longer have the homework battle every night. They were happy to let them play.

Update

During the Design Workshop, participants explored a variety of stakeholder perspectives, including

students, classroom teachers, administrators and parents. It was determined the prototype would focus on elementary students as the main user. The group believed if students had less required homework and parents had ideas on how to guide their student during unstructured time, there would be more time for play and they would feel less stressed and happier.

The prototype contains these key elements:

- ▶ Minimization of assigned homework
- ▶ Production of a guide for parents
- ▶ Students developing an awareness of their feelings
- ▶ Students charting daily their feelings

Impact on Students

- ▶ Fewer meltdowns from students
- ▶ Students more willing to take risks
- ▶ Students asking more questions during learning
- ▶ Students perception of their feelings would indicate less stress.

Not Enough Time to Manage Pull-Out Services

How might we offer students the pull-out services they need while minimizing disruption to large group classroom instruction?

SUBMITTED BY **Mike Borgendale**

Original Submission

Our pull-out services are great; however, the continuity of instruction is an issue with kids moving in and out of the classroom.

Workshop Update

Prototype 1 will focus on students as the main user. The group believes that if students have more choice, they will be committed to the work and there will be less disruption in class. The prototype contains these key elements: (1) collecting input from students regarding the timing of their pull-outs, (2) gaining perspective of classroom teachers and specialists, and (3) students collaborating with administration and staff to test a more student driven-specialist schedule. Indicators of success: Student satisfaction with the schedule (that incorporates student choice) and reduced classroom disruption. Prototype 1 has been tested with one 5th grade class in a paper format; a focus group was held afterward to collect feedback.

Prototype 2 will focus on shifting a current pull-out program to a whole-class, co-taught experience. Workshop participants believe a co-teaching model will minimize disruption, support collaboration and provide enrichment experiences to all students. The prototype contains these key elements: (1) collaborative planning between specialist and teacher, (2) delivery through a Co-Teaching Model, (3) elimination of identifying specific students to be served. Indicators of success: The enrichment opportunity reaches and benefits the entire class, not just six selected students, minimal classroom disruption, minimal impact on scheduling other curricular responsibilities. Prototype 2 is still in the development stage. A push-in enrichment opportunity is being explored, but we have not reached agreement on which one to test. As a next step, a small group of specialists, administrators and classroom teachers will meet to ideate further.





Middle School Students

How might we help middle school teachers better identify and support students who are falling through the cracks?

SUBMITTED BY **Amy Hoffman**

Original Submission

Our middle schools could benefit from increased implementation of fundamental components of the middle school philosophy, including teaming and interdisciplinary experiences. We could be incorporating many more of the components that help students through their adolescent years.

Workshop Update

During the Design Workshop, participants explored a variety of perspectives including students, classroom teachers, specialists, administrators and parents. Participants worked on breaking down the language in the “how might we” statement, using Post-it Notes to pull out the meaning of what “falling through the cracks” means to them. It was determined the prototype would focus on the social/emotional health of students. The group believes that if advisory teachers are given a clear set of questions, they can identify additional students who might benefit from existing social/emotional support systems at the middle school level.

The prototype contains three key elements: Screener questions that Advisory teachers can use to identify students, a process for referring students to existing services based on screening questions, and a method for tracking services received by identified students. Success will be evaluated based on the number of additional students discovered through screening and positive validation by service providers (counselors, social workers, psychologist, etc.). The prototype concluded and data will be analyzed and shared in mid-April 2019.

Workshop participants developed screening questions to help Advisory teachers identify students who could benefit from services already in place at the middle schools.

spark

districtwide

Current Playgrounds

How Might We reimagine our current playgrounds so they are accessible for all students?

SUBMITTED BY **Tara LaClaire, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Minnetonka Community Education**

Original Submission

MCEC has some great resources for young children and wonderful staff who collaborate to create inclusive educational spaces that support all learners; however, the two playgrounds at MCEC are not currently fully accessible for all students. The playground equipment and playground surface make it difficult, or in some cases impossible, for students with physical disabilities to independently travel around the playground or use the playground equipment without physical assistance from an adult. Having an inclusive playground that all students can access independently would be a benefit to all children at MCEC and would provide all children, regardless of their ability, age, gender or background, the same opportunities to explore, discover and achieve during play.

Workshop Update

During the Design Workshop, participants explored a variety of perspectives from students (both general education and special education), teachers, administrators and parents. Although the current playgrounds meet the general needs for ADA compliance, some current students are not able to fully engage on the playground.

Workshop participants focused on physically challenged students using wheelchairs, walkers, crutches or

other mobility devices. These students cannot currently reach some of the playground equipment and, in some cases, any of the equipment. The workshop participants determined that if these students had better accessibility to the playground by using temporary accessibility mats, they would have more independence and interaction with their peers.

Temporary accessibility mats will be tested at Clear Springs Elementary, Minnewashta Elementary and Groveland Elementary, providing a full month of prototyping across the District. Staff will identify specific students and their needs and evaluate these indicators of success: (1) increased student use of playground facilities, (2) increased interaction between target students and peers, and (3) increased feelings of independence and inclusion by target students.

Temporary accessibility mats could be a key component in providing a fully inclusive playground so all students can explore, discover, and achieve during play time.





Academics and Stress

How Might We identify, track, and support students who do not handle academic stress well in order to prevent future problems for these students?

SUBMITTED BY **Jim Nunn, Phy Ed Teacher, Excelsior Elementary**

Original Submission

Academic success at Minnetonka has steadily improved for the past 15-20 years. Our outstanding academic programs that began in the elementary grades have provided a solid base for this improvement. Do we know if the academic success can equally match the emotional price of this success? How do we know that students can handle the added stress of increased academic expectations?

Workshop Update

During the Design Workshop, participants explored a variety of stakeholder perspectives, including students, classroom teachers, administrators and parents. Participants divided into two small groups during the ideate phase of the workshop: one focused on high school students, the other focused on elementary students.

High School

The high school group determined that, given the complexity of academic stress at this level, the original design challenge was too broad and would need to be narrowed down to who these students are and what their needs might be. The group believed if we better understand what is stressful for Minnetonka High School students, then we can provide more focused support for them.

Workshop participants identified next steps: Undertake high school empathy

work with small focus groups in grades 9-12 and then focus on understanding the level of stress and stressors tied to in-building experiences. The Empathy work is now complete and data will be shared with high school counselors, administrators, Teacher Instructional Coaches, Technology Coaches and support staff to determine how we can best provide one-on-one support for identified students.

Elementary school

The elementary student group discussed ideas that celebrate student strengths, interests and passions, and minimize comparisons, test scores and academic placements. The group agreed to test a prototype called "Joy Breaks," allowing students a 10-minute choice-time break each day to focus on a non-academic interest, activity, passion, etc. An Excelsior Elementary classroom is currently testing this idea for four weeks (including a pre-test week) to collect baseline data. The teacher selected a small group of students to track through the testing phase, giving each student a daily stress-level score (1-5) based on certain behavior markers. The hypothesis is that stress scores will go down as the "Joy Break" routine is established. Indicators of success: (1) A decrease in anxiety and stress related to school work and academic pressures and (2) an increase in confidence and positive attitude.





Alternative Therapeutic Options

How Might We explore alternative therapeutic options to help meet the needs of students with anxiety or depression?

SUBMITTED BY **Neil Dejewski**

Original Submission

Last year when the therapy dogs came to MMW, our students were able to interact with the dogs in a transformational way. One student laid down on the dog as he spoke to him and petted him. His stress, apprehensions and anxiety were relieved for a period of time. With therapy dogs, students are able to let go, find unconditional acceptance and love, and feel their anxiety wash away. How can we create more opportunities like this at MMW?

Workshop Update

Workshop participants began by reflecting on one student they personally knew who is struggling with anxiety or depression. They shared observations on situations that trigger stress and anxiety for these students, and other times when students are calm, focused and happy. The participants divided into two groups for the “define,” “ideate” and “prototype” steps: one focused on therapy dogs as a potential solution and another focused on alternative therapies.

Therapy Dogs

This group believes that if students are given time with a trained therapy dog during highly stressful moments of their school day, they will recover more quickly and be able to successfully engage in class with teachers and peers. The group designed two

prototypes: (1) Therapy dogs during school counseling sessions and (2) therapy dogs twice a month in one class period (with teacher permission). School counselors, paraprofessionals and teachers will document/provide feedback on the student’s behavior and progress toward the goals of reducing anxiety, increasing engagement in class and improving interaction with peers.

Alternative Therapies

This group pursued a “Writing for Wellness” prototype based on existing curriculum, “Future Self-Authoring” at the high school and fifth-grade levels. They believe that if students are given focused time to write out goals, set a direction for the future, and develop clarity of purpose, then anxiety about the future will be alleviated. MHS Wellness teacher Jason Opsal used this writing curriculum in his Wellness classes and will seek feedback from students on its effectiveness in decreasing stress and anxiety. Clear Springs English Language teacher Sara Lueth has also agreed to run a prototype with her fifth-grade students, focusing on similar “future self-authoring” writing prompts. Teachers will survey students, looking for self-reported decrease in stress and/or anxiety. Teachers and/or counselors will also document observations indicating a decrease in behavior issues or anxiety/stress concerns.

What We Report

How Might We better communicate a student's emotional, social and behavioral health to parents/guardians?

SUBMITTED BY **Lisa Reed**

Original Submission

As a district teacher and parent, I often consider, "What do I want to know from my child's teachers?" For me, the most valuable information answers these important questions: "How is my child interacting with peers? Do they use manners? Are they respectful to teachers? Are they a leader or a follower? Are they responsible and respondent?"

Currently, students receive an academic letter grade but how do we give feedback to parents about how each child is doing emotionally, socially and behaviorally in the classroom? The opportunity lies in creating a consistent communication method for parents in regards to their child's social and emotional well-being at school in addition to an academic letter grade.

There has been district review of health curriculum and an addition of social and emotional health standards. A cross-district work group, at the elementary level, supported this work in creating essential learnings from which the standards were derived. In addition to the existing health curriculum, lessons have been added to meet the social and emotional district health standards.

Workshop Update

The group believes that certain soft skills are key indicators of a child's success later in life. We feel that along with reporting to parents how their children are performing academically, it is also important to report characteristics that students are portraying in terms of certain soft skills. After our meeting we found the Mindset Continuum, which felt like a great starting point for our test.

For the Prototype, we will adopt the Mindset Continuum and test for one quarter with a select group of MMW middle school teachers. During this phase, teachers will have the flexibility to select just one element of the continuum and/or allow students the opportunity to select an element of the continuum that they would like to focus on.

We will ask the following questions to evaluate success:

- ▶ Is this information helpful to parents?
- ▶ How time-consuming is this process for students and teachers?
- ▶ What is the student feedback?
- ▶ Is it possible to measure all students along particular elements of the continuum?
- ▶ How might this change classroom dynamics, if at all?

REPORT
CARD



Increasing Awareness of Topics

How Might We increase the awareness of topics being taught in other content areas to help both teachers and students make connections between disciplines?

SUBMITTED BY **Becky Asche**

Original Submission

When presenting a lesson, have you ever heard a student say, "Hey, this is just like what we did in our math class the other day!" Or, "That's that onomatopoeia 'thing' from language arts last week!" I think to myself, "Gee... as their music teacher, I wish I would have known what they were learning in other classes so I could plan my lesson and make their cross-curricular classrooms more meaningful!"

Workshop Update:

Becky Asche met with other educators and parents to ideate on ways for elementary teachers and specialists to gain more access to topics being taught in other subjects. A majority of the group agreed that a plan could be housed within a Google Sheet and/or on Schoology. Others felt it would be more efficient to create cross-curricular experiences by actively working with teachers from other subject areas. The group decided to address both mindsets with a pair of prototypes that are currently in motion.

Prototype 1: A Shared Plan

This prototype focuses on connections between home, teacher, and specialist. The group believes that if specialists were more aware of

topics discussed in class, they could provide students a more meaningful, comprehensive educational experience. Prototype 1 is a concise, shared repository of concepts and/or topics to be discussed, two months in advance, in students' home classrooms. The intention is to inspire an interdisciplinary activity or integration of a concept in the specialists' curriculum. Implementation targeted for April 2019. Prototype 2 will be run in the fall 2019.

Prototype 2: Development of Interdisciplinary Learning Opportunities

Prototype 2 focuses less on a repository and more on actively developing interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students. They proposed meeting in person to discuss projects that would involve overlapping coursework with the home teacher and specialist. Teacher and student feedback would be sought at the end of the prototype phase. Prototype 2 will be implemented in fall 2019.

Tech Mates - Update

SUBMITTED BY Sara Hunt

Original Submission

As Sara Hunt started her work as an Instructional Technology Coach in 2013, she felt a strong need to find a way to leverage the student voice for many reasons: sharing, empathizing and helping the school community.

Update

Since then, the Tech Mates group has grown to include both middle schools and the high school. This groups focus has changed throughout the years, but the mission is the same:

empowering student leaders to help serve the school through technology.

Impact on Students

- ▶ Students are able to build their leadership skills as well as their technical skills
- ▶ Students are able to create content and help their fellow students with technology issues they face
- ▶ Students are able to provide support to teachers and students who need support



districtwide

Pathways to Tomorrow's Trades - Update

SUBMITTED BY **Brad Eby**

Original Submission

In October of 2017, MHS teacher Brad Eby submitted the idea to provide students with real-world experiences and show them the benefits of working in a field where using your hands, solving problems and doing something you enjoy is a great way to make a living. Another objective is to communicate the message that a career in the trades should not be seen as a "consolation prize" or that going to a technical college or vocational school is not as good as a four-year university. Brad shared how this idea touches upon a deeper need: The U.S. is experiencing a skills gap between the millions of jobs available in the trades and the number of skilled workers to fill them.

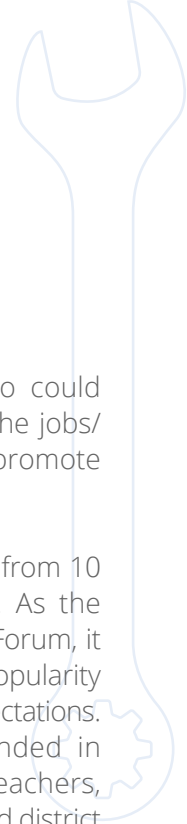
Update on Lean Prototype

In fall 2018, Design Team Member Matt Breen worked closely with Brad Eby and the MHS Technology Education team to identify a possible lean prototype that could be tested to validate students' interest in a VANTAGE-type program focused on the trades. The prototype was a "Trades Panel" at Minnetonka High School that provided all students the opportunity to hear and speak with representatives from

several trade industries who could answer questions, highlight the jobs/experiences/pathways, and promote skill sets.

On Friday, March 1, panelists from 10 professions arrived at MHS. As the panelists were seated in the Forum, it was quickly evident that the popularity of this event far exceeded expectations. In total, 168 students attended in addition to a number of teachers, paraprofessionals, building and district administrators, and a school board member. The percentage of females, Hispanic, Black and special education students who attended the panel (by choice) far outpaced the percent who were attending as a requirement of their Technology Education course.

Following the event and a building tour, the panelists participated in an ideation session led by Innovation Coordinator Nicole Snedden. The group recommended a number of next steps, including additional equipment, curriculum, and relationship-building with outside organizations. All ideas are considered an important resource as the district considers next steps in this process.



spark

districtwide



The results of pre- and post-event student surveys showed that 97% of students either maintained an equal interest or had an increased interest in a position in the trades after attending the Trades Panel. More than half the students (53%) noted an increased interest in a position in the trades.



vantage

awards

VANTAGE: The First Big Idea

BY **Chris Pears and Brent Veninga**

It may be hard to imagine, but the VANTAGE program was the first Big Idea from Minnetonka's first Big Hunt for Ideas. Chris Pears and Brent Veninga were working as social studies teachers back in 2011-12 when they sat together at lunch and envisioned a way to make the MHS student experience more impactful and meaningful for students. The rest, as they say, is history.

VANTAGE has expanded to serve more than 350 students in seven different profession-based strands: Global Business, Business Analytics, Global Sustainability, Health Sciences, Design + Marketing, Digital Journalism and User Experience (UX) Design.

VANTAGE
MINNETONKA ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES



student

**Blake Birno**

Blake Birno leads with innovation at VANTAGE. He is a member of the Student Advisory Board and participates regularly by making suggestions on how to make VANTAGE better. As a student in Digital Journalism, Blake takes advantage of every opportunity available. He attended the Hubbard Radio Digital Journalism Day and then produced an article for the newsletter. Along with his project team, he was a finalist at the 2019 Upper Midwest Emmy Foundation Student Production Awards for their work on their company project with Yess! Blake seeks out new innovative opportunities and is part of the Student Innovation Team at MHS where he founded the Lake Conference Council. He is one of two officials representing Minnetonka leading this new initiative whose purpose is to create unity among high schools in the Lake Conference through camaraderie, sharing resources, insights and an Annual Unity Event. It has been a pleasure having Blake at VANTAGE this year.

staff

**Melanie Mozingo**

Melanie Mozingo breathes innovation into everything she touches. The VANTAGE Design + Marketing strand includes many unique Mozingo innovations like the Toy Design Challenge, speed-projects, Uno-donut sessions, and incorporation of cutting-edge methodologies like Human-Centered Design. Melanie sees possibilities in every situation and infects her students and peers with a high ambition level that leads to amazing results nobody expects. Her emphasis on innovation causes her students to grow more demanding of themselves and their teammates. Ms. Mozingo's sense of possibility leads her to make connections with the broader community that are pivotal to the long-term success of the program. VANTAGE is fortunate to have Melanie Mozingo as a leader in innovation.

community

**Hannah Worrell**

Hannah Worrell is receiving the award because of her commitment to continuous improvement at VANTAGE. She donates countless hours as a mentor, judge and project coach every year. Her insight, commitment to excellence and innovation as well as her industry insight have helped transform company projects, shark tank proposals and toy design projects into exemplars of superior student-driven work. Her high-level, critical feedback encourages our students to "think-outside-the-box" in an effort to develop ideas that are the epitome of innovation. Hannah expects a lot from our students and, for that reason, our students respond positively and deliver work that exemplifies creativity and innovation.

tonka online awards

Submitted as a Big Idea in 2013 by math teacher Jim Donald, District staff have developed a supplemental online learning program called Tonka Online that provides high-quality virtual courses to Minnetonka students and others throughout the state.

During the summer of 2014, Tonka Online successfully launched its first fully online course, Lifetime Fitness PE, with an enrollment of 42 students. Enrollment grew to 176 in 2014-15 and reached 1,576 for 2018-19. The program now offers 50+ courses, including 12 Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Tonka Online has earned full program approval from NCAA and was granted official state online-provider status from the Minnesota Department of Education.



TONKAONLINE



student



Catherine Moore

Catherine is a dedicated online student who has enjoyed the flexible learning opportunities that Tonka Online provides those with busy schedules. Caroline also volunteered to be an advocate for the program at the Academic Lunches during the 2019-20 registration period and helped remake one of the registration videos this winter.

staff



Heather Eyrich, Cheryl Duncan and Grant Hendrickson

Our World History teachers have been improving the online experience and demonstrating the traits of a cohesive and effective collaborative group. They have improved course delivery, design, and are developing authentic assessments to enhance the online World History experience.

tonka coders & makers

awards

Tonka Codes was a Big Idea designed in 2013-14 and launched in 2014-15. This program has tested the hypothesis that computer programming and computer science can succeed as core content at the elementary grades and can prosper as a series of elective courses at the secondary level. Now in its fifth year of implementation, the results continue to show positive data based on student performance and student interest. In high school, students can choose from AP and IB computer science as well as a new VANTAGE strand called User Experience (UX) design.

Tonka Codes provides Minnetonka students with the training and support to make a significant contribution in the 21st Century marketplace.



awards

student



Connor Hansen

Connor Hansen was intrigued by the idea of learning to code and reduce paper waste at the same time. So when the Port looked into adding a Print Release Station (software that pauses printing until the recipient 'releases' the job at the printer), Connor paid attention. The cost of the commercial product was too high for the Port to support, so Connor researched online for an open source solution. He managed to connect with a community of coders who had been working on this very thing. Connor tirelessly worked through the complexities of setting up a Linux environment, coding the inner workings of the print release by teaching himself Javascript, working with Tech staff and setting up an iPad interface for the front end. After all of this, he spent enormous amounts of time testing, troubleshooting, and re-testing. He truly embodies the bold and intrepid spirit of a Tonka Coder—he found a problem to solve, and he coded a way to solve it!

staff



Laura Minnis

Laura Minnis has played an integral role in our efforts to integrate Computer Science at the middle school level. Laura is always looking for authentic ways to connect her curriculum to Computer Science. Additionally, during Code Week, Laura dedicated much of the week to coding activities including an Unplugged breakout lesson and a Sphero challenge that had kids creating and coding a color maze. Laura is very inclusive of her science peers, pushing them to get involved and sharing lesson plans with science teachers at both MMW and MME. Finally, Laura has stepped in and helped out with a few of the extra-curricular coding experiences we offer for our middle school students such as Coders Club and Technovation. Laura's ability to creatively look at science standards in an effort to expose her students to the important field of Computer Science is appreciated by her colleagues and students alike.

community



Sian Power

Sian Power has been a go-getter ever since she took over the role of Hour of Code Chair at Excelsior in 2017. Seeking feedback early on, she heard that many families were not able to participate because it was held after school. She worked hard with various stakeholders to coordinate the event so that all students at Excelsior Elementary could participate during the school day. Throughout the planning of the event, Sian spent hours working to ensure that it would be a success. She worked with a team of parent volunteers and teachers to make sure the entire process went smoothly while gathering feedback to ensure a successful event. Sian put in extra time organizing and monitoring the week preceding the event. Because of her, the event was a huge success. After the event, she was back to gathering data and feedback to improve the event for next year. Minnetonka Schools, and specifically Excelsior Elementary, are lucky to have such a dedicated, passionate volunteer as Sian Power.

design for learning awards

Creating a VISION around learning spaces means giving up the idea of the traditional classroom and embracing the idea that dynamic spaces can be changed to meet student needs, rearranged to suit the lessons of the day, and designed to encourage collaboration—a 21st Century skill students need to be successful.

Some guiding principles in D4L are, “make it new, make classrooms agile, imagine like a child and make it feel good.”



**DESIGN FOR
LEARNING**

staff



Lisa Zimmermann

Lisa Zimmermann, Explorers Jr. Lead Instructor at Minnetonka Community Education Center, has been a longtime innovator and pioneer with Design for Learning. Four years ago she submitted a grant that pushed the boundaries of how we look at facility design and lighting in Minnetonka. This year, she submitted a grant that focuses on outdoor learning and play for our preschool students, and how we might provide authentic experiences for them to engage in the outdoors, music and learning. Lisa is well-deserving of this award in that she is empathetic, creative, inclusive, and determined to reimagine what our current learning spaces are, and could be, for students in our schools. She also serves as a member of the Design for Learning Advisory Board and empowers staff to reevaluate what learning spaces mean.

staff



Christin Congdon

Christin Congdon, art teacher at Minnewashta Elementary and Design for Learning Advisory Board Member, has played a pivotal role in the growth of Design for Learning with not only staff, but students. For the past two years, Christin has facilitated a SchoolsNEXT Design Club at Minnewashta with fourth-graders. This club meets weekly over the course of the school year to participate in the Association for Learning Environments non-profit, to “challenge student committees to design their learning environments to enhance learning, conserve resources, be environmentally responsive and engage the surrounding community.” In 2017, Christin’s team placed fourth in the National Competition and this year students are continuing to show their leadership as they engage in the final stages of the competition. Christin is dedicated, passionate, positive, and a creative designer who is highly deserving of this award.

community

**GOPHER
SPORT**

High-quality Physical Education,
Athletics and Fitness equipment.

Gopher Sport Personnel

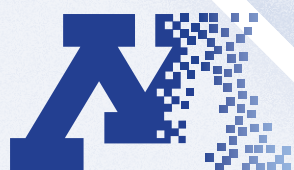
Gopher Sport personnel Amber Orenstein, Product Development Director; Laura Fletcher, Product Developer; Ryan Russell, CAD Designer; and Matt Levine, Brand Manager, have worked with both middle schools this year to help create an authentic learning experience for our student innovation teams using Design for Learning principles. Further, the team also worked closely with the Design for Learning Staff Cohort, providing insight, donating furniture to test, and answering questions about their product. The authenticity that they provided our students and staff would have been nearly impossible to replicate and we are so grateful and appreciative of the partnership we’ve formed with Gopher Sport.

minnetonka research

awards

Minnetonka Research began as a Big Idea several years ago and opened its doors in fall 2016 as the most advanced study program in the history of Minnetonka High School. This program provides highly motivated students early exposure to hands-on, college-level research during the school year. Students drive their own learning with projects that span an incredible range of disciplines—natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, computer science, music, political science and more. Under the guidance of experienced instructors and mentors, students develop their own research questions and project designs. At the end of the year, students can differentiate themselves as critical thinkers who are well-versed in the research process.

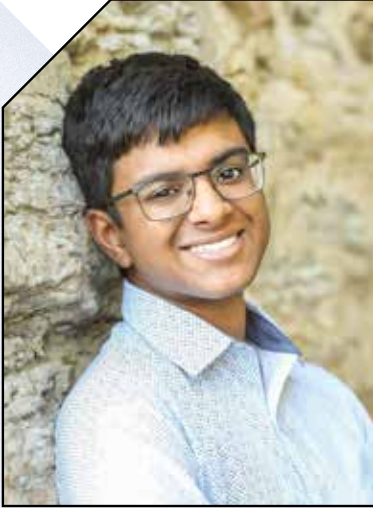
In part due to the generous support from experts and organizations around the world (equipment, mentorship, knowledge sharing), our students are excelling and being recognized at the state and national level. In 2019-20, more than 80 students in grades 10-12 will embark—or continue—on this incredible journey.



**MINNETONKA
RESEARCH**



student



Parthiv Krishna

Parthiv Krishna has been involved with Minnetonka Research since it opened in the fall of 2016, and his impact and commitment have been evident since day one. In his first year, Parthiv developed an automated system to track drivers' eyes to monitor for distracted driving. In his second and third year, Parthiv has been developing his autonomous micro aerial vehicle, or "drone" technology. His drone and corresponding software, built from the ground up, make it possible to remotely and autonomously monitor physical spaces that are either too dangerous or difficult for humans to enter. Parthiv often volunteers for extra help we may need, and is quick to support fellow students who need help. He has a very easy-going manner, and can successfully explain complex information to a variety of audiences. Minnetonka Research would like to recognize Parthiv for his leadership, dedication and professionalism.

staff



Christine Svihel

Christine Svihel has been an instrumental part of the success of the Minnetonka Research Program. Students in Minnetonka Research are exploring projects in diverse fields, and hence their projects have diverse needs for equipment and resources. Christine helps us manage project needs and resources over the course of the year. She works with students, Minnetonka Research staff, vendors and the business office to help ensure that student projects are able to obtain project resources in a timely manner so projects are able to continue advancing with minimal delays or wait time. She is dependable, enthusiastic, thorough, and an amazing communicator who always has a positive attitude. She goes above and beyond what is expected of her to ensure student success and we are so grateful for her involvement in Minnetonka Research.

community



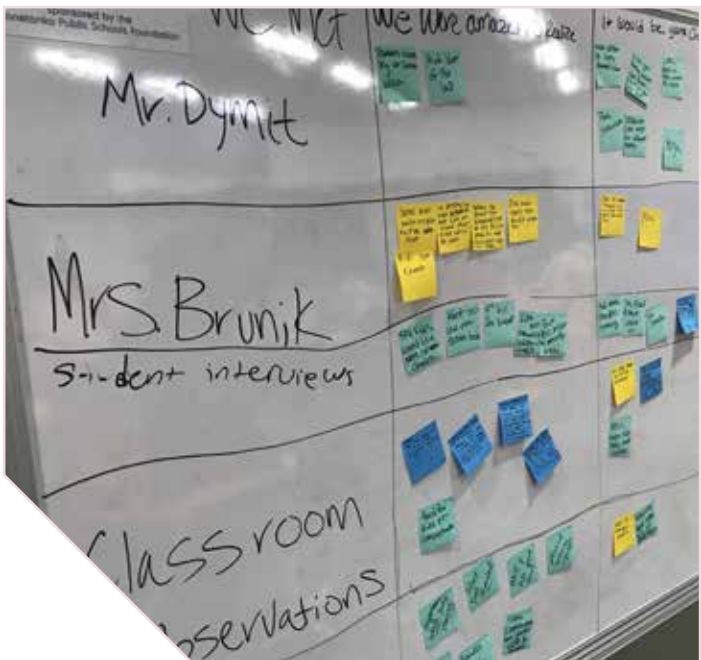
Dr. Lewis Ziska and Dr. Julie Wolf

Dr. Lewis Ziska and Dr. Julie Wolf of the USDA Adaptive Cropping Systems Laboratory have been exceptional Minnetonka Research mentors. They've been generous in their support, sharing material resources, running student pollen samples, and offering detailed, enthusiastic responses to student questions. They've consistently validated student work by taking the student's result and experimental design into consideration for their own projects. In addition, they've invited the student to share her experience in conference calls with other experts, and to join them over the summer at their lab in Maryland. Their contagious excitement for science and genuine interest in student work has truly set them apart as mentors this year.

student innovation team awards

Now in its fourth year, students at MHS, MME and MMW are participating on Student Innovation Teams with the goal of learning Human-Centered Design principles to solve problems.

Under the direction of district and industry innovation leaders, students are learning how to engage in their own innovation projects and lend their voice as a force for positive change in their respective schools.



student

MHS students Nate Eisenmann, Colette Benoit, Lauren Benoit, and Kristine Thomas were the first to volunteer when we put a request out to the Student Innovation Team for our first challenge: Redesigning the Social Studies Locker Area.

They immediately began work on empathizing with the users of the area, interviewing hall paraprofessionals, teachers, students, and custodians. Through listening to the needs of the users, they discovered that the first version of the design that the Interior Design company had generated did not take into account the need for quiet and privacy that users expressed. They advocated for a design that better met the needs of their users by creating a presentation replete with video, quotes, sketch-up, and visual idea photos to make their case, and presented it to stakeholders with poise and confidence.

They used their findings to apply for a Design for Learning Grant and received full funding for their request. They also presented their work to the Minnetonka School Board and shared how the Student Innovation Team had changed and influenced them; once again, with amazing poise and confidence. These four students are truly ambitious and kind-hearted, and have been leaders in the finest sense of the word. They disagree respectfully, come to consensus diplomatically, and truly embody the high school's core values of doing the right thing and representing us well.



staff

Ann Kaste, Minnetonka High School Information and Digital Learning Coordinator, has played a crucial role in the success of the MHS Student Innovation Teams this year. She is positive, full of energy, and knows how to connect with students. She works tirelessly to make sure students' ideas and prototypes have support and she knows how to build connections with other staff to ensure success for student innovators.

This year, Ann created an online website for Minnetonka High School that story-tells all the great projects happening with Student Innovation Teams and student innovation in general. Ann knows how to engage and design experiences for students that empower them and provide them agency to be change makers. She is highly deserving of this award.



student innovation team : middle schools

awards



student

Abbi Soberski
MME

As a second-year member of MME's Student Innovation Team, **Abbi Soberski** has shown the dedication and leadership that would be expected from a veteran member. Not only has Abbi made attending meetings a priority, she always shows up with a positive attitude and willingness to roll up her sleeves and get to work. A.A.L.T.R. Renovation, Abbi's team this year, was an integral piece of a Design for Learning grant that they contributed to for a special education classroom. The room, which started the year "doorless," has come a long way, thanks to Abbi and her team. It will receive the final touches, including flexible seating and standing desks, over the summer as the grant received full funding! There are few eighth-graders who can stake claim to the positive impact they will leave with MME the way Abbi can.



student

Saloni Somia
MMW

Saloni Somia is an eighth-grade student who has served for two years on the WISH Team at MMW. She has dedicated time and energy to our innovation process. Saloni is valued for her insight into various challenges at our school. She also has a way of working with others that is encouraging and accepting. It is admirable how easily she helps others feel that their voice is important and heard.

Saloni presented on behalf of the WISH Team at the Minnetonka School Board meeting as well as the Minnetonka Middle School West Site Visit. She impressed all who had the opportunity to hear her with her wisdom and insight. She was able to clearly articulate our story and help others understand the amazing work that has been accomplished by our team.



staff

Lisa Reed **MME & MMW**

Lisa Reed, Tonka Coders and Makers Teacher, has played a pivotal role in the success of Student Innovation Teams at both East and West. She not only has great enthusiasm for innovation, but she knows how to make connections between staff and student innovators, finding authentic opportunities for students to test their ideas and getting feedback from a variety of stakeholders. Lisa is persistent, hard-working, and always keeps the momentum going. She continually brings fresh ideas and new approaches to SIT and has an incredibly positive attitude. She is well deserving of this award.

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community

Gopher Sport

Gopher Sport personnel Amber Orenstein, Product-Development Director; Laura Fletcher, Product Developer; Ryan Russell, CAD Designer; and Matt Levine, Brand Manager, have worked with both middle schools this year to help create an authentic learning experience for our student innovation teams. The authenticity that they provided our students would have been nearly impossible to replicate. By utilizing the Human-Centered Design process, our students were able to empathize with their classmates, ideate products that would meet the needs, and ultimately design prototypes. Staff from Gopher Sport guided the process, sharing their expertise and experience. Ultimately, our students were able to tour the Gopher Sport facility to experience the actual design process. The visit brought a sense of accomplishment to our students following all of their work. It also helped them see the process work in the “real world.”



thank you,

minnetonka

“When we have the courage to walk into our story and own it, we get to write the ending.”

- Brené Brown



