



Minnetonka School District, ISD #276
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FALL 2021

AROUND MINNETONKA

NEWS FROM MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MMW NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

Minnetonka Middle School West (MMW) has been recognized as a 2021 National Blue Ribbon School. It is one of 325 schools nationwide and one of just six in Minnesota to earn this prestigious distinction. The recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

"Earning the National Blue Ribbon School distinction truly exemplifies the dedication, persistence and an ever-present pursuit of excellence," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Dennis Peterson. "I congratulate the current principal of Minnetonka Middle School West, Freya Schirmacher; the past principal, Dr. Paula Hoff, and all of the teachers and staff at the school who made this accomplishment possible."

The National Blue Ribbon School award affirms the hard work of educators, families and communities in creating a safe and welcoming school where students master challenging and engaging content. MMW has been recognized as an Exemplary Achievement Gap-Closing School for being among Minnesota's highest performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school's student groups and all students.

"This award is a true reflection of the small moments of excellence that happen every day at MMW; a student who takes a risk to ask a question, a teacher who works a little bit longer so that a student understands a concept and a family member who partners with a teacher to design a plan for learning. All of these daily moments of dedication, persistence and connection build a culture of excellence for all," said Freya Schirmacher, principal at MMW.

Read more: minnetonkaschools.org/BlueRibbonMMW



MINNETONKA MIDDLE SCHOOL WEST NAMED 2021 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

MINNETONKA SCHOOLS IMPORTANT DATES

NOVEMBER 2021

- 1.....Two-Hour Late Start K-12
- 4.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 9.....Celebration of Service, 6:30 p.m.
- 11.....End of 1st Quarter
- 12.....No School K-12, Planning and Grading/PLC
- 15.....2nd Quarter Begins
- 18.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.
- 25-26.No School K-12, District Office Closed, Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER 2021

- 2.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 10-11.Tonka Pride Sale, DSC
- 16.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.
- 23-24.District Office Closed
- 23-31.No School K-12, Winter Break
- 31.....District Office Closed

JANUARY 2022

- 6.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.*
- 15.....Kindergarten Registration Deadline
- 17.....No School, District Office Closed, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 20.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.*
- 21.....2nd Quarter Ends
- 24.....No School K-12, Planning and Grading/PLC
- 25.....3rd Quarter Begins

* Note: these meeting dates and times are tentative

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

KINDERGARTEN enrollment



FOLLOW THE STEPS TO ENROLL FOR THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

Did you know? Even if you have other children attending school in Minnetonka, you must complete the steps to enroll your child in Kindergarten. Begin with the online form at minnetonkaschools.org/enroll-now.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE - JANUARY 15, 2022

Resident families: The priority deadline for resident online enrollment is January 15, 2022. *What does priority mean?* Families must make an important decision for their Kindergartener: English language instruction (all elementary schools), Chinese language immersion (Excelsior and Scenic Heights elementary schools) or Spanish language immersion (Deephaven, Clear Springs, Groveland and Minnewashta elementary schools). Your first choice of language and school are given **priority** when you register by January 15. After that date, your first-choice schools or programs may be filled.

Open-enrolled families: The state deadline for Open Enrollment applications is January 15, 2022. There are several steps in the approval process, which are outlined at minnetonkaschools.org/oe-checklist. Families that submit an Open Enrollment application will be notified regarding enrollment by February 15, 2022. At that time, families will be asked to complete the approved Open Enrollment registration form.

DISTRICT OF CHOICE

Minnetonka Public Schools is among the best-performing school districts, not just in Minnesota, but across the nation. Starting in Kindergarten, our primary goal is to inspire the love of learning in

children through academic, social and emotional teaching strategies. Our curriculum balances active, playful, hands-on learning with individual, small- and large-group instruction designed to nurture early academic skills and promote social development. Throughout the grade levels, our innovative programs and extensive supports help each student succeed:

- Personalized, child-centered education
- Caring support to promote student well-being
- K-5 computer coding
- Unique programs for advanced learners in elementary school: Navigators, Wings, project-based learning and accelerated math and reading
- Before- and after-school childcare in our Explorers Program: minnetonkaschools.org/explorers

INFORMATION NIGHTS IN DECEMBER

Minnetonka Schools is hosting virtual and in-person Kindergarten Information Nights in December. Register online to let us know you'll join us: minnetonkaschools.org/info-night

Location	Events in December 2021
Clear Springs Elementary 952-401-6950	December 7: In-Person Information Night, 6pm December 9: Virtual Information Night, 6pm
Deephaven Elementary 952-401-6900	December 9: In-Person Information Night, 6pm December 16: Virtual Information Night, 6pm
Excelsior Elementary 952-401-5650	December 7: Virtual Information Night, 6pm December 9: Virtual Information Night, 6pm
Groveland Elementary 952-401-5600	December 6: Virtual Information Night, 6pm December 7: In-Person Information Night, 6pm
Minnewashta Elementary 952-401-5500	December 7: Virtual Information Night, 6pm December 16: Virtual Information Night, 6pm
Scenic Heights Elementary 952-401-5400	December 7: Virtual Information Night, 6pm December 9: In-Person Information Night, 6pm

MESSAGE from the Superintendent

Reflecting on 2020-21 and A Look Ahead

As we look back on the 2020-21 school year, one of the challenges of providing the strong learning plans and the safety procedures for our students in 2020-21 has been managing the financial impact.

The District had a complex plan to place as many students as possible in school starting in September of 2020 but to also allow the six-foot required separation between students. That meant having 12-15 students and a teacher in each classroom and having another classroom with a paraprofessional and the rest of the respective class. While the teacher was then able to stream instruction and/or move from classroom-to-classroom, we still needed all the additional paraprofessionals to supervise students.

That model was highly effective educationally, and it was also expensive. It was used for about half of the year, and then we moved to less distancing and more students in each room for the rest of the year. We also provided both in-school learning and virtual learning to our students in all grades, which required more teachers.

All these instructional accommodations and the cleaning supplies, moving of excess furniture to warehouses, and other changes to keep students and staff safe cost the District about \$10,000,000, which was partially off-set by \$4,000,000 in Federal aid. Fortunately, there were some other costs that were lower than anticipated, and the District did not lose student enrollments like most other districts in the state and country did.

Despite these costs, the District has spent just \$1,522,344 more than it received in revenue for 2020-21. When considering 2019-20 and 2020-21 together, the District actually increased its fund balance, and there will be another increase for 2021-22. The District will have worked through three very challenging years that placed a heavy demand on the budget and finished with an increase in fund balance, overall.

Minnetonka schools has not had to make budget cuts for the past 15 years. Prior to that time, for 10 years there were budget cuts or the use of existing fund balance to pay current bills nearly every year. As the District heads into the coming several years, there will be a need to use some of the fund balance that has been developed over the past 15 years; however, we still do not anticipate budget cuts, as the District's financial picture remains strong.

Dr. Dennis Peterson, Superintendent