

MINNETONKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #276
District Service Center
5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Summary of February 19, 2026 Study Session

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in study session at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 19, 2026 in the Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Board Chairperson Kemerie Foss presided. Board members present were Sally Browne, Karen Jordan, Taunya Kolbinger, Dan Olson, Mike Remucal, Meghan Selinger and Superintendent Law, ex officio. Student School Board representative Izzy Shoss was also present. The Study Session was livestreamed on the District's YouTube channel.

CITIZEN INPUT

Chairperson Foss extended an invitation to members of the audience who wished to address the Board on any topic. She also read the guidelines for Citizen Input, for the benefit of those who wished to speak.

District employee Lee O'Brien spoke about the recent Operation Metro Surge by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and urged the Board to consider long-term efforts/solutions for those students, staff and family who may have experienced trauma from recent events.

PRESENTATION FROM AMERICAN INDIAN PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minnesota law requires public school districts to identify and serve American Indian students through culturally responsive programming that supports academic success, cultural identity, and belonging. This work is guided by parent and community voices and supported by American Indian Education (AIE) State Aid, which is intended to supplement, rather than replace, district responsibilities.

Each year, districts are required to work in collaboration with their American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) to develop actionable goals in five statutory areas:

1. supporting postsecondary preparation,
2. supporting academic achievement,
3. making curriculum relevant to students' cultural heritage,
4. providing positive reinforcement of student self-image, and
5. developing intercultural awareness among students, staff, and families.

These goals, along with action plans and monitoring of progress toward them, are developed and reviewed annually in collaboration between the District and the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC).

Minnesota State Statute Section 124D.78 states that the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) must meet by March 1 of each year to review the district's American Indian Education plan and vote on whether or not the committee concurs that the educational offerings that have been extended by the district have been meeting the needs of American Indian students. The outcome of this vote, along with supporting documentation, must be reported to the School Board and submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education. The vote and resolution must be presented to the School Board by one or more members of the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee. The vote is formally reflected on documentation provided by the Department of Education and must be submitted annually on March 1.

A vote of *concurrence* indicates that the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee believes the district's current programming is meeting the needs of American Indian students and may continue as implemented. A vote of *non-concurrence* does not indicate noncompliance or failure; rather, it initiates a structured process for the advisory committee, school board, and district leadership to engage in dialogue and identify opportunities to strengthen and enhance educational programming for American Indian students.

Tara Hawks of the AIPAC then presented to the Board. She shared information regarding the number of American Indian students in the district, the history of educational aid for these students, and the program requirements. She noted that the AIPAC serves in an advisory role in the district and helps to ensure their students are receiving culturally relevant and equitable educational opportunities. The current count of American Indian students in Minnetonka is 156. The AIPAC has 19 total members, including a chair, vice chair, social media advisor, and student representative.

Ms. Hawks noted that program services designed to increase completion and graduation rates of AI students must emphasize academic achievement, retention, and attendance; development of support services for staff, including in-service training and technical assistance in methods of teaching AI students; research projects, including innovative teaching approaches and evaluation of methods of relating to AI students; provision of career counseling to AI students; modification of curriculum, instructional methods, and administrative procedures to meet the needs of AI students; and instruction in AI language, literature, history, and culture. Districts offering programs may make contracts for the provision of program services by establishing cooperative liaisons with Tribal programs and AI social service agencies. These programs may also be provided as components of early childhood and family education programs.

Instructional Responsibilities

- Cultural Curriculum: Providing direct instruction in AI language, literature, history and culture
- Academic Achievement: Implementing programs designed to increase completion and graduation rates by emphasizing achievement, retention, and attendance
- Curriculum Modification: Adapting existing curriculum and instructional methods to make them relevant to the needs and cultural heritage of AI students
- Career Guidance: Providing tailored career counseling services to support postsecondary preparation
- Early Childhood Learning: Integrating AI education components into early childhood and family education programs

Administrative and Staff Responsibilities

- Professional Development: Developing support services for staff, including in-service training and technical assistance on teaching methods for AI students
- Program Innovation: Conducting research projects to evaluate and implement innovative teaching approaches
- Administrative Adaptation: Modifying administrative procedures to better accommodate and meet student needs
- Community Partnerships: Establishing cooperative liaisons and contracts with Tribal programs and AI social service agencies for program delivery
- Parental Advisory: Maintaining an American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) to ensure programs are planned and evaluated in consultation with parents

Ms. Hawks went on to say that the AIPAC was issuing a vote of nonconcurrence based on the district's failure to meet statutory obligations and provide equitable support for AI students. Specifically, this vote is rooted in the following:

- Staffing and Funding: The district has failed to appoint a coordinator to start the school year. Furthermore, while peer programs of this size typically employ two full-time staff members, we were offered a single, 30-hour position with no benefits, funded entirely by our own aid rather than district investment.
- Curriculum and Representation: There is a lack of dedicated Language and Culture classes, and AIPAC has been denied a seat on the Curriculum Advisory Board.
- Consultation: The district has not consulted AIPAC on American Indian-related curriculum as required.
- Professional Development: Teachers have not received AIPAC-vetted professional development, and counseling staff are not adequately trained on the specific opportunities available to our students.

Current data from the Minnesota Report Card highlights persistent achievement and opportunity gaps for our students. These disparities include:

- Attendance: 5 percentage points lower
- Academic Progress: 5 points lower
- MCA “Does Not Meet” category: 10 points higher
- Math and Reading Proficiency: 5-10 points below district averages
- Students Receiving SPED Services and/or Accommodations: 38 students or 24%

Recommendations

- Immediately hire or designate a dedicated American Indian Education Coordinator to ensure program leadership is in place without further delay. 35 students have IEPs or 504s and need cultural representation. 157 students need home visits.
- Hire 2 full-time positions, including a licensed educator to teach language and history classes.
- Allocate General Fund dollars to support these positions rather than relying solely on state American Indian Education Aid, ensuring the aid is used to supplement rather than supplant basic district responsibilities.

Board members thanked Ms. Hawks for the comprehensive presentation. Superintendent Law said he would be following up with the Board in writing regarding next steps on this item.

REVIEW OF POLICY #707: TRANSPORTATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

General Counsel and Executive Director of Human Resources Anjie Flowers and Transportation Manager Jonathan Wamsley presented the policy to the Board. Ms. Flowers explained that the bulk of the changes consist of language clean-up and will make the policy clearer to the reader.

In the discussion that followed, Board members suggested replacing the word “videotape” with the phrase “video recording.” A question was also raised regarding the phrase “midday buses” and it was agreed to retain that language, even though the district does not currently run buses at midday.

Superintendent Law noted that the policy would be brought back to the March 5 regular meeting for approval.

DISCUSSION ON UPDATED 2026 LEGISLATIVE POSITION STATEMENTS

Superintendent Law noted that the Board had reviewed the draft 2026 Legislative Position Statements document at its November study session and December regular meeting. The document focuses on the need for the Legislature to provide sufficient funding for key

funding formulas that are the backbone of programmatic stability for the District. We have also added additional interest areas that we will monitor based on our community feedback, Board goals and AMSD priorities.

Additional Interest Areas:

- Support efforts to enhance school safety including community based mental health
- Stabilize compensatory funding
- Support a reevaluation of Minnesota's assessment system
- Support an emphasis on student experiential learning opportunities
- Support research about student technology use in schools, including the use of AI

Board members were supportive of the additions to the document. Superintendent Law noted that it would be brought back to the March regular meeting for approval.

DISCUSSION ON LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY/ENROLLMENT TARGET

Superintendent Law began by noting that the School Board has a School Board Goal to ensure Long-Term Financial Stability. This Goal suggests a variety of strategies to implement including advocating for legislative change so that the District can ask for voter support for additional funding or use Board authority to raise the Local Optional Revenue, advocate for a larger increase in the per pupil funding, make reductions to expenditures, and make adjustments to the enrollment target to support a balanced budget. The Board has also prioritized maintaining a stable fund balance. As the state considers how to address a budget deficit for the upcoming fiscal biennium, it appears that legislative support to address our financial challenges is uncertain at best. With this in mind, and hoping to avoid additional cuts to staff and programs, District Administration is proposing an increase in the enrollment target, tiered over the next two years, which if successful will delay the need for additional cuts temporarily. The new proposed targets and financial impact were shared with the Board at their study session in January and their February regular meeting. Superintendent Law again went over the information that had been shared previously and asked for further direction from the Board.

In the discussion that followed, it was agreed that the Board needed to make a decision on this and bring it to a vote at an upcoming meeting. The following points were also raised:

- Residents of the community know that we need additional revenue in future years to sustain our programs and prevent budget cuts – this would be an avenue to do that
- These additional students could be absorbed without increasing staff
- There is a need to show the public how we would alleviate the pain points if we went ahead with this – dropoff and pickup, for example
- Better to raise revenue than cut expenses

- This is the only lever we currently have to raise revenue
- We can't depend on the Legislature – education funding is not a focus this year
- Open enrollment was a big issue in the 2019 school board election
- Could we tailor this to only accept additional students at sites where we have room?
- Some of our sites are closed to OE currently
- Additional students come with the perception of increased taxes and bigger class sizes
- Perhaps show the property tax impact on a \$300,000 house, a \$500,000 house, a \$750,000 house, etc.
- Need specific messaging to the parent community around this
- The bulk of new students come into our system at the kindergarten, sixth grade and ninth grade level
- Budget cuts will result in increased class sizes

Superintendent Law noted that this item would be brought back to the March 5 regular meeting for a vote. He also noted that demand for our programs continues to be strong, and we should have no trouble placing an additional 100 students if the Board decides to go in that direction. “Many districts don’t have that luxury,” he said.

REVIEW OF HEALTH AND DENTAL PREMIUM RATES FOR 2027

Mr. Bourgeois presented this item to the Board. He noted that the district has been self-insured for employee health and dental insurance since July 1, 2002. Self-Insurance for health and dental benefits means the district has its own plan for health and dental benefits and then contracts out third-party administration for the adjudication of claims. Premiums are contributed by employees out of the bi-weekly paychecks and by matching amounts from their fringe benefits compensation.

The School Board are the Trustees of the Self-Insurance Fund. There is a self-insurance advisory committee made up of representatives of all the employee groups of the district. This body makes recommendations to the School Board on annual premium levels and plan benefit levels for the School Board to consider when they are setting the annual premium rates and any plan design changes.

The Self-Insurance Fund has been very beneficial to both the District and employees. Since its inception, annual premium increases have averaged 4.15% over the first 24 years of the Self-Insurance Fund. In FY25, the Self-Insurance Fund finished the year at a small \$382,543 surplus, with a cash balance of \$9,036,871 and a fund balance after liability accruals of \$6,545,471. In FY26, claims have increased across the board with pulmonary, orthopedic and psychiatry claims accounting for the three highest claim categories. GLP-1 use for non-diabetes conditions is also accelerating at a 58% increase over FY25.

For FY27, Medical Trend (the term used in the medical industry for medical inflation) is running at 9.2% and Pharmacy Trend (the term used in the medical industry for prescription inflation) is running at 11.0%. CBIZ Actuaries have calculated that for the Minnetonka ISD 276 Self-Insurance Plan, based on the experience rates of the prior 24 months of actual claims and prescriptions generated by it is necessary to increase Medical Plan rates by 11.0% to break-even operations in FY27. This is 1.8% above the national trend this year with the bulk of that being accounted for by the increase in GLP-1 prescriptions.

For the Dental Plan, the Dental Trend is running at 4.5%. CBIZ Actuaries have calculated that for the Minnetonka ISD 276 Self-Insurance Plan it is necessary to increase Dental Plan rates by 2.84% to continue break-even operations in FY27.

Rates for FY27 are proposed as follows:

Base Plan Perform Network	FY26	FY27	Change
Employee	\$989	\$1,098	\$109
Employee + 1	\$1,682	\$1,868	\$186
Family	\$2,363	\$2,623	\$260
VEBA HRA Plan Open Access	FY26	FY27	Change
Employee	\$916	\$1,017	\$101
Employee + 1	\$1,559	\$1,731	\$172
Family	\$2,190	\$2,431	\$241
BCBS High Ded HRA Aware	FY26	FY27	Change
Employee	\$823	\$914	\$91
Employee + 1	\$1,400	\$1,554	\$154
Family	\$1,969	\$2,186	\$217
BCBS HD HRA High Value	FY26	FY27	Change
Employee	\$745	\$827	\$82
Employee + 1	\$1,264	\$1,404	\$140
Family	\$1,778	\$1,974	\$196

Dental Plan	FY26	FY27	Change
Employee	\$50	\$52	\$2
Family	\$122	\$126	\$4

The Self-Insurance Advisory Committee met on February 9, 2026 to review these options and voted unanimously to recommend to the School Board that for FY27 medical premiums be increased 11.0%, and dental premiums be increased 2.84%.

Board members agreed that while an increase in premium costs is never good news, they appreciated the thoughtful work of the committee in determining the amount of the increases.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the study session at 7:30 p.m. A special meeting of the Board followed.