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

Summary of August 20, 2026 Study Session

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in study session at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 20, 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 David Law, ex officio. 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 those who wished to speak.

District parent Nicole Nejezchleba spoke of her concerns with COSN (the Consortium for School Networking), which is a professional association for K-12 education technology leaders and school district IT professionals in the United States. She also discussed her concerns with the Blaschke Report, which is produced annually by COSN.

District parent Claire Patterson of Screen Smart Tonka commended the Board for the effort and time they have put into the topic of reducing screen time for students, but she expressed her disappointment at the vagueness of the District's communications on this topic. She also asked that an Advisory Committee be formed to further study this issue.

DISCUSSION ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL TRIPS

MHS Activities Director Ted Schultz presented this item to the Board. He shared the following information:

History

- 2010-2015: Few clubs/activities – district covered costs for entry fees, travel costs and lodging for students
- 2015-2020: Relatively few clubs/activities (2-3) – district covered entry fees, travel costs OR stay costs for students
- 2020-2024: Large increase in national opportunities (8-10) – district covered entry fees, travel costs OR stay costs for students

- 2025-2026: 12 clubs/activities – district covered substitute teachers, entry fees, and implemented $300/$400 stipend for travel/lodging per student
- In the past year, 159 students were covered at a total cost of $64,000 under a standardized funding practice

Mr. Schultz noted that the district's level of funding support is unique among Lake Conference schools, as no others provide funding for national trips. One of six Lake Conference schools cover entry fees, one of six cover the advisors' expenses, and none of the schools cover travel or lodging.

Mr. Schultz concluded by saying that the recommendation of administration is to reduce the per-student travel and lodging stipend to a flat $200 per student (lowering the estimated annual district cost to approximately $31,800). If district budgets continue to decline, consideration will be given to eventually transitioning to a model where national travel and lodging are fully funded through club fundraising.

In the discussion that followed, Board members raised the following points:

- Some clubs could be constantly fundraising throughout the year because they know that some students will compete at the national level every year (due to the club's history)
- Could we implement a needs-based application for the $200 stipend?
- Could parents be given the opportunity to contribute to a fund for students with financial hardship?
- Could fundraising be more group-centric? Not all students are able to fundraise.
- The community has a history of supporting students when they are visibly fundraising (car washes, bagging groceries, etc.)

The discussion concluded with the Board agreeing that the student stipend would be set at $200 for the upcoming year, with plans to revisit this topic in the future.

REVIEW OF POLICIES

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois proposed the creation of three new policies in relation to the District's new Perpetual Endowment Trust Fund. The policies are:

- 735: Investment of Perpetual Endowment Trust Fund Corpus
- 736: Gifts and Donations for Perpetual Endowment Trust Fund
- 737: Use of Investment Earnings from Perpetual Endowment Trust Fund

After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to officially approve the policies at the next regular Board meeting in September.

UPDATE ON BUILDING BOND CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

Mr. Bourgeois gave an update on the upcoming construction projects at various district sites. He noted that upon approval of the $85 million Building Bond Referendum on November 4, 2025, the district has been working with ATS&R Architects to turn conceptual plans for each building into actual plans for construction. The district has been focusing on the two largest projects at the middle schools, which account for $51 million of the $85 million in proposed projects working through the design and labyrinthine permitting process.

The MMW project bids were opened today at 2:00 p.m. The MME project bids will be opened on August 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. The low bids will be presented to the Board for approval at the Regular School Board Meeting on September 10, 2026, and construction will commence in September 2026 at both sites, with completion by December 31, 2027.

Mr. Bourgeois then went through every upcoming project, sharing details and architectural renderings for each. He concluded by noting that construction inflation is up significantly, with the Builders Cost Index up 13.5% from June of 2025 to June of 2026. He noted that the district is working hard to deliver what was promised and stay within the $85 million in bond resources.

The Board thanked Mr. Bourgeois for the incredible detail in his presentation and noted they were excited to get these projects going!

UPDATE ON OPEB TRUST FUND

Mr. Bourgeois presented this item to the Board. He began by noting that at the School Board Meeting of August 7, 2008, the School Board established the Minnetonka Independent School District 276 Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Revocable Trust to provide assets for the payment of lifelong post-employment benefits for health insurance owed to employees who had been working under contracts with those provisions prior to July 1, 2002. The School Board specifically chose to establish a revocable trust, as the statutes authorizing such trusts allowed for the trusts to be either irrevocable or revocable. Under the statutes governing the revocable trust option, there is a provision that allows for any excess assets over the actuarial accrued liability to be withdrawn by the School Board and used for any District purpose.

In the ensuing approximately 13 years, OPEB Trust assets grew from their original amount of $17,742,555 in August 2008 to $28,051,349 as of June 20, 2021, while the OPEB Liability decreased from $17,742,555 in August 2008 to $10,985,427 as of June 30, 2021.

During Fiscal Year 2022, the School Board decided to withdraw $9,850,000 of OPEB Trust Excess Assets so that they could be invested in the construction of the VANTAGE MOMENTUM Building, which will be a 100-year asset for the District.

Since that time, the OPEB Trust has continued to accrue enough investment earnings every year to cover the cost of annual OPEB benefits. This is of immense value to the District, because absent the OPEB Trust, the District's General Operating Fund Unappropriated Balance would be significantly lower than it is today.

From FY2008 through FY2026, $12,326,977 has been disbursed from the OPEB Trust to the General Operating Fund to pay for retiree benefit expenditures. If the OPEB Trust had not been available, the General Operating Fund would be at just $9,588,856, rather than the pre-audit estimated $21,915,833 on June 30, 2026.

Mr. Bourgeois then presented a detailed history of the fund, from its inception to the present day. He concluded by noting that for the next 13 years of the fund, at 6.5% annual returns, there would be $16,093,196 in investment earnings, $8,143,221 in benefit withdrawal dividends, and $23,594,934 in assets remaining on June 30, 2039. He said the fund had been an incredible asset for the District.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the study session at 7:45 p.m.