



Kindergarten Program
in Minnetonka Public Schools



SHAPE YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE



2020-21

minnetonkaschools.org/enroll

A PEEK INTO THE FUTURE





MINNETONKA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



In Minnetonka, we offer a variety of learning options for Kindergarten. Each of our Kindergarten teachers has a genuine love for children and love for Kindergarten. They inspire in children a passion to wonder, discover, create and excel. Using the best of childhood development and brain research, they ignite a love of learning that burns brightly for Minnetonka students through graduation and beyond. Minnetonka's enhanced Kindergarten curriculum provides a full day of learning and fun for all students.

Kindergarten eligibility. Kindergarten students should be five years old by September 1. Parents may request early entrance consideration for children turning five by October 31.

READY TO ENROLL? IMPORTANT STEPS ARE REQUIRED FOR EACH RESIDENT AND OPEN-ENROLLED CHILD. PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BEGINNING ON PAGE 12.

*Minnetonka
teachers inspire in
children a passion
to wonder, discover,
create and excel.*

Kindergarten

ALL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Our standard Kindergarten program is an all-day program, approved by the Minnesota Legislature in 2013. With the change in legislation, Minnetonka has been able to enhance its Kindergarten curriculum to meet the changing needs of today's learners.

In a caring community of learners, our primary goal is to inspire in children a love of learning, developed through social and emotional teaching strategies. Our robust curriculum appropriately balances active, playful, hands-on learning with individual, small and large group instruction designed to nurture early academic skills and promote social development. Teachers attend to fine motor skills, large muscle movement and cognitive development. Our teachers are experts in child development and use the best in brain research to meet each child at their "just right" learning level and ensure children are well prepared for first grade.

PART-DAY ENROLLMENT

We understand that some families prefer less than a full-day schedule for Kindergarten. Responsive to the needs of individual children and families, the Board has approved a part-day option.

Students who attend only part-day will be assigned to an all-day classroom due to the anticipated low interest in this option. If at some time during the year, the family elects to transition to the all-day schedule, the child may do so easily without changing classrooms. All children will start their day at the school's start time. Families who elect part-day enrollment will meet individually with the principal and Kindergarten teacher to establish an early dismissal time, either mid-day or early afternoon. Parents will be fully informed about the portion of the all-day curriculum the child will miss, which will then become the responsibility of the family. Transportation for early dismissal is also the responsibility of the family.

PARENT OPTIONS PLAN (POP)

Families may use the Parent Options Plan to enroll at any Minnetonka school, on a space-available basis; however, transportation is only provided within school attendance areas.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Minnetonka Public Schools welcomes open enrollment and non-resident students. The statewide open enrollment application is available at [minnetonkaschools.org/enroll](https://www.minnetonkaschools.org/enroll) and should be returned as soon as possible or by January 15. Minnetonka may continue to accept students after January 15, on a space-available basis. Once a child is enrolled through the Open Enrollment program, the child may attend Minnetonka Schools through graduation, as long as the student maintains continuous enrollment.

EARLY ENTRANCE

Children turning five between September 2–October 31 may be eligible for early entrance into Kindergarten. This does not apply to the Ready Start Kindergarten program. Parents considering early entrance should contact Joan Larson, Early Enrollment Coordinator at 952-401-6950. Application materials for early entrance consideration are available on the District website at [minnetonkaschools.org/kindergarten](https://www.minnetonkaschools.org/kindergarten) (choose "Early enrollment"). Applications are due on or before March 15.

Options

READY-START KINDERGARTEN

Ready-Start Kindergarten was developed for families struggling over the decision to start Kindergarten or wait another year. Ready-Start Kindergarten is a comprehensive Kindergarten experience that prepares students for first grade the following year. It is designed for a small number of children who may not be ready, socially or academically, for traditional Kindergarten. This program does not apply to Early Entrance applicants. This program is tailored to attention spans of less mature children, and the class size is limited. Ready-Start Kindergarten is an all-day program, with a part-day option as well. Choice-time and hands-on activities provide students more opportunities to strengthen social and emotional skills. A language-rich environment builds early literacy and academic skills through stories, math manipulatives, puppets and themes, such as letter of the week. Parent involvement is a strength of the program.

A parent-staff conference will be held in the spring to determine specific placement for the next year. Transportation is provided for resident children enrolled in all day Ready-Start Kindergarten.

LANGUAGE OPTIONS

Minnetonka's excellent Kindergarten program has three language options: English, Spanish or Chinese Immersion. Each of our neighborhood schools has both an English and an Immersion program within the school. Our outstanding English program provides a literacy-rich environment and has a long history of excellence. Our Spanish and Chinese Immersion programs provide English-speaking children with the opportunity to acquire fluency in a second language while still in elementary school. The Immersion curriculum parallels Minnetonka's English Kindergarten curriculum, except all subjects are taught in the Immersion language.

Families who enroll in Immersion are asked to make a six-year commitment to the Language Immersion program. (See more information about the program on the next page.) Transportation is provided only within a school's designated attendance area. If a family opts to attend a school other than their neighborhood school for Chinese or Spanish, transportation is the responsibility of the family.



*Did you know?
99% of Minnetonka
parents rate
Minnetonka Schools
excellent or good!*

Language Imm

Spanish or Chinese Language Immersion options are offered as a school-within-a-school at each of our neighborhood schools. Families electing the Language Immersion Option are asked to make a six-year commitment to the Language Immersion program.

WHAT IS IMMERSION?

More than 30 years of research indicates that Immersion is the most effective type of foreign language instruction. Students are “immersed” in a foreign language in their classroom, while receiving the District’s basic curriculum. The new language is the medium of instruction as well as the object of instruction. The goal of language Immersion is for students to become proficient in a second language and develop some cultural awareness.

SPANISH AND CHINESE OPTIONS

All families have the option of Kindergarten taught in English, Spanish or Chinese. The Immersion program will enable students to pursue international career choices.

Chinese, offered at Excelsior Elementary and Scenic Heights Elementary, is the #1 native language in the world, spoken by one-fifth of the world’s population. Minnetonka has a long and positive language history and was among the first in Minnesota to teach Chinese.

Spanish is offered at Clear Springs Elementary, Deephaven Elementary, Groveland Elementary and Minnewashta Elementary. The Hispanic population is the fastest-growing demographic within the United States which presents great career opportunities for bilingual professionals. Spanish is the most common choice for a second language among Minnetonka students.

WHY BEGIN A SECOND LANGUAGE IN KINDERGARTEN?

The young child’s brain is developmentally ready to learn a new language; in fact, a child’s brain has twice as many connections as an adult. The young brain must use these connections or lose them. After this window of opportunity in which a child naturally learns a language, the brain slowly becomes less receptive. When children wait until high school to start studying a foreign language, the task is much harder.

In Kindergarten, students develop proficiency in the second language by hearing and using the language to learn all of their school subjects, rather than studying the language by itself. The Immersion teacher speaks the new language 100% of the time with students, beginning on the first day of school. Children will come to know their teacher as someone who understands English, but only speaks in Chinese or Spanish. Kindergarten students will speak to their teacher and classmates in English, but within a few years students learn to speak the Immersion language 100% of the time as well. By fifth grade, a student’s reading and speaking fluency will be on par with a fifth grader native to the language.

After elementary school, Minnetonka has a continuation of second language development in middle school through high school, so students’ language fluency will continue to mature. Minnetonka’s Immersion pathways provide options for students during middle

Immersion



MINNETONKA
Language Immersion

school and high school to continue on a path to be successful on the Advanced Placement language and culture exams, sustain a conversational and culturally competent fluency, or even begin studying a new language.

HOW MIGHT IMMERSION AFFECT MY CHILD'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE LITERACY?

Research consistently finds that the Immersion experience actually enhances English language development (Cloug, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000), but it is important to remember all children learn differently. Since Minnetonka began its Immersion program in 2007, standardized test data on English exams indicate no significant difference among Immersion students and their English-only peers in reading or math. In Minnetonka's Immersion model, dedicated instructional time in English begins in third grade. This is working well to secure strong English and Immersion language proficiency. Research also finds that learning a second language actually helps students learn their first language better.

LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

- Has a positive effect on intellectual growth and enhances a child's mental development
- Develops flexibility in thinking, sensitivity to languages and a better ear for listening
- Improves a child's understanding of the native language
- Gives children the ability to communicate with people they would otherwise not have the chance to know
- Opens the door to other cultures and helps a child understand and appreciate people from other countries
- Increases career opportunities where knowing another language is an asset

Learn more at
minnetonkaschools.org/Immersion

IS THE IMMERSION PROGRAM A GOOD FIT FOR ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS?

The Immersion program is a good fit for any Kindergarten child whose family values learning a second language in elementary school. However, Immersion may not be a good fit for every child or every family.

- Families who prefer their children have a profound command of the English language before learning a second language usually choose our English Kindergarten program.
- The Immersion program is a long-term commitment. Electing Immersion because a friend or neighbor made that choice is not wise. Make your decision based on the best interest of your child.
- Developing second language skills will follow a similar pattern to a child's first language development. If your child was older than most children in acquiring verbal skills or letter and number recognition in English, your child may be more successful in the English program.
- The Immersion program may not be a good fit for a child who has a language-processing disorder.
- If you are not sure whether Immersion is a good fit for your child, contact your school principal for further consultation.

Curriculum

OUR KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

All Kindergarten classrooms feature a literature-rich environment where students are immersed in songs, chants, big books, phonemic awareness, literacy centers and writing activities that build a strong foundation for early literacy. We focus on both oral and written language development.

The math curriculum teaches foundational math concepts on the concrete level first and then moves students toward the abstract level. Daily work with hands-on materials and math manipulatives provides children with opportunities for learning and applying concepts related to number sense, patterns and computation.

Because Kindergartners exhibit a broad range of abilities, reading, writing and math instruction is differentiated through small group, guided instruction. At the same time, classroom routines, such as the daily calendar, choice-time, and morning meeting effectively build a classroom community that promotes social development.

Our district focuses on 21st Century fluencies through experiential learning beginning in Kindergarten as students nurture their creativity, collaboration and problem-solving skills. Additional lessons introduce media, information inquiry, and global digital citizenry beginning in Kindergarten.

Our enhanced Kindergarten curriculum expands opportunities for hands-on science experiments, early engineering concepts, technology and the arts. Thematic social studies, science and health units provide opportunities that foster safety, decision-making and global citizenship.

As part of Minnetonka's K-5 computer coding curriculum, Kindergartners will use hands-on, graphic-based tools, like programmable robots and iPad apps, to begin to learn fundamental computer programming skills in a fun and engaging way.

Promoting physical and social development, children are regularly engaged in active, child-initiated, small-group play activities and independent choice activities within in a nurturing environment.

THE IMMERSION PROGRAM

Immersion classrooms follow the Kindergarten curriculum (described above), except 100% of classroom instruction and culture will be in the second language (Spanish or Chinese). Our Kindergarten teachers know they are introducing a new language to children. So, teachers use body language, visuals, manipulatives, exaggerated facial expressions and expressive intonation to communicate their meaning, and draw students into the language. Teachers carefully structure the day with familiar routines and repetition as children begin to understand words in the Immersion language.

Typically in first or second grade, classroom teachers will request that students try to speak only in the Immersion language. This is a gradual, but exciting process. In grades 1-5, classroom instruction continues in the Immersion language. Specials—music, art, physical education and media—are taught in English. Special education and high potential services are also taught in English in all grades.

Childcare

In third grade, direct instruction in English begins with 70 minutes per day of English taught by an English language arts teacher.

EXPLORERS CLUB

Minnetonka Explorers Club, before and after school care, is available at all schools for all children grades K-5. Explorers Club is open from 6:30 a.m. through 6 p.m. For information, call 952-401-6832. **Note:** A separate online registration for Explorers needs to be completed in addition to Kindergarten enrollment forms.

Explorers Club offers flexible enrollment. You may register your child for two, three, four or five days per week. Children enjoy a variety of fun learning activities and indoor and outdoor play. Explorers Club is staffed by experienced, creative and caring professionals.

Learn more! Explorers Club registration information and fee schedules can be found at: minnetonkaschools.org/explorers

*Did you know?
32% of my
elementary friends
enroll in Explorers
Club for before or
after school care.*



School Service

TRANSPORTATION

Kindergarten students enjoy riding the yellow school bus with the “big kids” before and after school. School buses transport students within a school attendance area to and from the bus stop nearest their home address. Bus stops in your neighborhood have been established to serve all children. Stops generally have been in place for many years and proven to be safe and accessible. Parental assistance is needed and appreciated at all bus stops.

An alternate stop may be arranged for daycare or a second household. Please submit an “Annual Request For Daycare/Alternate/Open Enrollment” form available at minnetonkaschools.org/transportation.

Open-enrolled students are eligible to ride the bus from any resident stop located within the school attendance area. Please submit an “Annual Request For Daycare/Alternate/Open Enrollment” form available at minnetonkaschools.org/transportation.

Some Open Enrollment families privately contract for bus service outside of the District boundaries. Families or neighborhoods work directly with First Student Transportation on private contracts.

BUS FEE FOR STUDENTS

Minnesota state law requires the District to provide transportation services to all students who live outside a two-mile distance from their school. For children who live within the two-mile boundary, there is a fee for bus service. The driving distance is measured using the District’s bus routing computer program. The bus fee is \$100 per child with a \$250 maximum per family.

If your home is within the two-mile area, you will be sent a notice in spring following registration. Bus passes are mailed in August.

Transportation registration forms and information may be found at minnetonkaschools.org/transportation.

LUNCH SERVICES

Minnetonka Public Schools’ Nutrition Services department offers a wide variety of healthy choices that teach children how to develop healthy, lifetime eating habits. Current research reinforces the importance of fruits, vegetables and whole grains in the diet. Minnetonka Public Schools receives fresh bakery products with no trans-fats or preservatives. Therefore, the school meal program requires children to take a least one half cup of a fruit and/or a vegetable with their lunch purchase.

During the first weeks of school, many school volunteers assist our Kindergarten children in going through the lunch line, selecting meal choices, and checking out.

In mid-August, you will receive instructions on how to log in to My SSO, access Skyward and view your child’s lunch account. Skyward is a tool you will use to make an online payment to your child’s lunch account, check the balance on their account and see what they purchase each day. Lunch menus are available on the district website under Shortcuts (main landing page) or by downloading the free app, NutriSlice. For more information on the Nutrition Services department, visit minnetonkaschools.org/nutrition.

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HEALTH SERVICES

Minnetonka Schools have Licensed School Nurses on staff who supervise health office staff. If your child is ever required to take medication while at school, it will be administered by our health office staff. If your child has allergies or other chronic conditions, please record this important information on the Annual Verification of Health Information Form completed through online registration.

Immunizations

Your child's immunization record must be on file with the school before your child may attend. In July, you will receive an email from CareDox asking you to update your child's immunization information for school. Please complete this task before August 1.



Watch for an email invitation from your assigned school to go on a practice bus ride!



TECHNOLOGY

Minnetonka is a national leader in using classroom technology to personalize and accelerate learning and to connect with all types of learning styles.

In Minnetonka, all Kindergarten classrooms are equipped with SMART Boards (interactive white boards) that allow teachers to quickly project visual images from the computer to assist with instruction. Teachers also wear wireless microphones which gently amplify and distribute their voices to all corners of the classroom, enhancing children's ability to hear new words and sounds, and creating a calm and nurturing classroom. Students also have access to classroom sets of computers and iPads. Minnetonka's commitment to technology allows teachers throughout the District to create interactive lessons, draw from a wealth of pre-screened and pre-approved learning tools, and keep students engaged and interested in learning.

Registration

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS AN EXCITING MILESTONE FOR FAMILIES. IN MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WE WANT TO MAKE SURE **THE PROCESS IS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE** FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. VISIT OUR SCHOOLS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT THEY OFFER AND HOW DIFFERENT OPTIONS FIT YOU AND YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS.

L **EARN MORE ABOUT MINNETONKA'S KINDERGARTEN OPTIONS.** Minnetonka has outstanding Kindergarten options in English, Spanish and Chinese Immersion, plus Ready-Start Kindergarten. Visit our website to learn more: minnetonkaschools.org/kindergarten.

A **TEND A KINDERGARTEN OPEN HOUSE.** Minnetonka schools host Preschool Story Hours and/or Kindergarten Information Nights in November and December. Visit our schools and meet the principal and teachers. For a list of dates and times, see the back cover or visit minnetonkaschools.org/kinfo.

S **ELECT A KINDERGARTEN OPTION THAT BEST FITS YOUR CHILD.** This may be a difficult decision. Speak with your principal, ask your child and talk with friends and family who have recently enrolled their child in Kindergarten.

C **HOOSE WHICH SCHOOL YOUR CHILD WILL ATTEND.** Minnetonka School District has six equally excellent elementary schools. Most children attend their neighborhood elementary school. The Parent Option Plan (POP) is available for families if they wish to send their child

to a different elementary school than their neighborhood school. We also welcome Open Enrollment, non-resident families. **The state deadline for applying for Open Enrollment is January 15;** students will be accepted after the deadline as space is available.

E **NROLL YOUR RESIDENT CHILD.** Resident families, you must complete online enrollment for your incoming Kindergarten child, even if you have other children enrolled in the District. **The priority deadline for resident online enrollment is January 15, 2020.** Resident applications are taken on a rolling basis, but first-choice schools or programs may be filled. You will be required to upload your child's birth certificate and proof of address. A scan or photo image of these documents is acceptable. Please contact the District Enrollment Office if you have questions or need assistance with online registration.

Student Registration for Last Names A-L
Ashley Kuphal, 952-401-5009
ashley.kuphal@minnetonkaschools.org

Student Registration for Last Names M-Z
Lori Schwartz, 952-401-5012
lori.schwartz@minnetonkaschools.org

District Enrollment Office business hours
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.



OPEN ENROLLMENT PROCESS.

To begin the open-enrollment process, please follow these steps:

- a. Contact Ashley or Lori in the District Enrollment Office (see previous page).
- b. Complete the State of Minnesota open enrollment application form (visit minnetonkaschools.org/OE) and return to the District Enrollment Office by January 15.
- c. Wait for open enrollment approval and further direction from the Minnetonka District Enrollment Office. Once approved, you will receive the online link to register.

UPDATE YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNIZATIONS.

For the safety of all children, Minnesota law requires written proof that your child has been immunized against seven diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTP), measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and polio. Children entering Kindergarten must also be immunized for varicella (chicken pox) and a series of three hepatitis B shots.

In July, you will receive an email from **CareDox** asking you to update your child's immunization information for school. Please schedule a doctor's appointment, complete the required immunizations and submit to CareDox before August 1. Your child cannot attend school until the CareDox information is updated.

If your child has a medical reason for not receiving immunizations, a signed statement from your physician or clinic is needed. Families who object

to immunizations must provide a notarized declination form. If you have any questions, please contact your school health office.

PARTICIPATE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING.

State law requires that all children be screened through Early Childhood Screening in a school district, or have proof of comparable screening by a non-school provider. This becomes the basis for your child's health file for K-12. Please fax, mail or upload a copy of the screening summary when completing online registration if done in a district other than Minnetonka. If your child needs to be screened, please call the Minnetonka Early Childhood Screening Office at 952-401-6840.

LOOK FOR COMMUNICATION FROM YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL.

Beginning in spring 2020, look for an email communication from your child's school regarding welcome events, Kindergarten practice bus ride, volunteer opportunities and more. Classroom assignments and online access instructions for your student are typically released in **mid-August**. Also watch for a "Back to School" webpage on your school website with school supply lists and announcements. minnetonkaschools.org

Schools

CLEAR SPRINGS ELEMENTARY

Principal: Curt Carpenter
5701 County Road 101
Hours: 8:40 a.m.–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952-401-6950
Absences: 952-401-6954
Fax: 952-401-6955

DEEPHAVEN ELEMENTARY

Principal: Bryan McGinley
4452 Vine Hill Road
Hours: 8:00 a.m.–2:40 p.m.
Phone: 952-401-6900
Absences: 952-401-6904
Fax: 952-401-6906

EXCELSIOR ELEMENTARY

Principal: Stacy DeCorsey
441 Oak Street
Hours: 8:00 a.m.–2:40 p.m.
Phone: 952-401-5650
Absences: 952-401-5655
Fax: 952-401-5657

*Minnetonka
students
consistently score
among the best in
Minnesota on state
reading, writing, math
and science tests.*





**GROVELAND
ELEMENTARY**

Principal: Andrew Gilbertson
17310 Minnetonka Blvd.
Hours: 8:40 a.m.–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–5600
Absences: 952–401–5604
Fax: 952–401–5606

**MINNEWASHTA
ELEMENTARY**

Principal: Cindy Andress
26350 Smithtown Road
Hours: 8:40 a.m.–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–5500
Absences: 952–401–5504
Fax: 952–401–4061

**SCENIC HEIGHTS
ELEMENTARY**

Principal: Joe Wacker
5650 Scenic Heights Drive
Hours: 8:40 a.m.–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–5400
Absences: 952–401–5404
Fax: 952–401–5412

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND LEARNING LINKS:
MINNETONKASCHOOLS.ORG/KINDERGARTEN**

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MINNETONKASCHOOLS

Discover the opportunities that await your child at Minnetonka Public Schools!

WHAT IS A PRESCHOOL STORY HOUR? Children enjoy an entertaining story while parents learn about our outstanding Kindergarten program, including Language Immersion options.

WHAT IS AN INFORMATION NIGHT FOR PARENTS? Information nights are for parents only. You will learn about the District's Kindergarten program and options offered at that school. No RSVP is necessary for Story Hours or Information Nights.

	Events and Deadlines
Clear Springs Elementary 952-401-6950	November 13, 2019: Preschool Story Hour, 9:30-10:30 a.m. December 12, 2019: Kindergarten Information Night for Parents, 6 p.m.
Deephaven Elementary 952-401-6900	November 14, 2019: Preschool Story Hour, 9-10 a.m. December 12, 2019: Kindergarten Information Night for Parents, 6 p.m.
Excelsior Elementary 952-401-5650	December 5, 2019: Kindergarten Information Night for Parents, 6 p.m.
Groveland Elementary 952-401-5600	November 12, 2019: Preschool Story Hour, 9:30 a.m. December 10, 2019: Kindergarten Information Night for Parents, 6 p.m.
Minnewashta Elementary 952-401-5500	December 5, 2019: Kindergarten Information Night for Parents, 6 p.m. December 10, 2019: Kindergarten Information Night for Parents, 6 p.m.
Scenic Heights Elementary 952-401-5400	November 12, 2019: Preschool Story Hour, 9:30 a.m. December 10, 2019: Kindergarten Information Night for Parents, 6 p.m.
Kindergarten Enrollment Webinar	November 19, 2019: 12-1 p.m. Register at http://bit.ly/Kinders2020 <i>(Register to receive the recording if you cannot attend the live event.)</i>
Open-Enrollment Application Deadline	State of Minnesota Application Deadline: Wednesday, January 15, 2020
Resident Priority Deadline	All residents must complete online enrollment for their incoming kindergarten child, regardless of whether they have other children in the District . The priority deadline for resident online enrollment is January 15, 2020. Resident applications are taken on a rolling basis, but first-choice schools or programs may be filled.
Fall 2020 Dates	Kindergarten Assessments: September 8-9, 2020 First Day of Kindergarten: September 10, 2020



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5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka, Minnesota 55345

952.401.5000

minnetonkaschools.org

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