

*Excellence in how we*

**LIVE. LEAD. LEARN.**



**2022-2023**  
annual report



**MINNETONKA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

# CONTENTS

SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE.....1

SCHOOL BOARD GOALS.....2-3

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.....4-7

CLASS OF 2023.....8-9

UPDATING OUR SPACES.....10-11

CLASSROOMS OF THE FUTURE.....12-13

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS.....14-18

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT.....19

POINTS OF PRIDE.....20-23

COMMUNITY EDUCATION.....24

AHOY, MINNETONKA!.....25

WORLD’S BEST WORKFORCE.....26-27

FINANCIAL REPORTS.....28-29

PARENT AND COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY RESULTS.....30

## EDITORIAL STAFF

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

**Daniel Campbell, MFA**  
Creative Director

**Mary Cornelius, MA**  
Communications Specialist



**MINNETONKA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

5621 County Road 101  
Minnetonka, MN 55345  
minnetonkaschools.org  
952-401-5000

8



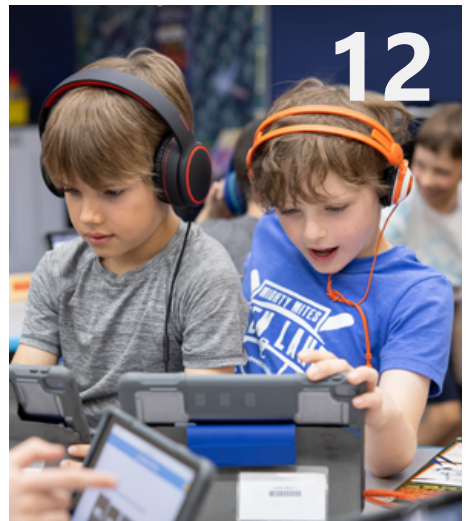
Minnetonka Schools celebrates its newest graduates, the Class of 2023.

10



Updates to Minnetonka school buildings transform District spaces into even better and safer places to learn.

12



District leaders are working hard to support classroom learning by using instructional technology resources in innovative ways.

25



Join Superintendent Law for *Ahoy, Minnetonka!*, the District’s new podcast, to hear stories of excellence, celebration, innovation and much more.

## Superintendent's Message



Hello, Minnetonka Community!

As I enter my second year as Superintendent of Schools for the Minnetonka Public School District, I've been reflecting back on the incredible experiences I have had during my transition year. Minnetonka provides unrivaled opportunities for students, families and the community.

During my first year, I had the privilege to visit and observe student academic and co-curricular opportunities from preschool through high school and beyond. We piloted a Spanish Immersion preschool program, launched a VANTAGE program strand for aspiring educators and took the foundational steps to begin offering an aviation program for our high school students. These are just three of the dozens of examples that show Minnetonka's student-centered, innovative approach to education.

This report contains hundreds of examples of world-class education. Our schools are full of talented students participating in unique educational experiences. Many of the programs mentioned in this publication are unique to this district, including our preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade Language Immersion program, advanced learning opportunities, Minnetonka Research, K-12 Tonka Online e-learning program, VANTAGE Advanced Professional Studies and MOMENTUM Design and Skilled Trades programs. We work hard to provide high-quality programming to match every student's interest. As this report showcases, between high-

achieving students in both academics and extracurriculars and accomplished staff, there is much to celebrate.

In the spring of 2023, our School Board met to set goals for the 2023-24 school year. The goals focus on excellence in all we do. We will work to ensure all students feel welcome and connected and experience a sense of belonging in Minnetonka. We will continue to implement multi-tiered systems of support, a comprehensive, yet flexible, structure to ensure every student is academically challenged and growing throughout the school year, with a strong emphasis on literacy. Finally, we are committed to providing excellence in leadership and in our organizational support structures for staff and students with a focus on long-term financial stability.

It has been my pleasure and joy to connect with so many staff, students, parents, alumni and community members. I look forward to all we can do together to continue to grow the exceptional opportunities for our students and to ensure that the excellence and innovation that has flourished here continues to guide our steps.

Respectfully,

David Law, JD  
Superintendent, Minnetonka Public Schools

## School Board Goals

The Minnetonka Public School District is governed by its seven-member School Board. Each member is elected at large and serves alternating four-year terms.



Meet the 2022-23 Minnetonka School Board. Pictured: Chris Vitale (director), Dr. Mike Remucal (director), Mark Ambrosen (director), Lisa Wagner (chair), Katie Becker (clerk), Meghan Selinger (vice-chair), Patrick Lee-O'Halloran (treasurer).

### 2022-23 School Board Goals

Each year, the Minnetonka School Board sets goals for the school district. In the 2022-2023 school year, Minnetonka Public Schools focused on three goals.

#### **GOAL: EXCELLENCE IN WELL-BEING, CONNECTION, AND BELONGING**

The District will foster and promote positive student well-being, connection and belonging efforts and will identify and remove barriers that have a detrimental effect on these areas. The District will strive for fair treatment, opportunity and advancement of all students to pursue their highest levels of academic and personal achievement. The Board's vision for child-centered excellence will be the foundation for these efforts.

#### **GOAL: EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT LEARNING AND SUPPORT**

Excellence in student learning and support is a foundational principle guiding the Minnetonka School Board and District Administration in their work. The continuation of the District's excellence will be driven through deep implementation of educational frameworks and strategic programs to support student learning. The District will also broaden the reach of the Minnetonka experience through the Tonka Online K-12 e-learning program and will assess the program's successes and challenges to make recommendations for future adjustments. And, the District will utilize space strategically to accommodate its growing innovative programming. This includes long-term facility planning for the programming needs in all academic and co-curricular programs.

#### **GOAL: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

The District strives for excellence in all aspects of leadership and fiscal management. It will increase engagement opportunities for District leadership to build even stronger community trust, keeping constituents informed and engaged. The District will take steps to further maximize long-term financial stability and sustainability. And, there will be an enhanced focus on recruitment and retention of exceptional teachers and staff, including efforts to create a representative workforce that will enrich the learning environment for all students.

You can read the School Board's 2023-24 Goals for the District at [minnetonkaschools.org/goals](https://minnetonkaschools.org/goals).

## Q&A with School Board Chair Lisa Wagner

Lisa Wagner, School Board Chair and 16-year member of the Board, reflects on 2022-23 goal outcomes and the future of the District.

### How did the School Board determine the 2022-23 goals?

**CHAIR WAGNER:** The School Board looks at a wealth of input when considering goals including surveys and input from students, teachers, staff and administrators. We distill that, as well as information we learn in our meetings, into actionable but visionary statements. Excellence in student well-being, connection and belonging underscores all the District does, and this should be an ongoing focus. The Board felt a continuation of the District's efforts with multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) was of great importance—with a focus on tiered instruction for all students, as this allows improved outcomes for all. Regarding leadership and organizational support, the Board heard from the community it was looking for increased communication and engagement.

### What are areas in particular where the Board feels the District performed well in 2022-23?

**CHAIR WAGNER:** The District made good progress on its well-being and belonging efforts. The continuing MTSS work has established a good foundation to build on. The community engagement and communication efforts were positive, and that is reflected in parent and community survey results. The District also had success with signature programs, such as S.A.I.L., VANTAGE and MOMENTUM, among others.

### What are areas, in particular, where the Board feels the District has work to do?

**CHAIR WAGNER:** We need to practice continuous improvement. As the Board shared in our Vision document: "If our future is to be better than our past, we must have the courage to let go of what no longer serves us, embrace what is required for the future and advocate for what is best for our children, our community and our nation."

### What do you see as the School Board's main focus and responsibility?

**CHAIR WAGNER:** The Board is responsible for governance of the District. It has one employee—the Superintendent. The Superintendent leads all other aspects of the District—the day-to-day operations and the implementation of the Board goals. As a Board, we do not make individual decisions. We operate as a cohesive, collaborative body that guides the District by providing a vision and setting goals. We serve as a bridge between the community and the District ... to collectively advocate the community's needs to the District and the District's needs to the community.



School Board Chair Lisa Wagner and Clerk Katie Becker show their District pride at Minnetonka High School's Homecoming parade in downtown Excelsior.

### What do you see as opportunities and challenges going forward for the District?

**CHAIR WAGNER:** There is new work outlined in the 2023-24 goals regarding literacy, and that is a big opportunity. There's energy around literacy nationally and locally, and we have a good foundation and room to grow. Our examination of financial stability is a challenge but also provides us with an incredible opportunity to reinvest in our students' futures. Continuing to build on our signature programs and provide exceptional student learning opportunities is critical.

### In your 16 years on the Board, and with your last few months on the Board on the horizon, what are your hopes for the Board—and for the District?

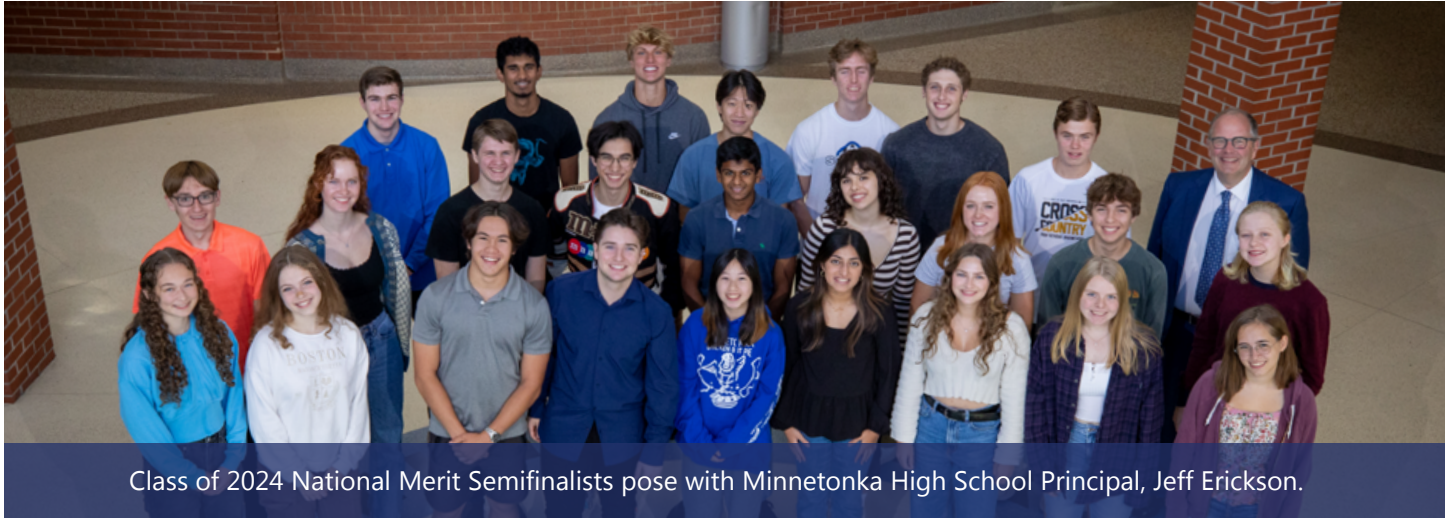
**CHAIR WAGNER:** We have a tradition of excellence for all students of all abilities at all levels. I hope we always pursue that as our guiding principle. I look forward to the District continuing to be innovative, strategic and visionary in providing relevant, exceptional programs.

To future Board members, I advise you to work hard to trust each other. Practice constructive discourse. Be empathetic. Listen. Be curious and study student needs. And, be a great support and guide for our Superintendent, his team and the staff of Minnetonka Public Schools.

It's been an honor and a privilege to serve our community and to see the incredible progress the District has made over the past 16 years. I am humbled to have been a small part of making it happen.

# Celebrating Academic Excellence

## National Merit Semifinalists



Class of 2024 National Merit Semifinalists pose with Minnetonka High School Principal, Jeff Erickson.

Twenty-eight Minnetonka High School seniors have been named 2024 National Merit Semifinalists in the 69th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. The students scored among the nation's best on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) taken their junior year, in fall 2022.

More than 1.3 million juniors entered the competition for 2024, and of those, approximately 16,000 (~ top 1%) were named National Merit Semifinalists. Semifinalists will have an opportunity to continue the competition for approximately 7,140 National Merit Scholarships.

## IB Diploma Graduates



Class of 2023 IB Diploma graduates pose together at an end-of-year celebration last spring.

Congratulations to the 50 students from the Class of 2023 who earned the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. Of those, 27 earned an IB Bilingual Diploma in Chinese, Spanish or Portuguese.

The IB Diploma Programme is recognized and respected by the world's leading universities. At Minnetonka, the IB program

is an all-inclusive series of courses that uses internationally-developed curriculum to provide a deep, thought-provoking study in six areas during 11th and 12th grade. It is known for academic rigor and comprehensive curriculum, enhanced by an inquiry into the theory of knowledge, research, creativity, action, service and a capstone extended essay.

## Showing Pride in Student Achievement

Minnetonka Schools celebrates the many outstanding academic achievements of its students. Read on for a spotlight on just a few of the ways students made an impact this year with their curiosity and passion. You can find even more examples of Minnetonka students' academic achievements in the Points of Pride section on page 20.



**"I really enjoyed being able to travel to Washington, D.C. with my friends and have a fun competition, meeting new people from across the country along the way."**

*-Evan Truong '28*

### Math and Science Club at Minnetonka Middle School East

Middle schoolers from Minnetonka Middle School East formed a Math and Science Club, and in 2022-23, several of the club's teams had great success in math and science. The group was founded by student Michael Luo '27.

Three club teams participated in the State Science Bowl competition in the Middle School division, with one placing first and earning a trip to represent Minnesota at the National Science Bowl competition in Washington, D.C. The team of Michael Luo '27, Jacob Lee '27, Alex Ren '28, Addison Shi '28 and Evan Truong '28 placed fourth in their division nationally, resulting in an award for the school from the Department of Energy.

The club also had teams compete in the 2023 Minnesota MATHCOUNTS Competition sponsored by the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers. The team of Luo, Lee, Ren and Sam Wu '28 placed first in state. Luo placed second in state as an individual and qualified to participate in the National MATHCOUNTS Competition.

### Minnesota Aspirations in Computing Awards

The National Center for Women and Information Technology offers an annual awards program to recognize students for their technology interests, skills and accomplishments. The honor recognizes these students' academic excellence, leadership and future goals with regard to computing and technology.

This year, three Minnetonka High School students were honored at the state level with Minnesota Aspirations in Computing Awards: Meiling Mathur '23 was a State Winner, Valerie Nelson '23 earned a State Rising Star Award and Alia Peterson '23 earned a State Honorable Mention.

**"This award gave me the opportunity to network with mentors and professionals in the field of computer science. It has inspired me to work harder at what I do."**

*-Meiling Mathur '23*



# Testing Ahead of Peers

Minnetonka students experience a transformation that accelerates their learning far above the national average. By the time they reach middle school, the average sixth grader in English or Chinese/Spanish Immersion is performing beyond the 12th-grade level in reading and math compared to national norms.



## MCA III Test Results Show Strong Performance by Tonka Students

Minnetonka students across all grades tested are performing well on measurements collected through standardized testing. Most notably, students demonstrated strong performances in science, reading and math. On the spring 2023 MCA III assessments, Minnetonka students ranked first in reading and science and second in math among comparative schools in the Twin Cities metro area.

### SPRING 2023 MCA III READING, MATH, AND SCIENCE COMPARISONS\*

District	Reading	Math	Science
<b>Minnetonka</b>	<b>74.2%</b>	<b>75.8%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>
Wayzata	73.5%	76.2%	61.1%
Edina	73.9%	70.6%	63.1%
Orono	72.0%	69.3%	60.0%
Westonka	72.6%	74.4%	63.1%
Eastern Carver County	60.9%	59.5%	50.5%
Eden Prairie	63.8%	58.5%	52.6%
Hopkins	52.0%	40.6%	29.6%
<b>State of Minnesota</b>	<b>49.7%</b>	<b>45.3%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>

## NWEA Test Performance Compared to National Grade-level Criteria

By the spring of their first year with Minnetonka Schools, Kindergarten students already begin to perform academically ahead of their peers. By the end of elementary school, the average fifth-grader is performing at a mid ninth-grade level in reading and an early twelfth-grade level in math. By sixth grade, these students are performing beyond twelfth grade in both subjects.

### SPRING 2023 RESULTS: NWEA MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

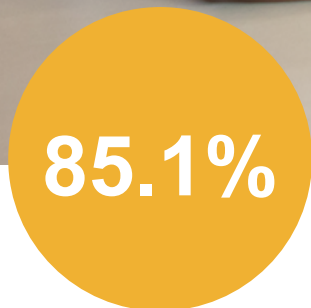
Minnetonka	Reading level:	Math level:
Kindergarten	Early 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Mid 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade
Grade 1	Mid 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Early 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade
Grade 2	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 3	Mid 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Early 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 4	Early 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Early 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 5	Mid 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 6	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Grade 7	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Beyond 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade

\*The MCA III percentages in the table on the left represent all students tested on the MCA III from the Minnesota Report Card found on the Minnesota Department of Education website.



# AP by the Numbers

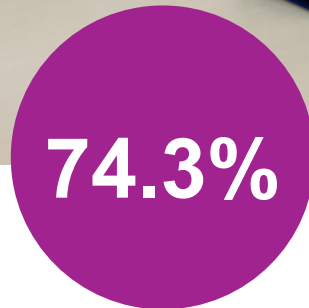
Advanced Placement® (AP) gives students the chance to engage with college-level work while still in high school and to earn college credit—which can save families thousands of dollars. In the 2022-23 school year alone, 3,195 AP® exams were taken by Minnetonka High School students.



of all MHS students took an AP® exam and received at least a 3



of the MHS students who were enrolled in an AP® course also took the AP® exam



of the Class of 2023 took at least one AP® exam during their high school career



unique AP® courses were offered at MHS

Looking for your student's name? Visit [www.minnetonkaschools.org/APscholars23](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/APscholars23) to view a complete list of AP Scholars.

## Best Wishes to the Class of 2023

On Thursday, June 8, the 70th graduating class of Minnetonka High School attended commencement at U.S. Bank Stadium. The 889 graduates and their families joined the District in celebrating the culmination of their K-12 school journey.

Graduates have enrolled in 280 colleges and universities in 47 different states and the District of Columbia, and one graduate is studying internationally. The top five colleges and universities that graduates are attending include: University of Minnesota Twin Cities (84), University of Wisconsin Madison (57), Normandale Community College (33), Iowa

State University (30) and University of Saint Thomas (29). Four graduates are serving in the Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy or National Guard.

"Your legacy at Minnetonka High School is set," noted Principal Jeff Erickson in his commencement address. "It is one of kindness, humor, creativity, curiosity, respect and inclusivity. I am grateful to have been a part of your story, and it is with overwhelming pride and honor that I say to you, the Class of 2023, well done and congratulations!"





**99%**

of seniors graduated

**86%**

are college-bound

**78%**

are attending 4-year colleges and universities

**8%**

are attending 2-year colleges

**31%**

are attending Minnesota colleges and universities

**4**

graduates have entered military service

**6**

graduates have entered the workforce or are pursuing an apprenticeship

743 out of 889 graduates have reported their post-secondary plans. Numbers and percentages in this section reflect students who chose to report.

## Updating Our Spaces

Building Improvements—Big and Small—Continually Transform Minnetonka Schools into an Even Better and Safer Place to Learn



The LED bulbs at Einer Anderson Stadium light up the night much more efficiently and cost-effectively than halogen bulbs.

From sustainability to security, updates to Minnetonka school buildings are a regular part of each school year and summer, when the majority of construction projects take place. The District's rolling Long-term Facility Maintenance 10-Year Plan ensures that buildings receive the attention they need. As updates occur, energy efficiency and enhanced security are underlying priorities, ensuring that Minnetonka's learning spaces are prepared for students and teachers both now and in the decades to come.

"We are efficient in energy use and saving money to put more toward the classroom as a core value in how we operate the District from a financial standpoint," said Paul Bourgeois, Executive Director of Finance and Operations for Minnetonka Public Schools.

Energy efficiency is a priority when planning building maintenance, such as including additional insulation to roofs for increased thermal efficiency. New additions and window replacements in existing buildings include installation of double-pane argon-filled 20%-tinted windows, saving on heat in the winter and air-conditioning costs in the summer.

All of the District's boilers have been converted from indirect-fire to direct-fire models, increasing efficiency by about 10%. The boiler systems have also received exhaust stack recovery units to increase efficiency by 10%. Existing HVAC mechanical units have been replaced with modern energy-efficient units.

Minnetonka Public Schools participates in seven community solar garden contracts, with the District as the anchor tenant with 40% of the generated output. It also has a Renewable\*Connect contract with Xcel Energy for wind and solar sourcing of electricity.

All District buildings use LED interior lighting, and there are occupancy sensors in all classrooms and hallways to minimize lights on when spaces are not in use. Energy management controls in rooms minimize both electricity and natural gas use by targeting energy needs.

Outdoors, building security and parking lot lights also feature LED bulbs. In the Tonka Dome that is put up over Einer Anderson Stadium each winter, lights were switched from 1,000-watt halogen bulbs to 100-watt LEDs. Other

Einer Anderson Stadium and Veterans Field lights are also now LEDs.

“This has all happened over the years,” said Bourgeois. “Energy efficiency continues to be a core factor in our ongoing building component upgrades that we do to keep our more than 1,833,000 square feet of facilities in a state of good repair for the long term.”

Security remains a constant consideration in all District building upgrades, as well. “We are always evaluating ways we can keep students and staff as safe as possible in our

schools and buildings. We revise and update procedures, and we upgrade security systems and equipment, taking recommendations from experts in the field to stay on the cutting edge,” said Superintendent David Law.

An additional level of security and controlled entry was completed for all school buildings during the 2022-23 school year, requiring visitors to show identification before proceeding to main offices from entryway vestibules. For the 2023-24 school year, a new Security and Emergency Management Coordinator position was added to support needs across the District.

## SPOTLIGHT ON SPACES AROUND THE DISTRICT



### Update on VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building

The District broke ground on its newest instructional space, the VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building, in May 2022. Since then, the land was cleared and graded for construction and the structure has been built. While the building’s completion timeline has been impacted by industry supply shortages, the work has been progressing very well. When completed in late winter/early spring, the building will be home to several VANTAGE strands and MOMENTUM’s new aviation program. Read more about the expansion of MOMENTUM and the building project on page 16.

### Groveland Elementary’s Outdoor Classroom Offers Fresh Opportunities for Learning

In collaboration with the school’s parent teacher organization, a new outdoor classroom was installed on the grounds of Groveland Elementary. Whimsical cement seats shaped like acorns and sized for elementary learners create a small amphitheater that can be utilized by classes and clubs. “The classroom has been a big success,” said Andrew Gilbertson, Groveland Elementary Principal. “Classroom teachers and specialists have used it to get students learning outside and to increase engagement.”



### New Playground at Minnetonka Community Education Center Supports the District’s Youngest Learners

Minnetonka Community Education replaced its 30-year-old playground with brand-new, fun, colorful and state-of-the-art equipment for the start of the 2022-23 school year. The new playground meets the needs of students ages two through five in the Minnetonka Preschool and Junior Explorers program. The play space includes a variety of equipment pieces for students of all ability levels, and it also provides a community space to socialize and play.

## Classrooms of the Future in Action!

Innovative Technology. Exceptional Learning Environments. Premier Student Experiences.



Students from Minnetonka Middle School West learn about robot coding using LEGO Mindstorm machines as part of a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) elective course.

A Minnetonka Public Schools classroom looks very different today than it did 20, 10 or even five years ago—and in the years ahead, classrooms will continue to evolve. From flexible seating and modular desks to the worlds of possibility opened up through the interactivity of personal devices, Minnetonka classrooms are dynamic places where students of all grade levels are researching, collaborating and presenting, with technology as an accelerator for learning.

“Our District is research-driven, where proven and promising teaching and learning practices are the basis for classroom technology decisions,” said Dr. Amy LaDue, Associate Superintendent for Instruction. “Desired learning outcomes, coupled with the research on how students learn and the technologies available, drive our technology needs.”

“Classroom technology is any ‘tool’ used for any aspect of instruction or as a means to interact with the teacher and/or with classmates,” said Amanda Fay, Director of Instructional Technology. “These range from low-tech pieces, such as math manipulatives and whiteboards, to high-tech options, like iPads, apps, presentation screens and microphones.”

Throughout the 2022-23 school year, the Minnetonka Schools Teaching and Learning and Technology teams continued their iterative collaboration to research the next era of Minnetonka’s classroom technology, a project presented to the School Board throughout the year as the “Classroom of the Future.” The research process included stakeholder interviews, teacher surveys and focus groups, student focus groups and discussions with PTO/PTA leaders regarding classroom technology.

As administrators and teacher leaders prepare for “what’s next” in terms of technology in the classroom, it will not be a device alone, but an entire classroom ecosystem designed to support student experiences for meaning, engagement and deeper learning. “The era of independent hardware devices has passed,” said Mike Dronen, Executive Director of Technology. “What’s next is a connected classroom portfolio of higher performing hardware and software that outperform today’s current technology, better supporting learning, instruction, collaboration and access. We are looking to transform education.”

Through extensive “Classroom of the Future” research, four

guiding principles emerged that will inform the District's next steps for technology. Technology utilized should be 1) Visible, 2) Mobile, 3) Flexible and 4) Collaborative.

Visible technology refers to consistent, reliable, equitable, modern and easy-to-use equipment, including bright and clear classroom display technology.

Mobile technology refers to responsive equipment with productive and efficient workflows and tools to support teachers and students both in and out of the classroom.

Flexible technology refers to the ability of equipment to adapt, physically or digitally, based on individual or collective student or teacher needs.

Collaborative technology refers to equipment that allows every student and teacher to engage in learning activities.

These core priorities will ensure that future technologies in Minnetonka classrooms continue to act as a catalyst to accelerate student learning.

## Funding for Classroom Technology and District Security on the Nov. 7 Ballot

All of the technology currently used in Minnetonka classrooms is funded through the District's Capital Projects "Tech Levy."

This levy is up for renewal for Minnetonka School District resident voters to consider in the upcoming election. Approval of this ballot question would renew critical funding for the District's technology and security infrastructure, as well as support for the staff members in these areas.

Visit [minnetonkaschools.org/tech-levy](http://minnetonkaschools.org/tech-levy) for all of the key information you need to make an informed decision, including Frequently Asked Questions.

## Students Put Technology Skills into Action

Minnetonka Public Schools works constantly to support students in innovative ways that will stimulate learning and achievement. Teachers encourage students to work on real-world problems and pair their technology skills with innovation to solve challenges. Below are just a few examples of Minnetonka students putting technology into action.



### Middle School Students Design & Create 3D-Printed Prosthetic for Pet Chicken

Seventh graders in Dawn Sorenson's technology education class used the engineering design process to make life a little easier for Maple, a local pet chicken beloved by an MME family. After the chicken lost a claw to frostbite, the class worked together to design and fabricate a prosthetic for her. Students used the digital application Sketch Up to create 3D renderings of their ideas, which were then fabricated using a 3D printer.



### Elementary School Students Teach Digital Citizenship Using Green Screen Videos

Clear Springs Elementary fifth graders learned important digital citizenship skills in a hands-on way. Working in teams during their media time, students created videos about how to interact with others safely online while keeping their personal information secure. Students led every aspect of the video production, from writing the scripts, acting out conversations and recording their ideas to editing their footage and presenting final films to the class.

# Signature Program Update

Experiential Learning Offers Pathways to Personal Success



Providing students with unique and personalized real-world learning opportunities has long been a priority for Minnetonka Schools. Through the District's innovative signature programs, students in grades K-12 are provided with experiences to connect curriculum to their lives beyond the classroom, deepening their understanding by learning from professionals and collaborating with each other.

"Our signature programs are a hallmark of a Minnetonka Schools education," said Superintendent of Schools David Law. "When learning is personalized to a student's interests, passions and needs through dynamic experiences, students find deep engagement and success. It's an amazing way to introduce them to future possibilities."

Read on for an update about several of these pathways, from the District's K-12 Language Immersion program to its many specialized courses that give students a chance to explore into future careers and post-high school opportunities.

In addition to the programs featured here, Minnetonka Schools has many other personalized options for students:

- Ready-Start Kindergarten (RSK) is a Kindergarten program filled with hands-on opportunities to develop social and emotional skills, specifically designed with younger Kindergarteners in mind.
- Tonka Online provides an exceptional, comprehensive e-learning experience for students in grades K-12.
- Tonka Codes is a K-12 coding curriculum that introduces all students to the language of computer programming.
- Art and music classes start in Kindergarten, and musical theatre opportunities begin in fifth grade.
- Senior Capstone provides students the opportunity to apply for and participate in a two-week, off-campus experience at the end of their senior year.



## LANGUAGE IMMERSION

Minnetonka's Chinese and Spanish Language Immersion Program provides premiere learning experiences for students from Kindergarten through their senior year. With the state's largest Language Immersion program, the District is uniquely prepared to support the goals of students.

In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 3,391 students enrolled in the District's Spanish Immersion program, and 1,228 enrolled in the Chinese Immersion program. The majority of graduates who continued Immersion through their senior year expressed the desire to earn an advanced degree in their language of study as either a major or minor.

"In our most advanced IB Immersion classes, the following statistics are noteworthy regarding how many students passed the IB exam: 100% for Chinese Language and Literature, 100% for Spanish Language and Literature Standard Level, 94% for Spanish Language & Literature Higher Level and 89% for Spanish Global Politics," shared Jodi Siegel, Immersion lead and Spanish Immersion teacher at Minnetonka High School.

Chinese Immersion student Declan Halloran '23 credits the program with supporting him in building deep friendships and with helping him plan for his career direction after high school. "I am interested in becoming a diplomat or an expert in East Asian culture," said Halloran. "Despite its difficulty, learning Chinese has been one of the most important parts of my life and has given me so many opportunities that I otherwise would not have had."

In the spring, the District added a new Tonka Online Course, Chile Immersion Abroad, which offered an opportunity for students to travel and study in Concepción, Chile. "Students dive deeply into many aspects of Chilean culture prior to travel and complete a travel project while in Chile," said Siegel. "This course shows an official Immersion Abroad course on their transcript and deepens their travel experience."



**"LEARNING CHINESE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF MY LIFE AND HAS GIVEN ME SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES THAT I OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD."**

*-Declan Halloran '23  
Immersion Program Student*

## MINNETONKA RESEARCH

Minnetonka Research provides students the opportunity to pursue authentic research driven by their own questions and interests. This program inspires and guides students as they develop strong skills in communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration.

In 2022-23, 68 students participated in the program. This year, Minnetonka Research welcomed 90 students, the largest class in program history. Projects completed during the school year focused on everything from aerodynamics optimization to resolve porpoising issues in F1 automobile racing to machine learning algorithms for the early detection of carpal tunnel syndrome in violinists, and much more.

Many Minnetonka Research students took part in regional and state science fairs to share their knowledge and processes. One student, Ana Stewart '23, qualified to compete at the International Science and Engineering Fair. Another highlight of the year included the return of the in-person Minnetonka Research Symposium in May.

Minnetonka Research students were mentored by professional scientists from around the country and the globe. Our students then, in turn, mentored younger students from Minnetonka elementary schools. Twenty-eight fourth graders from Deephaven visited students in the spring to share their own research and participate in experimental design activities.

"The most challenging and exciting part of research is when you get to a step in your project that requires you to perform a technique that you have no idea how to do," said Kate Feist '23, a Minnetonka Research student. "You then get to do a deep dive into learning the new technique. You try. You mess it up. You try again, and you learn. It is very exciting and extremely challenging at times but very enjoyable because you have a passion for it."



**"YOU TRY. YOU MESS IT UP. YOU TRY AGAIN, AND YOU LEARN. IT IS VERY EXCITING AND EXTREMELY CHALLENGING."**

*-Kate Feist '23  
Minnetonka Research Student*

## MOMENTUM

Three years ago, MOMENTUM, Minnetonka High School's program for design and skilled trades, launched with expanded opportunities in technology education. It has since grown to serve hundreds more students. In that time, course registrations have increased by 56.7%, growing from 564 in 2020-21 to 884 in 2023-24. MOMENTUM provides students with specialized tracks in construction systems, manufacturing, design and transportation.

"The program has had continued success with the Mini-Youth Apprenticeship opportunities embedded in our classes," said Brent Veninga, coordinator for MOMENTUM. "On a monthly basis, students visited area businesses in the trades. They have given these site visits and subject matter experts high praise."

Lessons in professionalism have been incorporated into the MOMENTUM curriculum based on input from local business partners, training students on the importance of the following components: Having a "safety first," actionable mindset, being reliable, being engaged, being proactive and being an effective communicator.

"I'm proud of myself for taking a risk and taking the Physics of Home Renovation course," said Jacob Ekstrand '23. "It has taught me more than any other course about the real world. My MOMENTUM teacher has helped me better understand the trades and taught me countless skills that I'll be using for the rest of my life. The program has granted me so many opportunities to get first-hand experience in the trades."

Minnetonka's first aviation courses launched this fall as part of the transportation track in MOMENTUM. More than 170 high school students elected to take part in this opportunity. Aviation courses will be held in the new VANTAGE/MOMENTUM building under construction on Highway 101 and Covington Road. This soon-to-open, state-of-the-art facility will bring VANTAGE programming closer to campus

and will provide specialized spaces to support the curriculum offered in MOMENTUM and VANTAGE. It will be Minnetonka's first all-new school building in more than 56 years.

"To see the incredible growth in student interest in MOMENTUM in just a few years time has been so exciting," said Mark Ambrosen, School Board Director, advisory board member for MOMENTUM and retired air traffic controller. "The new aviation track aligns with the program's goal of preparing our students for future career opportunities in the trades and with the School Board Goal of Excellence in Student Learning and Support. This is definitely opening doors for students to consider various aspects of aviation as a viable career option."

Of the students registered for aviation in 2023-24, 20.7% are female, compared to just 9.6% of female pilots currently in the industry. Principal Jeff Erickson shared, during an update to the School Board, that the demographic balance of students registered for Aviation I and Aviation II is representative of the backgrounds of students at the high school, showing interest across various racial, gender and learning ability markers.

"It is great to see that students from a wide variety of backgrounds are interested in MOMENTUM programming. Closing opportunity gaps and offering alternate post-high school paths for students who may not be interested in attending 4-year colleges are important markers of success for MOMENTUM," said Meghan Selinger, Vice-chair of the Minnetonka School Board. "The District offers financial assistance to those who may need it for MOMENTUM fees, such as flight time for the aviation program, to reduce barriers to student participation."

"It's important to note that the District funded the construction of the VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building with existing bond capacity and revenue streams. The District's financial team, under the guidance and support of the Citizen Finance Advisory Committee, refinanced existing bonds and used that additional bond capacity, along with some of the District's investment earnings, to pay for the building. The District did not have to ask tax payers for more money to get it built. That is something we try to do whenever possible—creatively and strategically use all existing revenue options before going to voters for more," said Patrick Lee-O'Halloran, current School Board Treasurer, who also serves as the Board representative on the Citizen Finance Advisory Committee. "Wise and prudent financial management is a key strategy the Board—and the District Administration—will continue to embrace. This is one important way that we, as a District, have been able to serve our students well through top-tier facilities, which go hand-in-hand with top-tier instruction."

The VANTAGE/MOMENTUM Building is slated for completion later this school year. A ribbon-cutting and open house will be planned and communicated in late winter or early spring.



**"MY MOMENTUM  
TEACHER HELPED ME  
BETTER UNDERSTAND  
THE TRADES AND  
TAUGHT ME SKILLS  
THAT I'LL BE USING  
FOR THE REST OF MY  
LIFE."**

*-Jacob Ekstrand '23  
MOMENTUM Construction  
Systems Student*

## VANTAGE

VANTAGE is Minnetonka High School's advanced professional studies program, offering a unique way for high school students to apply their coursework in real-world settings. Now in its 11th year, VANTAGE offers 10 different strands and serves more than 550 high school students.

The program provides hands-on engagement and connection through one-on-one mentorship with local professionals, rigorous coursework and real project work directed by industry leaders. VANTAGE students partner with small, local businesses, nonprofits and multinational corporations to provide recommendations and insights into a variety of authentic business development strategies.

"The central goal of VANTAGE is to produce confident young adults who are ready to go out and succeed in whatever they want to do," said Roger Andre, executive director of VANTAGE. "Students get to experience what professional life might be like five, 10 or 20 years from now."

Learning from industry professionals was a highlight of the program for Zariya Anderson '23, a VANTAGE Health Sciences student. "In our last semester project, we shadowed two or more professionals in a medical field and then presented our different experiences to our class and mentors," she said. "I had the amazing opportunity to shadow three people—a trauma nurse, a firefighter and an orthopedic physician's associate. I loved observing all their day-to-day activities, including surgeries and how they interact with patients."

The addition of the VANTAGE Education strand to the program course list was a highlight of the 2022-23 school year. It joins study areas in Business Analytics, Design + Marketing, Multimedia Communications, Global Business, Global Sustainability, Health Sciences, Public Policy and User Experience (UX) Design, as well as International Relations, a new strand added for the 2023-24 school year.



**"I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHADOW THREE PEOPLE. I LOVED OBSERVING ALL THEIR DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING SURGERIES AND HOW THEY INTERACT WITH PATIENTS."**

*-Zariya Anderson '23  
VANTAGE Health Sciences Student*

## S.A.I.L.

Minnetonka's Students Achieving Independent Life (S.A.I.L.) program is a transition education opportunity for students ages 18-22 with special needs. Opened in 2021, the program is based in a building intentionally created to support learning for life after high school, and includes a complete model apartment, greenhouse, kitchen space, video production studio and learning labs for skill development.

The S.A.I.L. program assists students in preparing for success in adult life by focusing on student- and team-identified transition outcomes. Students have access to skill development activities designed to meet their needs for career training, recreation, leisure, community participation, independent living and post-secondary/post-school planning.

"Our students had a very busy school year," said Erin Valenta, Director of Transition Education. "Community involvement and practice is an integral part of our program. Students participated in more than 180 community outings and countless visits to internships and work experiences."

Community partnerships offer students ways to learn professional skills and build relationships for their future career opportunities. "We added a new work site at Northern Tool and Equipment this year," said Valenta. "It was a wonderful addition to our business partnerships, as we were able to add a different type of retail experience for students with an interest in tools and automotive."

"We have learned so much by coming to S.A.I.L.," said student Jacob Cofer '21, who completed the transition program in 2023. "We learned about how to grow in our independence. We learned about making wise and responsible decisions, and we learned many things to help us succeed in adulthood." Cofer completed his S.A.I.L. work seminar at Minnetonka Junior Explorers, and he has continued to work there since graduating from the program.



**"WE LEARNED ABOUT MAKING WISE, RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS, AND MANY THINGS TO HELP US SUCCEED IN ADULTHOOD."**

*-Jacob Cofer '21  
2023 S.A.I.L. Graduate*

## TONKA ONLINE

Tonka Online is Minnetonka Schools' e-learning program. It began as a high school-level supplemental program more than 10 years ago and has now grown to become a full K-12 school. Tonka Online offers its students the opportunity to receive the same outstanding District-developed curriculum, rigorous academic standards and commitment to excellence that their counterparts in Minnetonka's physical buildings receive. In 2022-23, 156 students enrolled in Minnetonka Schools through Tonka Online.

K-8 Tonka Online courses have been specifically designed to provide personalized instruction and to better support learners through a blend of synchronous and asynchronous instructional models. Outside of the classroom, teachers ensure that students have an opportunity to develop social and emotional skills with classmates.

"We are continuously collaborating to create memorable social experiences for our students," said Joe Hessburg, assistant director of Tonka Online. "We have many students who are becoming friends with each other and want to hang out and play. So, teachers created opportunities for families to do that. From community meet-ups to buddy groups to all-school assemblies, the Tonka Online experience is more than just an online course. It's a true school community."

High school students in Tonka Online have access to both supplemental courses and core curriculum courses that round out their graduation requirements.

"Minnetonka is one of the few districts in the metro that has been able to keep an online program going post-pandemic," said Superintendent of Schools David Law. "I'm excited that Tonka Online's K-12 full e-learning option will be heading into its third year, and we will continue to meet the needs of our students who thrive working online."

**"I HIGHLY RECOMMEND TONKA ONLINE. THE TEACHERS ARE AMAZING, AND THEY MAKE THE CLASS SUPER INTERESTING AND DYNAMIC. MY DAUGHTER IS RECEIVING THE BEST EDUCATION, THE BEST TEACHERS, THE BEST SUPPORT AND ALL THIS FROM OUR HOME!"**

*-Giuliana Lozano  
8th Grade Tonka Online Parent*

## THE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

The Navigator Program serves academically advanced students in second through fifth grade. This unique program provides a specialized learning environment capitalizing on the unique intellectual strengths of its learners.

"By providing rigorous, meaningful work in a safe learning environment, advanced learners develop the grit needed to try hard things, to fail and to try again," said Diane Rundquist, Minnetonka's Director of Advanced Learning. "This is critically important to this population of learners because we don't want college to be the first time a student struggles."

During the 2022-23 school year, Navigator students participated in experiential learning opportunities, including a food innovation challenge in partnership with VANTAGE. Students developed quality frozen desserts that were sustainable, healthy and appealing to consumers and presented their ideas to VANTAGE student panels.

"We do a lot of projects in which we get to decide what we want to focus on and that we direct for ourselves," said Devin Kuenzel-Turner '31. "We have made podcasts, we wrote alternatives to classic stories, we worked with VANTAGE high schoolers on product development and marketing and many other fun and interesting projects. I have confidence that I can embrace more responsibility and academic challenges beyond my grade level when given the opportunity."

Academic enrichment is available in Minnetonka for students K-12. At the elementary level, programs such as Independent Investigations, Project Think, Academic Extension and Wings also serve advanced students. In middle school, there are an array of Honors and Accelerated classes. Once in high school, there are many ways to engage in challenging work, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Honors courses, as well as specialized programs such as Minnetonka Research and Project Lead the Way.



**"I HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT I CAN EMBRACE MORE RESPONSIBILITY AND ACADEMIC CHALLENGES WHEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY."**

*-Devin Kuenzel-Turner '31  
Navigator Program Student*

# Strategic Enrollment Growth

## Open Enrollment Funds Innovative Programs and Reduces Class Sizes

Outstanding teachers. Innovative, cutting-edge academic programs. World-class facilities. A personalized approach to student learning, well-being and connection. Minnetonka Public Schools has earned its reputation for excellence and has become a district of choice for families in Minnesota.

Sixteen years ago, Minnetonka Schools was on a steady decline of students. If the trend had continued, the District would be at approximately 6,000 students now. Instead, due to a strategic approach to planning and growth, the District is thriving at a bustling 11,100+ students and continues to offer some of the most innovative and sought-after opportunities available. Strong enrollment numbers have been key to the District’s success.

“All around us we are seeing districts with declining student numbers,” said Superintendent of Schools David Law. “Our Board recently had a presentation by the state demographer, and she explained that our state is aging and that student numbers are declining throughout it. This is impacting most districts in a very negative way, forcing them into steep cuts of personnel and programming.”

By thoughtfully and creatively embracing open enrollment, which allows students from across the state to enroll in the school district, Minnetonka Schools brought in more than \$43 million in the 2022-23 school year alone, with more than \$7.5 million of that revenue left over, after the cost of instruction for open-enrolled students, to fund unique, innovative programs that benefit resident students and to minimize financial cuts to staff and programs.

“Many of the District’s costs are fixed—such as facility-related expenses, utilities, and salaries and benefits for District administration and the majority of our teaching and support staff,” said Chris Vitale, School Board Director. “By using the additional revenue provided through open enrollment each year, we have been able to build out signature programs such as Language Immersion, VANTAGE Advanced Professional

Studies, MOMENTUM Design and Skilled Trades, Minnetonka Research, S.A.I.L. and other top-tier opportunities. These are innovative, experiential learning options our resident students would likely not have without the added revenue the District receives from open enrollment, because we just couldn’t afford them without it.”

Because non-resident students bring significant revenue in the form of state and local aid, the District can keep class sizes small. The District hires more teachers and paraprofessionals and creates additional classes, as needed.

“It may seem counter-intuitive, but by adding open-enrolled students and increasing our student body, we can offer smaller class sizes,” said Dr. Mike Remucal, School Board Director. “Without the additional open enrollment revenue, the District would really struggle to keep class sizes as small as they are now, as there would not be financial flexibility to add support when it’s needed.”

Minnetonka Schools consistently has low class sizes, as compared to the Twin Cities metro area average, as seen on the table below:

### ECSU ANNUAL CLASS SIZE STUDY CHART\*

Grade Level	Twin Cities Metro Area Average Class Size	Minnetonka Average Class Size
Kindergarten	20.4	20.3
Grade 1	21.8	21.7
Grade 2	22.9	19.7
Grade 3	24.3	21.9
Grade 4	25.2	24.1
Grade 5	26.2	24.7

Year after year, Minnetonka’s reputation for excellence grows, and student achievement and opportunity is at an all-time high.

Superintendent Law said, “It’s important for us to keep revenue streams strong for the District, and the revenue provided by open enrollment is significant in helping us to maintain the excellence our parents, students and residents have come to expect from Minnetonka Schools.”

\*Numbers come from the most recent Metro ECSU Study available.

**“THE REVENUE PROVIDED BY OPEN ENROLLMENT IS SIGNIFICANT IN HELPING US MAINTAIN THE EXCELLENCE OUR PARENTS, STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS HAVE COME TO EXPECT FROM MINNETONKA SCHOOLS.”**

*- David Law, JD  
Superintendent of Minnetonka Public Schools*

## 2022-23 District Points of Pride

The outstanding achievements of individual students, student groups, teachers and staff showcase the hard work, dedication and passion the Minnetonka Public Schools community pours into its every endeavor. As a District driven by child-centered excellence, the accomplishments achieved in 2022-23 and the exceptional efforts put forth every day to earn these awards and honors are celebrated.

### Academics

- Minnetonka High School Class of 2023 Highlights:
  - 37 National Merit Finalists, 49 Commended Students
  - 11 students received the top score of 36 on the ACT.
  - 266 full-program Language Immersion students continued their coursework through their senior year—72 students in Chinese, 194 students in Spanish.
  - 50 students earned an IB Diploma, of which 27 earned a Bilingual IB Diploma—18 students in Spanish, eight in Chinese and one in Portuguese.
  - 81 students earned a Minnesota World Language Proficiency Certificate, 151 earned a Gold Bilingual Seal, 168 earned a Platinum Bilingual Seal and seven earned Multilingual Seals.
  - 285 students graduated summa cum laude, 75 magna cum laude and 79 cum laude.
- 1,410 MHS students were honored with academic letters. The Class of 2023 earned 412 letters, the Class of 2024 earned 420 letters, the Class of 2025 earned 289 letters and the Class of 2026 earned 289 letters.
- Minnetonka's AP® exam pass rate (3 or higher) is 85.1%. As of publication, 840 students in grades 9-12 have earned one of three AP® Scholar designations.
- 795 students took a total of 1,372 IB exams. 88% of students scored 4 or higher.
- Minnetonka Research Highlights:
  - 34 high school students and eight middle school students were state qualifiers for the Minnesota State Science and Engineering Fair.
  - 20+ research awards were earned at state.
  - Ana Stewart '23 was named a Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair Finalist, and three other students were selected as alternates.
- 18 MHS students earned high marks in the National French Contest.
- Two MHS students earned Bronze Awards for their high marks on the National German Exam.

### Activities

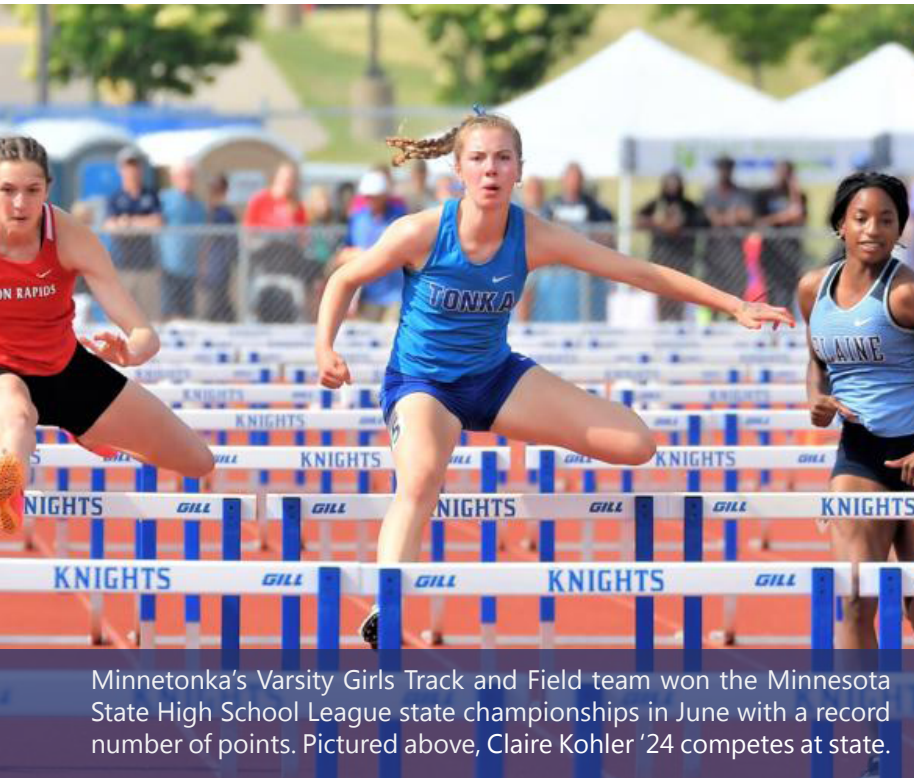
- At the Minnesota State Scholastic Chess Championships, Demir Augustine '25 placed seventh and a team from Minnetonka Middle School West took first place in the Junior High Middle School competition. At the School Chess Association's Statewide Grade Level tournament, the MMW team also took first place.

- 17 students qualified for national competition in Archery.
- The Minnetonka Debate team had three students who were state competitors.
- One Minnetonka student qualified for the state Speech tournament.
- DECA sent 150 students to the State Career Development Conference, which is a school record for participation.
- Team Spike+, a FIRST Lego League team made up of students from Excelsior Elementary and MMW, earned two first place awards at state, in the Robot Design category and the Head-to-Head category.
- Minnetonka E-Sports teams placed first in state in two game categories this year, and more students qualified in three additional categories.
- The Minnetonka High School Knowledge Bowl team placed third in state. Both MME and MMW had teams place highly at state and regional competitions.
- The Minnetonka High School Math team placed sixth at state.
- The Chicken Bot Pie robotics team qualified for state and national competition. The team was also invited to present its work at the 2023 Minnesota State Fair.
- The Minnetonka High School Science Bowl team placed third in state.
- The Minnetonka High School Science Olympiad placed fourth in state, earning many individual medals, as well.
- Students from all six of the District's elementary schools competed in Minnetonka Community Education's second annual Tonka Top Chef competition. Viktoria Sambelashvili '30, Stella Bohmbach '30 and Sofia Sousa '32, all from Scenic Heights Elementary, won first, second and third place, respectively.

### Athletics\*

- 17 seniors signed Division I National Letters of Intent to compete in their sports at the collegiate level. 12 additional students signed Division III Letters of Intent.
- Ava Lindsay '23 won the Athena Award for 2022-23 in Girls Hockey.
- The Boys Alpine Skiing team won its second straight state title, the eighth in program history.
- In Girls Alpine Skiing, two athletes qualified for state. Marissa Witte '24 was the state runner-up.
- Boys Varsity Baseball tied with Edina for third place at

\*Team and individual accomplishments are listed alphabetically by sport.



Minnetonka's Varsity Girls Track and Field team won the Minnesota State High School League state championships in June with a record number of points. Pictured above, Claire Kohler '24 competes at state.



Marco Christiansen '24 is the first Minnetonka High School state wrestling champion since 1995.

the state championship tournament.

- Boys Varsity Basketball qualified for state and made it to the quarterfinal round of the tournament.
- Adapted Bowling placed second in the state tournament physically impaired division.
- The Varsity Bowling team placed fourth in the state.
- The Middle School Mountain Biking team took first place overall at the state tournament, which is the first for our mountain biking team at the middle or high school level.
- Middle School Cheerleading qualified for state and took seventh place overall.
- Junior Varsity Cheerleading placed fourth at state.
- Varsity Cheerleading earned its 26<sup>th</sup> state and sixth national titles this year.
- Boys Cross Country earned fourth place at state.
- Girls Cross Country earned second place at state.
- Boys Varsity Golf qualified for state and placed seventh.
- Girls Varsity Golf qualified for state and placed third.
- In Gymnastics, three student athletes advanced to the Class AA individual state championship.
- Boys Varsity Hockey won the state championship.
- Girls Varsity Hockey earned fourth place at the state championship tournament.
- In Nordic Skiing, the varsity boys team placed 13th at state. Two varsity girls team members qualified for state.
- Boys Swimming & Diving earned fourth place at state

- and was the True Team state champion. Individually, Evan Witte '25 earned first place in the 100-m Freestyle.
- Girls Swimming & Diving earned second place at state and was the True Team state champion. Individually, Paige Dillon '24 earned first place in the 100-m Freestyle. The team also won the 200 Medley and 400 Medley.
- In Synchronized Swimming, Minnetonka placed fourth as part of a cooperative team with the Blake School.
- Boys Varsity Tennis had three athletes qualify for state.
- Girls Varsity Tennis won the team state championship. Tennis players Sarah Shahbaz '23 and Kelsey Phillips '23 placed first and second, respectively, in the singles division of the tournament.
- Boys Track & Field placed second at the Minnesota State High School League state tournament and was the True Team state champion. Individually, Tobias Williams '24 won the 100-meter dash.
- Girls Track & Field won the MHSCA True Team Class AAA state title and won the Minnesota State High School League state championship title with a record number of points. Claire Kohler '24 was the state champion in the 100- and 300-meter hurdles. Lucy Hiller '23 was the state champion in the triple jump. The girls varsity 4x100m relay team also took first place at state.
- In Boys Varsity Wrestling, Marco Christiansen '24 was the state champion for the 170lb category.



Minnetonka Theatre students perform a scene from their award-winning spring musical, *Guys and Dolls*. The play is set in 1950's New York, where two star-crossed couples gamble in luck and love from Times Square to Havana and back.



Ciara Grad '24 won Best of Show in this year's Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Contest, administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Her entry, "Mother & Daughter Bonding," is an oil painting based on a photo she took.



Minnetonka Middle School West Best Buddies chapter president, Audrey Hauser '27, accepted the award on the school and District's behalf with Best Buddies founder, Anthony Kennedy Shriver, and other special guests.



Minnetonka High School was ranked one of the best high schools in the state by *U.S. News & World Report*.



In 2023, Niche.com ranked Minnetonka Public Schools #2 in Best School District, #2 in Best Teachers, #4 Best High School and #4 in Best Places to Teach among public schools in Minnesota.



Minnetonka Public Schools received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International for the 28<sup>th</sup> year in a row.



The District is recognized for the 10<sup>th</sup> year in a row as one of the best communities in the nation for music education by the NAMM Foundation.



## 2022-23 District Points of Pride

### Arts

- Ciara Grad '24 won Best of Show for the 2023 Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Contest, administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.
- Marching Band placed eighth in state. Three students qualified for state in the Color Guard.
- Three Minnetonka students qualified for the state Music Listening competition, where they placed fifth overall.
- 34 elementary and middle school students were selected for the 2022-23 American Choral Directors Association Honor Choir.
- 11 students were selected for the 2022-23 Minnesota Music Educators Association All-State Choir.
- 12 students were selected for the 2022-23 Minnesota Music Educators Association All-State Band.
- Seven students were selected for the 2022-23 Minnesota Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra.
- Four students qualified for the MNSOTA Middle Level Honors Orchestra.
- Christian Garner '27 won the Minnetonka Youth Symphony Young Artist Grand Prize in the trumpet category.
- Scholastic Art Awards:
  - 24 students have earned top honors for art, including 16 honorable mention awards, nine silver keys and nine gold keys.
- Scholastic Writing Awards:
  - 14 students earned awards for writing, including three honorable mention awards, eight silver keys and eight gold keys.
- Minnetonka Theatre students were state champions in the one-act play competition for their show, *Honk and Holler*. They earned a Class Double A star rating for their performance.
- Minnetonka Theatre also earned 17 Hennepin Theatre Trust Spotlight Awards for the fall musical, *Grand Hotel*, and 25 for the spring musical, *Guys and Dolls*. Both shows received awards for Outstanding Achievement in Musical Theatre, Outstanding Overall Production and Outstanding Overall Performance.

### Service

- Tavhida Bakhtiyorzoda '23 placed third in the statewide "Escape the Vape" public service announcement video contest. The contest was sponsored in part by the Minnesota Department of Health and the University of Minnesota Masonic Cancer Center.
- During Heart Week, high school students set a new

record of more than \$60,000 raised for Minnetonka Family Friends, a Minnesota nonprofit that provides support and encouragement to families in need.

- 264 students and adults were recognized through the President's Volunteer Service Award program. Together, the honorees reported 39,904 hours of service to local and global communities. 130 Bronze, 57 Silver and 77 Gold Awards were recognized.
- 44 MHS students earned varsity letters in Community Service.

### District And Staff

- The Best Buddies chapter at Excelsior Elementary has been recognized at both the state and national level as the Outstanding Elementary School Chapter of the Year. Best Buddies is an organization that fosters one-to-one friendships and offers leadership development programs for people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Jordan Cushing (English, MHS), Claire Harley (English, MHS), Jennifer Furness, (English, MMW) and Zach Ludvigson (Math, MHS) earned the National Board Certified Teacher distinction in 2023.
- Varsity Track & Field coaches Jane Reimer-Morgan (girls team) and James Finch (boys team) were named the State High School Coaches of the Year by the The U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association.
- Minnetonka Community Education was named as a Top-10 Community Education Program in North America by the Learning Resources Network.
- Joe Cossette (Science, MHS) has been named as the national Teacher of the Year by the Physics Teacher Education Coalition.
- Executive Director of Special Education Christine Breen received the 2023 Hero Award from GiGi's Playhouse, a nonprofit that provides free educational and therapeutic programs to individuals with Down syndrome.
- The Minnetonka Schools Communications Team earned 15 national awards recognizing outstanding work in communications from the National School Public Relations Association.
- Minnetonka staff raised \$83,000 through the annual employee Charitable Giving Campaign. In the 20+ year history of the project, staff have raised more than \$1 million to support organizations serving those in need.

# Minnetonka Community Education

Minnetonka Community Education (MCE) provides national-caliber programming in areas supporting Skippers of all ages. During the 2022-23 school year, MCE was recognized as a 2023 Learning Resources Network Top 10 Community Education Program in America. Overall participation for all Minnetonka Community Education classes, events and programs totaled 34,369, a 13% increase over last year.

“Minnetonka Community Education is such a valuable resource and connection point for our families—and for residents of this school district overall,” said Katie Becker, Minnetonka School Board Clerk and Board liaison to the Community Education Advisory Committee. “For many, it’s the first place where they start to build connections with Minnetonka Schools. It was a space where I first met other District parents and found ways to give back to the community, too.” Becker served as a leader within the Minnetonka Preschool & ECFE PTO and was a founding member of the Parenting with Purpose Speaker Series, which is now evolving to a podcast to provide additional resources for families.

MCE serves community members starting at birth all the way through adulthood, before school, after school, in the evening, on weekends and on non-school days. It provides opportunities for all learners to pursue their passions, develop their talents and build relationships in a safe, nurturing environment. MCE provides enrichment and recreation programs, music lessons, Adult Basic Education and programming for adults with disabilities in its Project SOAR program. In 2022-23, Project SOAR enrollments grew by 112%.

Explorers childcare is also offered through MCE. The program provides a positive environment where children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships and grow in confidence and independence. Explorers provided before and after-school childcare programming for 1,373 students this past year, from Junior Explorers (ages 4-5) through fifth graders. Nearly 1,000 students were served in Explorers childcare over the summer.

Minnetonka Preschool and ECFE provides a place for the youngest learners to dream, create, wonder and discover. Minnetonka Preschool is rated at the highest level (Four-Star Rating) by Parent Aware and follows

the Pyramid Model framework to promote children’s healthy social and emotional development. New additions to the 2022-23 Minnetonka Preschool program included a new playground, Spanish Immersion Preschool and Nature Adventure Preschool.

MCE events such as Tour de Tonka, Minnewashta Mud Run, the Tonka Trail Trot, Fall de Tonka and the Youth Triathlon continue to be popular, family-friendly favorites. Tour de Tonka has hosted riders from 71 of the 87 counties in Minnesota and from 44 different states in its 18-year history. Other events including the Fifth Grade Finales, East Meets West and the Dodgeball Tournament remain popular, as well.

MCE is excited to add new events to the lineup in 2023-24, including a LEGO Masters competition, a Jigsaw Puzzle Competition and Pizza Party and a Family BINGO night.

Each year, MCE counts on more than 3,000 volunteers to help its programs and events run smoothly. Beyond major and recreational events, Project SOAR, Holiday Family Giving and the Rake-a-Thon, Rec Basketball, Ski & Snowboard Club and other youth recreation leagues are supported by our community’s amazing network of volunteers, from service organizations, sports teams, businesses and families.

To learn more about the many ways to get involved with MCE, visit [minnetonkacommunityed.org](https://minnetonkacommunityed.org).



Community Education’s annual Tour de Tonka bike ride has become a staple of the west metro community, growing to more than 2,500 riders annually.

## Ahoy, Minnetonka! Podcast

Introducing Minnetonka's Newest Way to Share What's Happening in Our Community



In episode 10 of the new podcast, Superintendent David Law hosts guests Marietta Jacobsen '70 and Matthew Andrews, PhD '95, to discuss the ways the Minnetonka Alumni Association connects and celebrates students and graduates—from fundraising for teacher grants with the Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation to hosting signature events.

This spring, Minnetonka Schools launched *Ahoy, Minnetonka!*, the District's new podcast. Listeners can tune in to learn about the many amazing programs, resources and people that make Minnetonka Schools a unique place.

Each episode features Superintendent David Law leading deep conversations with the many people who make Minnetonka Schools one of the best public school districts in the nation—teachers, students, parents, principals, volunteers, alumni, School Board members, staff and administrators from across the District.

Superintendent Law encourages all members of the Minnetonka Community—past, present and future—to listen in. "The *Ahoy, Minnetonka!* podcast features many of the incredible things happening in the Minnetonka School District. I invite you to join me through this series of podcasts to meet all of the people that play a role in making Minnetonka school history. Together, we'll learn

the stories and talk through the ways we all work together to pursue excellence in the ways we live, lead and learn," said Superintendent Law.

In a recent episode of *Ahoy, Minnetonka!*, Superintendent David Law chats with leaders from the Minnetonka Alumni Association on the ways they connect and celebrate Minnetonka students and graduates—from fundraising for teacher grants with the Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation to hosting signature events, such as the annual Alumni Awards Brunch during Homecoming weekend and the All-Class All-Friends Reunion, which will take place in Downtown Excelsior next summer on Saturday, July 27, 2024.

You can find episodes of *Ahoy, Minnetonka!* on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube or wherever you listen. To learn more, visit [minnetonkaschools.org/ahoy](https://minnetonkaschools.org/ahoy).



# Preparing the World's Best Workforce

2022-23 Summary Report

This World's Best Workforce (WBWF) report summary, in accordance with 2013 Minnesota Statutes, shares Minnetonka Public Schools' progress toward the state's goal of creating the world's best workforce. This includes student achievement goals, the strategies and initiatives that Minnetonka engaged in to meet those goals and the progress made by the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Minnetonka Public Schools continues to evaluate and refine its plan to address the following five, state-identified goals: 1. All children are ready for Kindergarten; 2. All third-graders can read at grade level; 3. All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed; 4. All

students graduate from high school; and 5. All students are ready for career and college.

Since these achievement goals were set in the 2013 Minnesota Statutes, Minnetonka Public Schools has made progress toward achieving each one, as measured by national, state and local assessments.

The full World's Best Workforce report, which includes student achievement goals and the strategies and initiatives that Minnetonka engaged in to meet those goals, will be available on the District website at [www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf](http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf) following the December 7, 2023 School Board meeting.

## WBWF Goal: Children Are Ready for Kindergarten

The District measured this goal in a new way for 2022-23. It was measured by increasing the percentage of all incoming Kindergarten students in Minnetonka Public Schools who score at low risk on the Fastbridge Early Reading Screener. In 2022, 82.4% of Kindergarteners were at low risk according to the screener.

Results for Fall 2023 will be available following the December 7, 2023 School Board meeting through the District's World's Best Workforce website at: [minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf](http://minnetonkaschools.org/wbwf)

## WBWF Goal: Third Graders Can Read at Grade Level

In 2022-23, Minnetonka third grade students surpassed the state average by 22.0%, with 69.1% meeting or exceeding proficiency on the MCA-III test, compared to 47.1% of third graders statewide.

## WBWF Goal: Closing Achievement Gaps

The District remains committed to its work in closing achievement gaps in reading and math. As measured by the MCA-III (and detailed below), the gap between white and non-white students at Minnetonka is much smaller than the gap reported statewide.

### READING

**MINNETONKA:** 75.6% of white students and 69.5% of non-white students met or exceeded proficiency on the MCA-III Reading test. The gap is 6.1%.

**STATE AVERAGE:** Of the state's white students who took the MCA-III in Reading, 58.3% were proficient. Of the non-white students, 35.2% were proficient. The gap is 23.1%.

### MATH

**MINNETONKA:** 77.1% of white students and 70.8% of non-white students met or exceeded proficiency on the MCA-III Math test. The gap is 6.3%.

**STATE AVERAGE:** Of the state's white students who took the MCA-III in Math, 55.1% were proficient. Of the non-white students, 28.4% were proficient. The gap is 26.7%.

## WBWF Goal: Students Graduate

The four-year graduation rate for Minnetonka High School students, as determined by the Minnesota Department of Education, is 96.6% for the Class of 2022.\* Comparably, statewide, 83.6% of students in the Class of 2022 graduated in 2022.\*

## WBWF Goal: Students are Ready for College and Careers

The District measured this goal differently than it has in the past, with a focus on students achieving college readiness benchmarks in each individual subtest, rather than only the student's composite score. This goal is measured using ACT scores from the Class of 2023, a test that 637 students took (69.6% of the graduating class).

For the Class of 2023, 61.0% of Minnetonka High School seniors who took the ACT met or exceeded the readiness for college-level coursework in all four areas (English Composition, Algebra, Social Science and Biology) as measured on the ACT. Comparatively, 28.0% of graduates statewide in 2022\* who took the ACT were considered college-ready in all four subject areas.

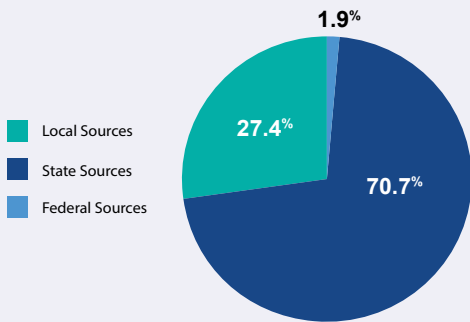
\*Information reflects the most recent comparable data available.

## Teaching & Learning Advisory Committee

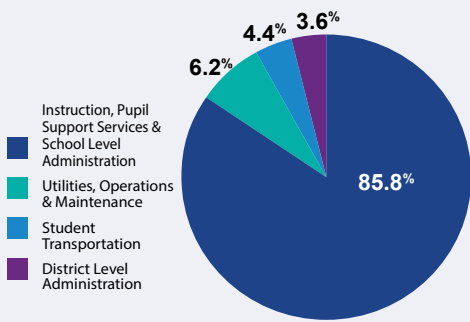
### 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

- Dr. Amy LaDue**, Associate Superintendent for Instruction
- Christine Breen**, Executive Director of Special Education
- Paula Calleja '24**, MHS Student
- Maria Chopite**, Minnewashta Spanish Immersion Teacher and Department Chair
- Amanda Fay**, Director of Instructional Technology and Media Services
- Paule Hocker**, Parent, Community Member, Scenic Heights Elementary Paraprofessional
- Sara Hunt**, Parent, Teacher on Special Assignment/Instructional Technology Coach
- Stephanie Johnson**, Parent, Community Member
- Karen Jordan**, Parent, Community Member
- Paige Koehnen**, Teacher, Grade 1, Clear Springs
- Erin Kopischke**, Reading Teacher-Spanish Immersion, Groveland
- Stephanie Nordstog**, Parent
- Nicolas Quintana '24**, MHS Student
- Dr. Matt Rega**, Parent, Director of Assessment
- Emily Rosengren**, MHS Assistant Principal
- Diane Rundquist**, Parent, Director of Advanced Learning
- Meghan Selinger**, School Board Member (2023 T&L Advisory Representative)
- Steve Urbanski**, Director of Curriculum
- Lisa Wagner**, School Board Member (2022 T&L Advisory Representative)
- Sara White**, Director of Teacher Development

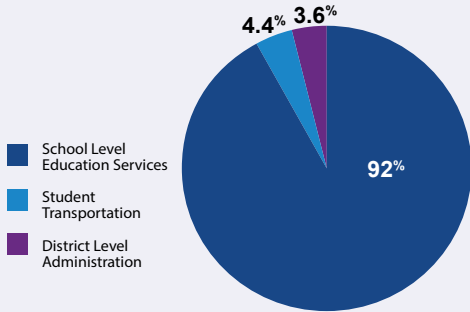
# Prudent Financial Management



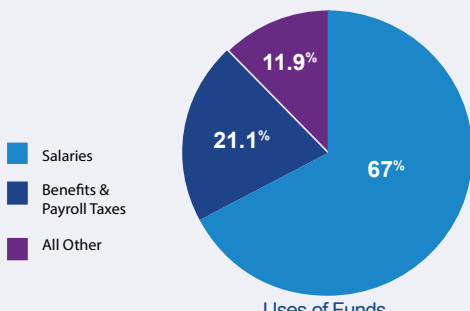
Sources of Funds FY22-23 Budget - General Fund



Uses of Funds by Function/Activity FY22-23 Budget - General Fund



Uses of Funds School Level vs. District Level FY22-23 - General Fund



Uses of Funds Employee Compensation vs. All Other FY22-23 Budget - General Fund

One of the Minnetonka School Board’s critical roles is to be a conscientious steward of taxpayer funds. “All of us on the School Board take the Board’s role as a responsible financial steward of District resources very seriously,” said Patrick Lee-O’Halloran, current School Board Treasurer and Board representative on the Citizen Finance Advisory Committee. “For that reason, the Board only seeks additional support from taxpayers as a last option.”

In Minnetonka, state funding makes up 70.7% of the annual operating budget, federal funds account for 1.9% and 27.4% is local funding. Of the 27.4%, approximately two-thirds of it is voter-approved referendum funding. The other local levies are based on formulas set in statute and approved by the School Board.

The Minnetonka School Board has worked diligently over the years to keep property tax levies as low as possible. The School Board has supported the District in pursuing the refinancing and restructuring of capital bonds to lower interest rates and in spreading the cost of capital over the life of the assets to the benefit of taxpayers. This has resulted in significantly lower annual bond payments, which, in turn, has translated into lower property tax levies than would have otherwise been possible.

District General Fund	Amended Budget 2022-23	Adopted Budget 2023-24
Beginning Assigned Fund Balance	\$910,000	\$910,000
Beginning Unassigned Fund Balance	\$22,626,367	\$23,000,676
Revenue	\$149,993,396	\$161,022,727
Expenditures	\$149,619,087	\$158,957,602
Difference	\$374,309	\$2,065,125
Transfer to Operating Capital	—	—
Ending Assigned Fund Balance	\$910,000	\$910,000
Ending Unassigned Fund Balance	\$23,000,676	\$25,065,801
Unassigned Fund Balance %	15.4%	15.8%
Student Enrollment	11,200	11,200

## Efficiency Excellence in Per-Pupil Spending

Minnetonka Schools provides exceptional and innovative programs for students and hires top teachers in the metro area while keeping its costs low. Through careful planning and efficiency, Minnetonka Schools spent \$386 less per pupil than the state average in 2021-22\* and \$2,300 below the cumulative average of its neighboring districts.

\*MDE Profiles. Information reflects the most recent comparable data available (General Fund Operating Expenditures).

2021-2022*	Cost Per Pupil
Minneapolis	\$19,830
St. Paul	\$19,119
St. Louis Park	\$16,158
Hopkins	\$15,197
Osseo	\$14,737
Edina	\$14,414
Eden Prairie	\$14,083
Wayzata	\$14,064
State Average	\$14,036
<b>Minnetonka</b>	<b>\$13,650</b>

# Consolidated Financial Statement

For the past 28 consecutive years—every year since 1994—Minnetonka Public Schools has received the Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. It is also one of just a few districts with an Aaa bond rating from Moody's. The District's financial team includes a Certified Public Accountant, and District financials are audited annually by the firm of CliftonLarsonAllen.

District General Fund	2022-23 Amended Budget	2023-24 Budget Amounts	2023-24 % of Total
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Property Taxes	\$34,565,174	\$39,892,593	24.8%
Earnings on Investments	\$900,000	\$1,500,000	0.9%
Other	\$2,904,745	\$2,753,840	1.7%
Local Sources	\$38,369,919	\$44,146,433	27.4%
State Sources	\$106,625,229	\$113,873,240	70.7%
Federal Sources	\$4,998,248	\$3,003,053	1.9%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$149,993,396</b>	<b>161,022,727</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
School Level Administration	\$5,485,351	\$4,872,567	3.1%
Elementary & Secondary Regular Instruction	\$85,927,773	\$90,294,060	56.8%
Vocational Education Instruction	\$1,335,162	\$1,527,389	1.0%
Special Education Instruction	\$24,064,444	\$26,031,893	16.4%
Instructional Support Services	\$6,660,258	\$7,536,677	4.7%
Pupil Support Services	\$5,845,480	\$6,139,114	3.9%
Sites & Buildings	\$8,019,362	\$8,433,794	5.3%
Fiscal & Other Fixed Cost Programs	\$1,286,354	\$1,396,046	0.9%
District Level Administration	\$815,963	\$886,905	0.6%
District Support Services	\$4,579,819	\$4,875,899	3.1%
Transportation	\$5,599,121	\$6,963,258	4.4%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 149,619,087</b>	<b>\$158,957,602</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Net Change in Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$374,309</b>	<b>\$2,065,125</b>	
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>			
Beginning of Year	\$23,536,367	\$23,910,676	
Transfer to Operating Capital	—	—	
<b>End of Year</b>	<b>\$23,910,676</b>	<b>\$25,975,801*</b>	

\*FY24 adopted budget estimate.

District General Fund: Includes General Fund Operations, Transportation & Activities. Note: Does not include Operating Capital, Arts Center, Dome Operations & Pagel Center.

This financial information provides only a snapshot of the District's unaudited finances. The audit firm of CliftonLarsonAllen will complete the external audit in November, and the District's Comprehensive Financial Audit Report will be posted to the District website once it is complete. Please view additional financial documents and reports at: [minnetonkaschools.org/finances](http://minnetonkaschools.org/finances).



## Finance Advisory Committee

2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

### Community Members

- Matt Chapman
- John Groton
- Jill Howe
- Deirdre Keller
- Charlie Steingas
- Cortney Swensen
- Rob Wolter

### School Board Representative

- Katie Becker (2022)
- Patrick Lee-O'Halloran (2023)

### District Administration

- Paul Bourgeois, CPA
- Jessica Hulitt
- Dr. Amy LaDue
- David Law, JD
- Ashwin Muni



★ Minnetonka Public Schools  
David Law, JD, Superintendent  
5621 County Road 101  
Minnetonka, MN 55345  
minnetonkaschools.org  
952-401-5000

NonProfit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Minnetonka  
Schools  
Permit 1287  
Hopkins, MN

## Parent & Community-wide Surveys Show Outstanding Support for Minnetonka Public Schools

Each year, all current parents are surveyed about their families' educational experience in our schools. This spring, we also administered a survey to members of the District's residential community. Results of both surveys showed deep support, connectivity and high confidence in our programs, schools, teachers and leadership.

