

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

Summary of June 17, 2021 Study Session

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in study session at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 17, 2021 in the Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Chairperson Chris Vitale presided. Other Board members present were: Mark Ambrosen, Katie Becker, John Holcomb, Mike LeSage, Christine Ritchie, Lisa Wagner and Superintendent Dennis Peterson, ex officio.

Prior to the study session, the Board met in closed session to discuss Dr. Peterson's year-end review. They also held a special meeting to approve the filing period for the November School Board election and several Consent Agenda items.

MTSS REPORT FROM CAREI

Assistant Superintendent Amy LaDue and Executive Director of Student Support Services Michelle Ferris presented this item to the Board. They explained that the purpose of tonight's discussion was to provide the Board with an update on the initial findings from the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Evaluation. Dr. Kim Gibbons and a team from the University of Minnesota's CAREI (Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement) were present virtually to give an overview of MTSS, provide general findings from the evaluation, and share next steps in this process.

Implementation Review

Through our partnership with CAREI, information has been collected to evaluate the first four guiding questions related to our district's implementation of a MTSS framework, which has often been referred to in Minnetonka as Response to Intervention (RTI). This information is intended to help our district prioritize, plan, and implement the MTSS framework with fidelity to ensure we are meeting student needs and improving student outcomes. The implementation review has been conducted as a continuous improvement process which will result in the creation of a consistent District-wide MTSS guide. As stated previously, rather than imposing judgments as to whether practices are "good or bad," the goal of this review is to provide information that will help facilitate our district's efforts to move to the next level of performance.

Guiding Questions

The following evaluation questions were identified by CAREI to guide the systematic data collection and analysis processes:

1. To what extent is Minnetonka Public Schools implementing an aligned (K-12) MTSS framework across all buildings?
2. To what extent do teachers and staff support implementation of a MTSS framework?
3. To what extent is staffing sufficient and equitable across tiers of service to support quality implementation of an MTSS framework?
4. To what extent is staffing efficient and responsive to appropriately address student needs?
5. What is the relationship between implementation of the MTSS framework and student achievement and behavioral outcomes?
6. What is the impact of the MTSS framework on special education child count?
7. To what extent is special education programming for mild disabilities consistent with best practice research?
8. How will the results of the MTSS audit be organized into a 3-year implementation plan for the district and each building?

Dr. Gibbons noted that her team had looked at what the District has done over the past two years, noting that much of what we've done has addressed student needs and intersects within the MTSS Framework (SAEBRS, Social Thinking, Seesaw, Experiential Learning, MGEM, 1-1 iPads). Dr. Gibbons' team is pleased with the work the district is doing thus far. She also said, "core beliefs matter," and that's where we start. Dr. Gibbons' staff did a few surveys with our staff. One of the highest things that has an impact on students is high collective teacher efficacy. This means helping staff to understand the way teachers go about their work really has an impact on student achievement and growth. Some are within our control. Some are not. What matters? Instruction, environment, curriculum, organization.

Next Steps

CAREI staff will facilitate professional development followed by action planning with District and building staff. June 15 was the first professional learning day for teams at which CAREI provided embedded professional learning, to create a shared understanding and common foundation for MTSS while unpacking the findings from the first part of the review. This will include the scope of the work to be completed over the next few months and beyond, since this is a multi-year proposal.

CAREI will also work with the District leadership team to prioritize the findings and develop a District action plan to guide and support these efforts. This District plan will provide guidance and direction for sites as they begin action planning in August.

Ms. Ferris noted that they are excited for the opportunities that will be provided through this intentional process work and ongoing District-wide consistent implementation of MTSS. The District will continue to work with CAREI to complete the evaluation and address all eight questions posed for the review. Additionally, CAREI will provide support to the District and building leadership teams to prioritize findings, develop action plans, and deepen our District-wide processes.

In the discussion that followed, Board member Holcomb asked that as the team thought about this work through the lens of the Minnetonka framework, were there any areas of observation or concern? Dr. LaDue responded by saying that strong core instructional practices give us a firm foundation to help us continue to further our MTSS work. We have a strong reading program in place. As we prioritize, we will consider how we better support buildings to support teachers to make sure we meet the needs of all students.

Board member LeSage asked if a three-year implementation plan was best practice. Dr. Gibbons noted that when Districts do these types of reviews, many needs get identified, and there is no way to do everything at once, so best practice is to address the highest priority items first. Middle level items follow, then lower priority items. Dr. LaDue noted that there is a systematic process that they'll take the District and buildings through and identify priorities based on their evidence and research but also what comes out of what the principals/building leaders say.

CITIZEN INPUT

Chairperson Vitale extended an invitation to members of the audience who wished to address the Board on any topic. He also read the guidelines for Citizen Input, for the benefit of those who wished to comment. The following people then addressed the Board:

Minnetonka resident Amber Bullington spoke about Goal 2. At graduation practice, a summa cum laude graduating senior was announced using their dead name (transgender person's former name). This student did PSEO, as did Ms. Bullington's daughter.

Shorewood resident Michelle Ebben spoke about Goal 2 on behalf of another person—an adult scared to speak out when thoughts don't align with those who are speaking out. Please don't engage with politics in our public schools. Don't teach kids what to think. Teach them how to think. Say no to social justice activities. It creates anxiety for students who are worried what others think if they don't participate in social activism at school. Be supportive of all students.

Excelsior resident Karen Zais spoke about Goal 2. She is representing VETE (Voices for Excellence Through Equity). Please revise Goal 2 to make its language more measurable. Key terms. Achievable goals (SMART GOALS) and getting direct feedback from stakeholders. VETE would like to help define terms for the Board, such as "equity." Bring in outside experts to do this training. They are giving more input via email. They will create another version of their goals in August.

Minnetonka teacher Ali Alowonle spoke about Goal 2. Thank you for listening to her last request about being empathetic to those who do not feel supported. Asking for DEI training for all employees. There was nothing constructive or actionable in past updates on Goal 2. She said ideas she brought up during training were dismissed. Examine survey data and use it. She lives for her students. She said Minnetonka should bring in DEI experts to create belonging lessons for students. She said the belonging training

was not effective. She was upset about a student who did not feel included and was upset during and after the belonging training provided by the District. She said some students are experiencing microaggressions.

St. Louis Park resident Marissa Rangel (District employee at MME) spoke about Goal 2. She said she is taking a big risk personally and professionally. She said there is a damaging climate in the District. Has raised concerns about lack of diversity in the curriculum. Her daughter has experienced harassment. She said staff feel unprotected. She said some students were worried about reporting various incidents. How long do we need to wait to feel safe and heard? Asking for baseline student and teacher data. Drive the decision with data.

Plymouth resident Harrison Schmidt (District employee at MMW) spoke about Goal 2. Pleased to see Goal 2, and focusing on relationships with students. But this is not enough to deliver on our Goal 2 promises. Prejudice, whether intended or not, is harmful. Create a culture of awareness about how we might be harming each other without trying to and how we can let each other know when we are hurting each other, how to have difficult conversations, and how students can recognize their own bias. MMW has made good strides, and the principal has had his back, but the District has not shown the same support. Our District is at a crossroads. We must leap or fall behind. He is struggling, as a teacher, to create an inclusive environment of equity and inclusion. Wants training for this and wants the District to sign on to this commitment so he's not alone. Hopes that the Board does not fear to move us forward in this area.

Minnetonka resident Kirby Crow spoke about Goal 2. They wanted to talk about study sessions being livestreamed or recorded, as students often have concrete schedules. They spoke about student walkouts at the middle school and high school. They said if students knew what was discussed at study sessions they might understand better about the work being done. They asked that all would advocate for equity. They said that students are brave when speaking out, but that people who are white and privileged should do this also. They asked that during the Board's summer retreat that they do some anti-racist training of their own.

Minnetonka resident Laura Skistad spoke about education and how all students have gifts. Education is not imposing a teacher's or administrator's ideology. Students should not know the politics of their teacher. Teachers should respect students and families to allow for many viewpoints. Celebrate achievements. Don't elevate some students or hold back others. Bigotry is wrong and celebrates mediocrity. Remain focused on academic excellence. Political and ideological neutrality should be required in classrooms. Parents should be able to review syllabi for each class so they can review what is being taught in the classroom.

Minnetonka resident Nicole Kirt spoke about Goal 2. She is Native American and has two boys enrolling here in the fall. She is open enrolling from Hopkins. She started in Hopkins because she wanted her kids to value diversity. Hopkins had massive budget cuts, however, and as a result, their school cut the gifted and talented program. She said

her district's leadership focused on anti-racism and that everything was very different after that. She said this was disturbing to her family. Class sizes rose to 30 kids, with combined grades. She said she was told it was about an equitable experience for all. She hopes Minnetonka does not adopt these practices and loses its focus on academics.

Minnetonka resident Scott Krohn said he has met five people in the past week whose families are leaving their home districts, and three of the families are coming to Minnetonka because of the excellence. He said you're going to get a lot of pressure, but stay the course. Don't give in to the pressure.

Chanhassen resident Julian Janes asked the Board to continue to support excellence in education. He thinks the Board is doing a good job of supporting all families. He came here with his three kids many years ago, for the District's excellence in academics. Is dismayed that St. Louis Park and Hopkins have eroded their gifted and talented programs.

Chanhassen resident John Odom noted that the last of his four children just graduated. His student feels prepared for next steps. Pleased the District is still ranked #1 (Niche.com). He said we need to make sure curriculum is #1 and that parents need to be the ones teaching morals. He feels curriculum needs to be free of that. He said that's the best thing for you to do for African American students such as his kids. He asked the Board to resist pressure. He asked the Board to stay focused on academics.

Shorewood resident Alfredo Francisco Perez said the curriculum should be determined by the Board and by the administration—not the students, the teachers, the parents or the PTO. Move away from special days or months or identifying people by their differences. For example, he is a Cuban-American, and he wants to be celebrated for all gifts he brings to the table and not his race. He would like the excellence in academics to continue.

Excelsior resident David Evans spoke about neutral classrooms. He is thinking about pulling his tenth grader out of Minnetonka and sending her to Breck or moving to Florida. She spent very little time in the classroom. He didn't like the masks, and if masks are required in the fall, his tenth grader won't be back. Same with mandatory vaccines. Please lead, don't follow. Is worried about the Bigs taking over (Big Banks, Big Pharma, etc). Resist Marxism. Don't drift into a military dictatorship like China. Choose freedom over a dictatorship (which ties into the masks and the vaccine). Probably can't keep politics out of school but we need to try. We love what you've done in the past, but it's been a hard year. Please steer us toward freedom.

Chanhassen resident Karen Jordan has an eighth grader at MMW. The past year has provided a unique glimpse into classrooms. She said Communism is something that she feels is present in our schools and that some of our students think is a positive thing. She said she was upset that Angela Davis was recognized as a person of the day. We should educate our children about the dangers of Communism. Communist countries have all kinds of problems, and there is no freedom of speech or movement. She asked that the

Board review social studies curriculum to better educate students about the dangers of Communism.

Chanhassen resident Lenny Schwartz was born in Belarus. His family is Jewish. He emigrated here at a young age. Open-enrolled into Minnetonka after he says his district began appeasing the social justice activists. He does not believe students should know the political leanings of teachers or staff. He said that with the student walkouts, students were forced to follow the crowd or be labeled as racist. If teachers are going to teach a controversial topic, they should bring up multiple perspectives. School should be for academic excellence, and that's why people come and stay in the Minnetonka School District.

Minnetonka resident Candace Rust spoke about the school year. She thanked the Board and Dr. Peterson for helping to keep kids in the classroom this past year. She feels they have had a great experience until this past year. She asked that the District keep all politics out of the school classroom. This past year teachers and principals have brought politics into the classroom. Sex, gender and everything that goes along with that are something that should be taught at home and not in the classroom. Books and curriculum used should be uploaded to the District website for all to see, to ensure a politically neutral environment.

Excelsior resident James Johnson is a community member, taxpayer, voter and recent graduate of MHS. Minnetonka should reconsider having month-long identity months. Students come to school to learn and grow, not to come and celebrate being Black or White or anything else. Moving away from identity-focused, which has teachers highlighting sex workers, rappers and others simply because of skin color. This excludes others from recognition. We need to inspire all students to be better. Identity does not determine your future.

Chanhassen resident Paul Staut spoke about equity. Open-enrolled in Excelsior for language Immersion. He was not pleased when the Governor's requested honoring of George Floyd with a Moment of Silence happened over the announcements at Excelsior. He sees Minnetonka as a gem in a sea of equity mediocrity and wants to protect his child from harmful social programs. Bullying is a part of life. He condemns it, but he will not accuse the District of supporting inequity. No one here today has said they will move their child from this District because of equity. They want academic excellence and equity. You can't have both. Please choose excellence.

Shorewood resident Kari Hatch spoke about Minnetonka Schools being at risk. Private schools are being flooded with families fleeing from social activism. She said that children are not a social experiment, and they should not be exploited in the classroom. She was not pleased with the walkout. She said large groups hid in Pagel because they were worried about teachers and what teachers would think of them. Transparency is important. A syllabus and curriculum should be made available in advance. She is against political activism. We need to move back to promoting critical thinking. She pulled one of

her kids from the District. He feels safe where he's at now. She hopes to bring him back, but please keep up with making it safe for everyone, because this year wasn't.

Chanhassen resident Melinda Andrews spoke to the Board about schools not being political and that teaching the art of debate is important – how to separate facts from emotions.

Minnetonka resident Gabriella Brose has had children in the District for 14 years. She wanted to thank Dr. Peterson and his staff. Her children who have graduated from MHS are doing great. She came to this country 20 years ago and her country is still devastated, and she is so pleased with the District. She is upset she has been blocked from parent Facebook pages because she has brought up concerns about Communism. She asked that we train teachers on how to have politically neutral classrooms. At graduation, say the students' name and accomplishments when they commence. Please hire teachers based on their experience and accomplishments, not based on politics.

Deephaven resident David Eaton from Deephaven thanked the Board and Dr. Peterson for their service. He said all school districts have to wrestle with controversy at times, like we are doing tonight. We should remain committed to academic excellence and to create productive, effective citizens. Focusing on education is tough right now. It can be a distraction with the energy from groups that want to push their ideology in. There's a balance of respecting opinions, but you do not want to create an environment where other students then feel things are hostile. The District should be a safe and inclusive place for all families. Policy 607 has been reviewed several times since the 1970s. Please review it. No indoctrination.

Excelsior resident Michael Persson graduated from the District in 1991. He said he thinks everyone has the same goal—teach kids how to think, not what to think. There shouldn't be outside influences stepping in. BLM and CRT are a political scam and people need to remember it's illegal to discriminate. He said the MCEE is creating division in this District. He moved his child out of the District because of fears of this progressive movement. Do not succumb to the demands of these outside influences.

St. Louis Park resident Bruce Nettleman spoke about open-enrolling here for academic excellence. His son is going to be an eighth grader at MMW and two youngest will be in Minnetonka next year. St. Louis Park 3rd and 5th grade, it feels like indoctrination. They removed their gifted and talented program. He can't think of a bigger reason to move than that. He spoke about equity and equality and the differences between them. We hope Minnetonka will raise our kids up with the expectation they will be challenged. Stand firm. Don't become educated beyond your intelligence. Have common sense.

Chairperson Vitale thanked all of the speakers for their comments.

REVIEW OF VISION DOCUMENT

This item was tabled.

BELONGING REPORTS FROM SECONDARY PRINCIPALS

MMW Principal Freya Schirmacher, MME Principal Pete Dymit, and MHS Principal Jeff Erickson presented updates on the efforts of their Belonging Committees in their schools.

MMW Principal Freya Schirmacher shared the following information:

- Search Institute – District-wide training
- Training on Gender Identity and Inclusive Practices
- Training on Student Mental Health and Understanding Emotions
- Facilitating Difficult Conversations
- Spring Full Sail Awards
- Advisory Student Lessons – empathy, multiple perspectives, non-judgment
- Heritage Months/Partnership with PTO/DEI Committee
- Student and Parent Belonging Committees (VIBE team)
- Student Survey—results were very positive

Student Feedback:

- Feel supported and welcomed by staff and peers
- Teachers don't always hear hurtful comments
- Not always comfortable/confident with reporting hurtful comments
- Not sure of how administration responds to hurtful comments or what the process is

Parent Feedback:

- E-learning was accommodating and helpful to many students
- Helped students realize that learning can happen “outside the box”
- Continue to look for ways to focus on strengths, find ways for students to participate and connect
- Continue to highlight the heritage months, including neurodiversity and celebrating students of all abilities

Student Ideas to Create a More Connected Community

- Do more team building activities
- Give us more time to meet people
- Give us different times to socialize
- Open discussion and more talking time before classes start
- Be inclusive and kind
- More acceptance of minorities
- Do more group activities
- A free period once a week to connect with friends
- More clubs and groups

- Start teaching LGBTQ+ history
- More in-depth and accurate Native American history in Social Studies classes
- Speak out more on social issues

Thoughts for Next Year

- Search Institute/Relationships Work
- Reconnecting all students – E-learners and in-person
- Deeper dive into curriculum
- “Speak Up At School”
- Continue the work with WOC, MOC, GSA and other groups
- Belonging Committee/building lead
- Increase participation/student and parent voice

MME Principal Pete Dymit offered the following information:

Overview of the Year

- Sixteen students on the committee, in addition to school counselors
- Bi-monthly meetings
- Focused mainly on education/awareness/celebration and friendship
- Utilized the Morning Show as the primary venue
- Successful in increasing awareness, celebrating highlighted groups and piloting a friendship support and mentoring program

Committee Feedback on Improvements for 2021-22

- Shift focus beyond race, ethnicity and religion – more awareness of disabilities and more focus on social justice issues
- More classroom-based discussions on topics and issues related to belonging
- Book/documentary discussion groups
- Optional discussion groups on current issues of social justice
- More focus on developing empathy in students as a strategy to address harassment and exclusion
- Stronger messaging from the leaders on expectations and consequences for bullying and harassment
- More focus on fostering advocacy in other students
- More resources and supports for students struggling with making friends and not feeling a sense of belonging
- Stronger connections and coordination with student government on efforts
- More representation of eighth grade students on the committee

MHS Principal Jeff Erickson offered the following information:

Overview of the Year

- Staff have been trained to interrupt, question, educate and echo
- Messages of inclusion on the morning announcements – given by Principal Erickson
- Continued work on relationships – making sure students know who they can talk to when there's an issue
- Student panel on belonging – 12 students shared their experiences with staff
- Staff debrief in May
- AAPI Month – students interviewed leaders within the community – very powerful
- Junior Unity Day in early June
- Speaker Keith Hawkins

Focus for Next Year

- Ensuring a safe environment
- Continuing to work with the Search Institute
- Continuing with staff training on providing a safe space for students
- Will continue to work with teachers on Board Policy #607
- More opportunities for student leadership (i.e. the Teaching and Learning Student Advisory Board)

In the discussion that followed, Board members asked questions regarding how to get all students involved in this work, not just those students who are known as activists; how to balance the students' enthusiasm with the complexities of this work; how to better see and understand others' perspectives; and whether the committees should be reporting to the full student body on their work.

REVIEW OF COUNSELORS' INSIGHTS

Dr. Peterson and Dr. LaDue introduced this item by saying that the counselors from the elementary, middle and high school buildings would be providing an overview of how the 2020-21 school year had gone. A video was then shown where counselors were interviewed talking about the year's successes and challenges.

In the discussion that followed, Board member Becker thanked the counselors for ensuring access for all students this past year via an electronic link that the students could use to make an appointment. She also thanked the counselors for adjusting their hours to accommodate more students' schedules. Board member Holcomb noted that the elementary counselors are being pulled in many directions, and we need to make sure the schools are resourced properly. Dr. LaDue responded by saying that this work ties into MTSS, and part of that work is determining what are those roles and responsibilities and making sure we meet the needs of all students.

REVIEW OF SPRING NWEA RESULTS

Director of Assessment Dr. Matt Rega led the discussion. He explained that the NWEA is an adaptive test that measures what students are ready to learn in the areas of Math and Reading. This is the tenth year of District-wide implementation. The following are key summary points in the analysis of the Spring 2021 administration of the NWEA:

- By Fifth Grade, English, Chinese, and Spanish students are performing at the early Twelfth Grade level in Math and mid Ninth Grade level in Reading
- By Third Grade, Chinese Immersion and English students are performing the same on the Reading Test, and Immersion students are continuing to do well on this English test. The current models for Reading based on NWEA data are effective for all three languages

Math Performance

- Among English students, e-Learners out-performed Hybrid student RIT growth in Grades **K, 1, and 6**
- Among Chinese Immersion students, e-Learners surpassed Hybrid student RIT growth in Grades **1 and 4**
- Among Spanish Immersion students, e-Learners surpassed Hybrid student RIT growth in Grades **K, 1, 2, 3, and 7**

Reading Performance

- Among English students, e-Learners out-performed Hybrid student RIT growth in Grades **K, 1, 5, and 6**
- Among Chinese Immersion students, e-Learners surpassed Hybrid student RIT growth in Grades **1, 2, 4, 5, and 7**
- Among Spanish Immersion students, e-Learners surpassed Hybrid student RIT growth in Grades **3, 5, 6, and 7**

Overview

The NWEA assessments were completed in May, and the results reflect the hard work of teachers to prioritize their instructional focus on essential learnings due to the multiple learning models and environments in which students received instruction. Teachers used the Minnetonka Essential Learnings, aligned to the Minnesota State Standards, to guide instruction and set goals for the school year. Dr. Rega then explained that tonight's report would focus on Spring performance in the areas of Reading and Math. The report will discuss RIT performance which is the scale that NWEA uses to show growth. Regardless of the grade level, a student with a RIT score of 200 is ready to learn a specific set of skills; this makes NWEA very useful for instruction.

Summary of Results

- Grade 7 students receiving Special Education services out-performed their peers not in Special Education according to Reading Fall to Spring growth targets.
- In Math, African American students improved in 4 of the 8 grade levels measured.
- In Math, Hispanic students saw gains at 4 of 8 grade levels as well with the largest increase occurring among Second Graders.
- There are no significant gaps in performance between Open-Enrolled and Resident students for both Reading and Math. By Second Grade, RIT scores are virtually the same in Math and Reading.
- As Minnetonka students move into the Middle School the acceleration of the middle student is evident. For example, a typical Minnetonka Fifth Grade student is performing at the mid Ninth Grade level in Reading at the early Twelfth Grade level in Math according to the current NWEA national norms. If a student is on grade level and performing at the Fifth Grade level, he or she will notice a significant difference in performance when his or her peers are six grade levels ahead of that individual.

Dr. Rega then walked the Board through the results, sharing specific information by grade, building and program (i.e. High Potential, Immersion, Special Education, LEP, etc.). He concluded his report by offering the following recommendations:

Previous Spring Scores Compared to Current Spring Scores

The NWEA Spring results are a snapshot in time of student performance, and the results should be used in conjunction with other formative assessments to make instructional decisions. Elementary and Middle School staff used Oral Reading Fluency Assessments and Benchmarking Assessments to triangulate data to ensure ample data is used to help drive instruction. Utilizing the *Learning Continuum* information as well as websites such as www.interventioncentral.org, teachers will have tools to help them differentiate for their students. In addition, teachers will need to continue to use the state test specifications to help plan more effectively to meet the needs of students taking the new Reading Common Core State Standards assessment.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Student Growth Compared with English Students

Although LEP students are not significantly closing the gap between non-LEP students in Minnetonka, many are meeting their growth targets by a significant margin. However, there are a few important points to note among Fifth Grade LEP students on the Reading Test. From Fall to Spring, this grade level saw 80 percent of students meet their growth targets. In fact, Grades 2-5 saw English Language Learners surpass the 50 percent Fall to Spring growth target, which is the national average for all students. In Reading, 4 out of 8 grade levels surpassed the 50 percent mark, and in Math, 5 out of 8 surpassed this threshold among students receiving ELL services.

This is especially important to the Minnetonka ELL program as the District monitors Reading performance closely through Third Grade to show how students are performing in Reading by the end of Third Grade as part of a state initiative.

It is important to note that there are a small number of students at each grade level within the LEP population, so it will be important for staff to analyze the specific student results prior to the start of the next school year. It would be an effective strategy for teachers to vertically plan with English and LEP teachers to ensure that strategies are in place for students to learn the necessary prerequisite comprehension skills moving into the next grade level. Common Assessments could be implemented to target specific deficient skills identified for the grade level.

Special Education

According to Student Support Services District leadership, students receiving Special Education services have a variety of disabling conditions that may impact, such as auditory processing needs or receptive and expressive language. In addition, students may need a teacher in close proximity to help keep them focused or to work with them using different modalities. In many ways, the data for students in Special Education can be seen as positive, with some areas to monitor. For example, Grade 7 students receiving Special Education services out-performed their peers not in Special Education according to Reading Fall to Spring growth targets. Also, in Reading, Grade 6 students in Special Education saw 50.0 percent of students reach their growth targets compared to their non-Special Education peers who had 56.0 percent reach growth targets.

To continue the positive trend, there needs to be collaboration among Special Education and non-special education staff to ensure that students receive targeted intervention in the areas of most need. For example, students should receive core instruction by their homeroom teacher, and depending on the needs of the students, Resource students should receive supplemental instruction by the resource teacher. The amount of time and type of intervention the student should receive depends on the deficient areas of the student. Students who need extra support should receive more intense intervention. Careful progress monitoring of student performance is one way that teachers can ensure that students are meeting their short term goals.

For Special Education students, it will be important to measure their growth in the Fall, Winter and Spring, especially for those students performing below the 40th percentile. Special education teachers will need to work with classroom teachers to analyze the specific grade level data found in the NWEA MAP grade level report. This report should be shared during data discussion meetings at each of the elementary schools. In addition, Special Education teachers, Reading specialists, ELL teachers, and various building leaders now have full access to reporting tools from the NWEA site and have been shown how to access the reports and work with the data. This will prove to be useful when analyzing strand level data in a timely manner. In addition to the report access, it is recommended that buildings create or update common assessments to provide teachers the opportunity to view data through item analysis. The NWEA site provides sample

questions tied to the strands to help with these types of assessments, however, the assessments themselves are not disaggregated at the individual item level.

Lastly, with the Sourcewell edSpring data warehouse system that was implemented three years ago, it will help data teams to analyze student results in a more efficient and effective manner.

District Performance Compared to Nation

The data from the Spring 2021 NWEA administration show that student data across all grade levels and subjects will need to be studied at the site level by building and District-level leadership to better understand the performance that occurred this Spring compared to other years. For the past several years, scores have remained steady, and this year appears to be an anomaly for Minnetonka students due to the COVID Pandemic and the needs for students to learn within multiple learning models. The information included above will provide us with information that will help District-level leaders and building staff look more closely at the strand level data. District leaders and building teams have traditionally participated in data discussions at the elementary level, and those discussions should continue again next Fall. The charts above will be used to track trends among the strands over multiple years. With this information, we will be able to look for areas of strengths and areas of growth. This information will prompt a closer look at each individual grade level's strand information not only at the elementary level but also at the middle level. It is recommended that District-level leaders continue what was started in year's past and engage middle level grade level teams in on-going data discussions tied to NWEA results. In addition, Middle School staff will continue to work with each other to implement common assessments between both Middle School sites.

Immersion

When students reach the Third Grade, the discrepancies that may have existed earlier disappear for both Reading and Math. Unlike previous years, the current Third Grade Immersion students are performing at similar levels as their English cohorts in Reading, despite having English Reading instruction for only one year. As Immersion moves to the secondary level, the program will be monitored closely.

For Spanish and Chinese Immersion students, the STAMP 4S assesses the target language at the Middle School level. At the elementary level, the AAPPL assessment was administered starting in the Fall of 2013 and measures Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking, consistent with the STAMP 4S. The K-5 Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) implemented four years ago, required extensive training for teachers throughout the Immersion program, and other assessments, such as the STAMP 4S and AAPPL were been purchased.

Like the MCA, Minnetonka students have shown that they can perform well on assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards because the Minnetonka

curriculum is aligned to those standards and more. Students are being assessed in what they are being taught.

High Potential/Navigator Programs

Since most students are in the 90-99 percentile, there are many students who are not identified as High Potential, but have some similar needs. The NWEA Learning Continuum is a resource from NWEA that can help identify what students are ready to learn if they are far above grade level. When students have exceeded the limits of the test's other measures, there is a plan in place to examine other assessment options.

Despite the typical lower Fall to Spring growth for students who reach high levels of RIT performance in the Fall, Minnetonka students who scored at these levels, made far more growth than the average student did nationally. For example, a student with a score above 245 is expected to make three to four points RIT growth in Math. However, Minnetonka students made approximately 13-15 points RIT growth according to Grade 5 High Potential and Navigator results. Two years ago, the growth was 11 points for the two groups and three years ago, the growth was 13 points for the two groups.

It is recommended that teachers take advantage of the item samplers NWEA has to offer in addition to focusing on strand level analysis of the results from the Fall. Some students will be expected to take the NWEA Math or Reading Assessments in the Winter as a checkpoint to see if they are making expected gains moving forward to the Spring.

Gender

The results from the Reading assessment should be used to carefully monitor students' performance throughout the year. This assessment along with the Sourcewell targets embedded in Sourcewell one-click reports could serve as a predictor for the Spring MCA III Reading Test since that assessment is also aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

Most elementary schools and the Middle Schools have created building goals that are tied to Reading. This change is due in large part to the change to Common Core Reading assessments.

The only gap in performance that has statistical significance is among Second Graders. Girls out-performed boys by 3.5 RIT points. Overall, girls at the First Grade level showed a statistically significant drop of 4.0 RIT points compared to their same grade counterparts from two years ago. Boys experienced a significant decrease in performance compared to their same grade peers in Grades K and 1 only. First Grade girls and boys are performing at the *Middle of Second Grade* level according to NWEA National Norms.

Ethnicity

Although the number of students is smaller within subgroups other than Caucasian, it will be important for teachers to collaborate with each other to address the areas of need from one grade level to the next. Teachers will need to identify the greatest areas of need within the subtests and set goals. Once those goals are identified, then teachers can work to create common assessments to address the target skills necessary to increase performance among a particular strand. Assessments can be in the form of homework, quizzes, tests, and differentiated activities.

In addition to planning, it is recommended that teachers work with students in small, guided Reading groups and ensure that all students participate in well-rounded literacy experiences where students are expected to provide Writing with their Reading and both Writing and Reading strategies are used across all curricular areas in all grades.

It will be important for middle school teachers to examine the results of the Spring assessments to gain knowledge of their students' strengths and areas for growth according to the specific end of course assessments. Information learned from these assessments should be used to guide instruction.

With the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) implementation for Minnesota school Districts, all schools will be looking closer at racial/ethnic subgroup data and will strive to ensure that any negative trends in this data are being addressed.

It will be important to analyze specific grade level results to truly understand the Spring NWEA Reading performances and determine a course of action for the 2020-21 school year.

Open Enrollment

Open-Enrolled and Resident students are performing similarly in Math and Reading by the time they reach Second Grade. This is encouraging news and a testament to the strength of Minnetonka's academic program. The longer the students are exposed to the Minnetonka curriculum, the more academically successful they become.

Over the years, the growth of Open Enrollment in Minnetonka has made a positive impact on achievement results. As the District continues to attract families from outside the attendance boundaries, it should be noted that this influx of students not only brings revenue to the District, but it also raises the level of academic achievement across the District.

Math

There is a need for differentiation in classrooms as a majority of students are ready for above grade level coursework in Math. It is important that we address the needs of students who despite our best efforts are not succeeding as well as those students who

already know the information that is typically provided in our curriculum. At the elementary level, students have visual images that help them if they are struggling and need more concrete instructional experiences, and students who need more challenge can work more abstractly with the concepts they learn. Middle school teachers will need to work to differentiate for their students within each of the courses by using common formative assessments throughout the year to help drive instruction.

There should be a systemic program in place to address concerns. In order to do this, the concept of Number Sense will need to be defined for staff. Number Sense had different meanings and understanding among staff from one grade level to the next. With the implementation of Singapore Math in past years, the concept of Number Sense was addressed. In addition, with the work done by the Math Committee to revise the Math assessments two years ago, teachers should focus on studying the assessments to backward map their units prior to teaching. The assessments are closely aligned to the Minnetonka Essential Learnings, so students should benefit from the alignment between common assessments in the classroom with the standardized NWEA and MCA assessments. Interventions can be put into place that can be used both at school and at home. In addition, resources that provide research-based interventions such as *Intervention Central* can be used by both classroom teachers and Title I specialists to provide targeted support for students. Title I support was successful this year as students met their goals at a very high rate and were exited from services as needed.

Reading

Students scoring below the 40th percentile will need support from a building Reading Specialist. The support provided to students through this model should be used to supplement instruction already occurring in the student's regular classroom. At the middle school level, it is important to tie in Reading strategies across the curriculum regardless of the content area. In addition, like last year, elementary teachers can look more closely at the vocabulary strand along with corresponding state standards to identify specific areas of needs for their students. Elementary teachers will need to ensure that they continue to refine their pacing, instruction, and assessment practice with the use of the Making Meaning curriculum. Great work has been done to ensure a smooth transition of a robust balanced literacy program, and next steps to ensure the program is implemented with fidelity among all staff is crucial to continued success.

Elementary and Middle School principals will need to work in conjunction with District-level staff to monitor data trends using the newly created Principals Dashboards as well as the comprehensive assessment files provided by the Assessment Department. The data can be used to study cohort and non-cohort performances across all student groups and programs.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

The District uses NWEA data, fluency data, and MCA data to identify students in need of additional Reading and Math support. This practice has been used for the past four years

and has been successful for identifying the most struggling students based on data. This ensures that all students are identified consistently; previously students were not identified using multiple measures. Multiple measures need to be used for students as they enter MTSS services at the middle level and should be used to exit students from these services as well. A refined process to standardize the process among all buildings has been implemented with involvement from teacher and District leadership during the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, work needs to be done to provide successful transitions for students from the Middle Schools to the High School.

REVIEW OF ISTATION RESULTS

Dr. Rega led the discussion. He began by saying that during the Spring of 2021, Kindergarten, First and Second Grade Spanish Immersion students took Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) Test. This Winter, Kindergarten Spanish Immersion students took the ISIP Test for the first time, and this Spring, all K-2 Spanish Immersion students took the test.

ISIP is a replacement for the DORA-Spanish Test that was administered to K-2 Spanish Immersion students in previous years. Support for the DORA-Spanish by Let's Go Learn had increasingly diminished while the demand for useful data had increased by K-2 Spanish Immersion teachers. Understanding the need for early intervention, Minnewashta Spanish Immersion teachers piloted Istation's ISIP assessment and instructional resources program from February through May during the Spring of 2016 and found the software program to be superior to what was offered with the DORA-Spanish Test.

Istation offers a software tool used to assess students within the following areas: *Phonemic Awareness, Letter Knowledge, Decoding, Vocabulary, Spelling, Comprehension, and Fluency*. Istation software is a tool designed to target students participating in Immersion programs and is an adaptive assessment tool that allows students to demonstrate evidence of learning at high levels beyond their current grade level expectations. Results are used by teachers to provide specific instructional resources to help students receive the practice needed to improve within identified areas of growth and accelerate in their areas of strength. Each day students are given the opportunity to engage in interactive practice activities that are at their level and aligned to their assessment performance. The Istation system allows teachers to formally assess students each month to monitor student progress on a regular basis in between Fall, Winter, and Spring benchmark assessments. In addition, there are instructional resources available to students within the program as well as at home.

The instructional resources are aligned to the assessment, and most importantly, these instructional supports are customized for individual students based on their benchmark assessment performance each season. In addition, teachers can administer monthly *On Demand Assessments* to track students' progress as they work through the instructional software. This system is not only supportive of early intervention strategies, but it also allows for students who need to be challenged academically beyond their current levels

of performance. Because there are three tiered levels, Minnetonka Spanish Immersion students have room to grow as they continue to strive toward the highest levels of the instructional and assessment program. Throughout the school year, teachers used the results to help plan for individual intervention with students depending on their performance. Student progress was monitored on a regular basis, and some students spent more time with the program each week depending on their needs. Students who needed more intensive intervention were assessed monthly with the Istation *On Demand Assessments*, as this is a form of progress monitoring for students who may be struggling with the language.

Dr. Rega explained that there are three levels or “Tiers” in which students are placed based on their ISIP “Ability Index” scores. The tiers range from Tier 1 (at or above grade level), Tier 2 (moderately below grade level), and Tier 3 (well below grade level). Students are placed into the different tiers based on their overall *Ability Index* for each of the subtests. The ability index score is a three-digit score, much like a RIT score from the NWEA Test. The ability index scores are totaled from each of the subtests to equal an overall ability index, thus placing a student into a particular tier. As students are placed into tiers, the ability index scores are also used to calculate national grade level equivalency and national percentile rank. A student’s grade level equivalency indicates the year and month of grade level performance. For example, if a student earns a grade level equivalency score of 1.6, then he is performing similarly to a student who is in the sixth month of First Grade nationally. If a student is performing at the 85th percentile, then he is performing better than or equal to 85 percent of the students nationally who took the test that month.

Dr. Rega then walked the Board through the results, sharing information regarding the ISIP scoring scale, highlights from the Spring, and District and school level results.

Highlights

- Minnewashta First Graders eclipsed the 50th percentile on three of four subtests while improving from Fall to Spring in all four areas
- Percentiles indicate that Minnetonka Kindergarteners performed below the 50th percentile on all four tests
- District results indicate that First Grade student performance is slightly below the 50th percentile when compared to the nation
- Among Second Graders, there were increases in the percentage of students reaching the Tier 1 level in four of five areas, with significant increases in Written Communication, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.
- The area of Text Fluency among Second Graders saw significant decreases in percentiles District-wide.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Dr. Rega noted that the scores should continue be viewed with caution, because it is clear there was an impact on student performance due to the pandemic. Although there were many positive signs of Fall to Spring growth, 2021 student scores were mainly eclipsed

by 2019 scores at most grade levels on most subtests. This is worth noting as teachers prepare to work with students next Fall. Teachers will use the results to help plan for individual intervention with students depending on their performance. All student progress will be monitored on a regular basis, and some students will spend more time with the program each week depending on their needs. Students who need more intensive intervention will be assessed monthly with the Istation *On Demand Assessments*, as this is a form of progress monitoring for students who may be struggling with the language.

Most schools will need to focus on Text Fluency among their Second Graders and First Graders will need a focus on Vocabulary and Phonics. In some cases, school staff will need to work with students on Reading Comprehension instruction among their Second Graders. The use of On-Demand assessments for students who are well behind their peers will be key. Sixty minutes of practice a week using the Istation software is recommended for students to show significant growth. With the ability to participate in practice at home on the Istation system, most students should be able to surpass the suggested 60 minutes of practice per week.

FINAL REPORT ON GOAL TWO

Dr. Peterson began by saying that Executive Director of Human Resources Dr. Mike Cyrus would be giving an update on hiring practices and that with that, and the secondary principals' belonging reports earlier this evening, that would complete the elements of Goal 2 that the District planned to update the Board on, as the other items were addressed at previous meetings. Dr. Cyrus then gave an overview of the hiring process, explaining that we use a structured interview process with all of our teacher hires. The process is very attuned to cultural competence, and identifies people more focused on others than themselves. The HR Department received over 2,700 applications this year, which is a typical number for us. The number of diverse candidates is growing each year a bit. The HR Department participated in sixteen online job fairs this past year, and Dr. Cyrus used some of the new marketing materials the Communications Team prepared for him in at least 12 of those fairs. We use Applitrack as an applicant tool. We also used CircaWorks, which targets diverse audiences. We have had 213 applicants that have come to us through this avenue. We also use Diversity in Education ads—and that has generated several more leads. We hired 37 fewer Caucasian hires than in previous years, so there has been an increase in diverse staff.

With regard to the job fairs, Dr. Cyrus said he and his team had looked at locations that had high levels of diversity and targeted them. The local fairs are where he found the richest veins of underrepresented communities. We received 15 applications we wouldn't have received otherwise, with 11 being interviewed and 4 being hired. He plans to maintain these recruiting efforts. He believes Texas is a rich opportunity for recruitment, particularly for our Spanish Immersion program.

Dr. Cyrus concluded his report by discussing the following possible next steps:

- Maintain a recruiting presence
- Continue online recruiting as much as possible
- Build a recruiting team reflecting greater diversity for big-ticket events
- Identify potential in-person venues
- Widen our marketing net
- Expand beyond Jobs in MN – Indeed.com, Teacher-talk videos
- Grow our Own
- Outreach to Black Men Teach – they are not interested in partnering with us to teach here, but they like the idea of us helping to get our kids into their pipeline
- Focus groups of leavers/exit interviews

FINAL REPORT ON GOAL 4

Dr. Peterson noted that relative to Goal 4, the Board had requested more information as to which classes were more challenging to deliver online during the pandemic. Dr. LaDue and Director of Curriculum Steve Urbanski had looked into this. Hands-on courses were, of course, more challenging, despite how creative our teachers were in delivering the content. Regarding immersion classes, there was a disadvantage in-person when masks were required, since students could not see the mouth movement as easily. Another area that was disproportionately impacted was the performing arts. Our teachers did an outstanding job, but there were challenges to overcome. Dr. LaDue commended the teachers and paras for all they did to make this year work. Regarding how students performed overall, Dr. LaDue said there is still some data we would like to see to know how we compare, so there is more work to do in summer and early fall. Also, we are starting to work with department chairs to identify how to respond to any gaps.

Dr. Peterson also noted that the Board had previously asked for the counselors' perspective on how the school year had gone, and that had been accomplished with the counselors' video that was shown earlier this evening.

REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Director of Curriculum Steve Urbanski led the discussion. He explained that departments and programs have identified instructional material needs for the upcoming school year. As the English Language Arts and Health Education departments engage in the curriculum review process during the 2021-22 school year, additional resources will be reviewed and brought to the Board for future implementation.

Core and Supplemental Materials

Everyday Mathematics continues to serve as the core mathematics program at the elementary level. The most recent edition of this program, Everyday Mathematics 4, provides additional core and supplemental resources, including numerous digital tools, to enhance mathematics instruction. Teachers received access to these updated digital resources to supplement existing instructional resources and enhance the e-learning

experience during the 2020-21 school year. Everyday Mathematics 4 is recommended for full implementation for the 2021-22 school year.

Fundamentals of Neuroscience, a new science elective course addressing how the human brain works in relation to cognition, memory, and learning, will be introduced next year. This summer the science curriculum writing team will continue to evaluate *Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain* as the core text for implementation during the upcoming year.

Instructional Materials

Title	Author	Course/Level
Everyday Mathematics 4	University of Chicago STEM Authorship Team	Mathematics, Grades K-5
Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain	Mark Bear, Barry Connors, Michael A. Paradiso	Fundamentals of Neuroscience

AP and IB Materials

The changing nature of the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum requires adjustments on a regular basis. Advanced Learner Coordinator Laura Herbst works closely with AP and IB teachers and department chairs each year to select from available and appropriate materials.

In addition to the criteria outlined in Policy #606, these materials are selected based upon the curriculum recommendations of the International Baccalaureate Organization, the College Board and the organizations' trainers. For the 2021-22 school year, AP and IB teachers have recommended implementing a number of new instructional resources to meet the demands of these programs. The instructional resources are included in the table below.

Title	Author	Course/Level
<i>Economics for the IB Diploma</i>	Ellie Tragakes	IB Economics
<i>Human Geography for the AP Course</i>	Barbara Hildebrant, Max Lu, Kethheth Keller, Roderick P. Neumann	AP Human Geography
<i>Human Geography: A Spatial Perspective (AP Edition)</i>	Sarah Bednarz, Mark Bockenhour, Fredrik Hiebert	AP Human Geography
<i>Matter and Interactions, 4th edition</i>	Ruth Chabay, Bruce Sherwood	AP Physics C
<i>Physics For Scientists and Engineers: A strategic Approach, 4th Edition</i>	Randall D. Knight	AP Physics C

Digital Resources and iPad Apps

In response to the varying e-learning needs of the past year, the district introduced additional digital resources to supplement the existing curriculum. The resources listed in the table below have been reviewed by teams of teachers, tech coaches and the Director of Instructional Technology and Media Services Dave Eisenmann to ensure that they meet the criteria described in Policy #606. They are recommended for the 2021-22 school year and beyond.

App Name	Category	Subject/Course
Acapella from PicPlayPost	Subject Specific	Music
Arcademics	Subject Specific	Math, ELA, Social Studies
AutoCad	Subject Specific	CAD/3D Printing
BioNetwork: Virtual Microscope	Subject Specific	Science
Bridge Constructor Free	Subject Specific	Tech Ed/STEM
Chromville	Subject Specific	Augmented Reality Creation
Day One Journal	Productivity/Organization	Health/SEL
Dice 3D 7pixels	AR/3D	Augmented Reality Creation
Edclub	Productivity/Organization	Typing/Keyboarding
Edpuzzle	Other	Multiple
EPview	Subject Specific	Photography
EV3 Programmer	Subject Specific	Tech Ed/STEM
Froggipedia	Subject Specific	Science/AR
Google Tasks	Productivity/Organization	Organization
Hudl Technique	Other	Physical Education
Learn the Pinyin	Subject Specific	Chinese Immersion
Math Clock, by MLC	Subject Specific	Math
Mathigon	Subject Specific	Math
Mathseeds Grade 2	Subject Specific	Math
Moose Math	Subject Specific	Math
Number Rack by MLC	Subject Specific	Math
Play and Learn - Engineering	Games	Tech Ed/STEM
Quiver - 3D Coloring	AR/3D	Augmented Reality Creation
Shortcuts	Other	iOS Apple
TanZen HD	Other	Other
Teachers TalkingPoints	Other	ELL Communication
Tinkercad	Subject Specific	CAD/3D Printing
Truss Me!	Subject Specific	Tech Ed/STEM

Chairperson Vitale thanked Mr. Urbanski for the report and noted that this item would be brought back to the August 5 regular Board meeting for approval.

UPDATE ON E-LEARNING

Dr. LaDue spoke about the early enrollment results for the fall e-learning program. She discussed how those who want English vs. Immersion impact the numbers, as well as how those who want Navigators impact the result. She also talked about what the e-learning program would likely look like in all grade levels.

Ms. LaDue noted that communications are going out to families already enrolled in e-learning with us for fall to firm up the numbers, and once we know what exactly we can offer, we will begin to connect with out-of-district families to share this option. We have heard from a few families already who have students in other districts who are asking whether we are offering e-learning in Immersion in the fall, as their school is not. She also spoke about the opportunity to reach out to other school districts to see whether any would like to partner, if they are not offering e-learning for fall semester. The e-learning website is under construction and will be completed once we know exactly what we can offer for fall.

Board member LeSage asked about state funding for those who enroll in e-learning. Ms. LaDue said she had been working with Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois to work out that question. The state has indicated that we will receive full funding for those fully enrolled. For those only taking a single course, we will receive a percentage for that course. Dr. Peterson noted that the District will not run the program if it is not financially viable.

PRESENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN DOCUMENT

This item was tabled.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the study session at 12:05 a.m. on Friday, June 18.

/cyv