

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

Minutes of February 1, 2024 Regular Board Meeting

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 1, 2024 in the Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Chairperson Meghan Selinger presided. Other Board members present were: Sally Browne, Kemerie Foss, Patrick Lee-O'Halloran, Dan Olson, Michael Remucal, Chris Vitale and Superintendent David Law, ex officio. The meeting was also livestreamed on the District's YouTube channel.

Prior to the meeting, Board members recognized, via a video, the following groups and individuals: DECA State Qualifiers and DSC Honored Artists from MHS.

Chairperson Selinger called the meeting to order and asked that everyone stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

1. **AGENDA**

Superintendent Law announced the following modifications to the agenda: removal of the closed session which was to have taken place at the end of the regular meeting, and the removal of Item VII. A – Review of Policy #417: Chemical Use Violations, as more review is needed of that item.

Lee-O'Halloran moved, Remucal seconded, that the School Board approve the agenda, as modified. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

2. **SCHOOL REPORT FROM SCENIC HEIGHTS**

Scenic Heights Principal Joe Wacker, Assistant Principal Nicole Snedden, staff and students updated the Board on the school's belonging efforts thus far this year, including the work of the student radio station KRTS. Students on the Student Belonging Committee also provided updates.

Board members thanked the presenters for their great work.

3. **COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

Chairperson Selinger noted that this opportunity for comment was available to community members who wished to address the Board on any item on that night's agenda. She also read the guidelines for Community Comments, for the benefit of those who wished to speak.

The following individuals then addressed the Board:

- District employee Noelle Olson spoke regarding the District's Nutrition Services program and her desire that healthy seeds be incorporated into students' meal offerings.
- District parent Nicole Nejezchleba spoke regarding Policy 626 and its weighted grade requirements. She asked the Board to retain the requirement.
- District employee Katie Tuthill read the following prepared statement:

Good Evening Madame Chair, Superintendent Law and Members of the Board.

My name is Katie Tuthill and I'm here to speak on agenda item 9, the open enrollment cap. I don't know if I'm feeling nervous about speaking, or the fact that the camera broadcasting is adding 10 pounds?

My husband and I have been teaching in this amazing district for 24 years. I've taught Kindergarten, 3rd and 4th grade, and I honestly can't imagine doing anything else.

I'm here this evening, to share my perspective on open enrollment, both as a teacher and a parent in the district. You see, in the spring of 2017 my husband and I decided to enroll our daughter in Minnetonka and she would start 6th grade at MME in the fall of 2018. While our home district was great, we knew Minnetonka would be a good fit and also be able to meet her academic needs. The following year our son would start 2nd grade at Scenic Heights.

Because of open enrollment our daughter was able to graduate from one of the best high schools in the state and our son will do the same in 2028. After 18 years of spending more time in our car than our home we decided to move and we were blessed to find a home in the district.

As teachers, we are aware of all the amazing opportunities and programs open enrollment has provided to our students, families and staff. However, over the past few years, our class sizes have continued to increase in size.

This year my teammates and I each have between 30-35 students. This is the most we've ever had in my 24 years of teaching. I did have 30 students during COVID but they were divided into 2 groups of 15, were in different classrooms, and I had a full time para who worked with me to support students. Larger class sizes are not only happening in the elementary levels, but at the middle and high school too.

I don't think anyone will dispute that open enrollment will help our district financially, but what about the quality of education students will receive if class sizes continue to balloon? As teachers, we love what we do, but we are wearing out.

Teachers work hard every day to ensure our students are getting the best education possible. We work countless hours outside our duty day and work with limited para

support, yet more and more is being placed on teachers. Teachers are now told they have to identify, select, and perform speech interventions? Where will it end? All of this on top of increasing class size.

Teachers deserve fair compensation for all that we do. We are the backbone of this district, and I am asking the board to consider releasing more funds to ensure we retain the best teachers.

We are stretched to the max, and we are running out of room. Where will you put these additional students? We have partitions and tables set up in hallways so small groups can meet with support staff. Some of us didn't have enough desks/tables to start the school year because of the increased class sizes.

With increasing enrollment we ask that you increase our compensation to value the additional work we do as teachers, not to mention the inflation that has happened over the past few years. Please adjust the budget and compensate teachers fairly for the countless hours of work we do on a daily basis. Thank you.

- District resident James Bullington spoke regarding his concerns regarding a possible increase in the enrollment cap, including facilities constraints, parking, pickup and dropoff, and inadequate classroom and cafeteria spaces. He asked the Board not to raise the cap.
- District parent Libby Parker spoke regarding her concerns about weighted grade requirements, specifically the requirement that students must pass the AP Test to receive a weighted grade. She asked the Board to remove the requirement.

Chairperson Selinger thanked the community members for their comments.

4. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF POLICY #626: SECONDARY GRADING AND REPORTING PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT (WEIGHTED GRADES)

Superintendent David Law shared that the School Board had discussed some proposed changes to Policy #626 at a recent School Board Study Session and that the item was being brought to a regular meeting for the Board to further discuss and then consider approval of those changes.

Background: Minnetonka Public School District Policy #626 Secondary Grading and Reporting Pupil Achievement was created to “establish effective grading and reporting practices that reflect a student’s academic achievement of the course standards.” One of the topics covered in this policy is “Grade Weighting” defined in policy as “the assignment of a greater value to the letter grade’s numeric point value to reward a student for completing the Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) course(s) and taking the national/international AP and IB assessments in the spring.” This policy was modified and adopted in June of 2016 and included the following criteria for weighted grading:

“International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses use different, weighted scales to differentiate between IB/AP and regular courses. All Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses shall be weighted +1.0 if the student earns a C- or higher, the courses have been determined to meet the standards of rigor established by the District, and the student successfully achieves a “3” or higher for Advanced Placement courses or a “4” on an International Baccalaureate assessment. For courses that are beyond the rigor of AP and IB, students must earn a C- or higher in the course and achieve a C- or higher on the end-of course exam to receive grade-weight status.”

This criteria was selected at that time with the belief that students would be more engaged in their coursework because they were expected to perform well on the AP/IB assessment. Since the policy was implemented, most students enrolled in these courses have earned a weighted grade. Some concerns were raised recently that some students choose not to take these rigorous courses because they are required to perform well on the AP/IB assessment in addition to strong class performance to earn the weighted grade, and the belief was that perhaps more students may participate if they had the option to meet either criteria instead of both.

After a first discussion at the November Study Session, the District conducted a survey of teachers, counselors, parents and students about this policy. A summary of those survey results was presented at the Board’s Study Session in January. The policy was discussed at that Study Session, and some suggested changes were brought forward for the Board at the February meeting for the Board to consider approving.

Lee-O’Halloran moved, Olson seconded, that the Board approve the policy with the recommended changes at it appears in the board packet.

In the discussion that followed, some Board members were in favor of the proposed changes, and others expressed concerns. Board member Foss said that the Board seemed to be moving too fast on this. She also said that the survey data showed that 74% of the teachers did not approve of the recommended changes. Board member Browne noted that the changes that had been made to the policy in 2016 were designed to foster student engagement, and she was wondering about the result. Board member Olson noted that in the teachers’ comments on the survey, most of them didn’t think that a grade of “C” was worth a weighted grade, and that’s what he was grappling with.

Olson moved, Browne seconded, that the original motion be amended to reflect that students must earn a B- or above in the class (not a C-) OR take the test to receive the weighted grade. After discussion, upon vote being taken thereon, the motion failed 0-7.

In the discussion that followed, Board member Vitale noted his concerns with changing the language, noting that the language in tonight’s board packet was different than the language the Board had discussed at their previous study session. Specifically, he noted

that at the study session, the Board had discussed a grading requirement of B or above, and tonight's discussion was centering on a grading requirement of C- or above.

After further discussion, Vitale moved, Foss seconded, that the Board table this discussion and bring it back to the February study session for further review. Upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor: Browne, Foss, Remucal, and Vitale; and the following voted against: Lee-O'Halloran, Olson, and Selinger, whereupon the motion carried 4-3.

Chairperson Selinger noted that this item would be brought back to the February study session for further discussion before considering approval of the changes.

5. **POLICY APPROVALS**

General Counsel and Executive Director of Human Resources Anjie Flowers led the discussion. She explained that the recommended changes to these policies are being driven by recent legislative action.

- #709: Student Transportation Safety - updates are recommended because of new requirements for pedestrian, bicycle and school bus safety training. There are different requirements at each academic level. Accommodations are also available for those students who would need them.

Olson moved, Vitale seconded, that the Board approve Policy #709 as presented. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

- #719: Nutrition Services - updates are recommended because of changes to the cost of meals for students. The language reflects that students are now entitled to one free breakfast and one free lunch per day. There are also new requirements for family notification of low account balances.

Remucal moved, Foss seconded, that the Board approve Policy #719 as presented. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

- #613: Graduation Requirements – updates are recommended because of changes in graduation requirements. MHS Principal Jeff Erickson has stated that the new courses will be ready to go for the Fall 2024 term.

Olson moved, Browne seconded, that the Board approve Policy #613 as presented. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

6. **APPROVAL OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

Associate Superintendent for Instruction Amy LaDue, MME Principal Pete Dymit and MMW Principal Freya Schirmacher led the discussion. Over the past two months, the middle school principals, in collaboration with the teaching and learning department, District

leaders and teacher leaders, have developed a comprehensive middle school program proposal based on the findings from the program review presented to the School Board at the November Study Session.

This proposal integrates the information gathered, including stakeholder feedback, during the program review completed over the past ten months. The proposal focuses on the student experience, prioritizing social and emotional development, student interest and strengths, the student knowing themselves as a learner, and providing opportunities for choice and ownership. This robust review process included data from stakeholder surveys and focus groups, information about program structures from regional and national peer schools, and best practices for middle school programming. A program review committee was convened to analyze all the information gathered and develop themes and priorities. Additionally, all middle school staff had multiple opportunities throughout the process for information sharing and feedback loops

Prior to the work this year, the last review of middle school programming was conducted in 2007. While changes following that review have served the school community well, the middle school program has continued to evolve with the addition of the Navigator program and the Spanish and Chinese Immersion programs, as well as an increase in enrollment. These changes, coupled with significant program additions at the high school level, made this an opportune time to again evaluate the middle school program as we strive to best meet both the needs of students and achieve District goals.

The Middle School Program Proposal addresses the five priorities identified and discussed at the November, December and January School Board Study Sessions. These priorities include: 1) creating a more flexible master schedule, 2) differentiated academic support, 3) dedicated social and emotional learning time, 4) the evaluation and expansion of exploratory and elective options emphasizing student choice, and 5) opportunities for teacher professional learning and collaboration. This proposal addresses these five priorities in two phases.

Phase I:

- Implement a modified block master schedule to provide greater flexibility.
- Integrate all Immersion courses into the regular daily schedule, untethering them from advisory.
- Restructure Academic Support options to include integrated intervention and extension, along with flexible support.
- Create dedicated Social and Emotional Learning time for all students.

Phase II:

- Evaluate and expand Exploratory and Elective options that emphasize student choice.

Both phases will include essential teacher professional learning, curriculum development and enhanced opportunities for collaboration. The priorities will focus on design and development of new courses and revisions to existing curriculum. These elements will shape the implementation of the initial phase and the design of the next iteration of courses.

Vitale moved, Lee-O'Halloran seconded, that the Board approve the middle school program proposal for further development and implementation beginning as soon as the 2024-25 school year.

In the discussion that followed, Board member Remucal asked whether the expanded elective opportunities will require more staff. Principal Dymit said no and that the middle schools would offer students more world language options, PE opportunities, music, art, tech ed, FACs and health electives and that we could accomplish this without increasing staff. Board member Browne asked whether there would be an impact to student load and class sizes. Principal Schirmacher there are some inefficiencies in our current staffing model that these changes will help. She said we are not anticipating class size increases. It is a different model, but total student course load would be increased by one section. Board member Browne asked what mechanisms are in place for frequent feedback loops. Principal Schirmacher said she and Principal Dymit have open office hours, meetings with specific departments, meetings with PLCs and staff meetings in place for this feedback.

Board member Vitale thanked Dr. LaDue and Principals Schirmacher and Dymit for their work and asked them to pass along the thanks from the Board to the teachers, staff, students and others who have been involved in the planning process in developing the proposal. Chairperson Selinger said she appreciated the intention and thoughtful approach of the team for this proposal and that it meets the needs of students. She asked whether there would be an issue with attendance if advisory is first hour. Principal Dymit said this is an opportunity to do a check-in right away, set the tone with students for the day, and do triage where needed. He added that if we see high absenteeism, we will move it to another time of day and that other districts who do this say it has not been an issue. Board member Lee-O'Halloran thanked the presenters for the intentionality of the work and for focusing attention on the middle school program and said that the Board is here to support them.

Upon vote being taken on the motion, the motion carried unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF ENROLLMENT CAP

Superintendent Law led the discussion. He explained that the proposal this evening was to increase the current enrollment cap from 11,100 in-person K-12 students to 11,250.

Mr. Law said this will average to 10-15 students per building and that the District will prioritize placing students in classes that are at or below the District's target levels. He added that currently 86% of elementary classrooms are at or below the target levels. The School Board discussed this potential increase at the December 7 School Board meeting and again in January at the Board's study session.

Board member Vitale asked whether we will allow for higher levels than the cap to allow for fluctuation, to allow the District flexibility. He asked whether it restricts the District the way it's written, to have flexibility. Superintendent Law said his goal is to keep buildings at their targets, and it's never perfect but it will be close and that he would keep the Board apprised along the way.

Board member Browne acknowledged there was a community comment about enrollment this evening and other comments had been received, particularly regarding cafeteria and restrooms, so she wanted to reiterate that the Board does not take this lightly to add to enrollment. Superintendent Law said that the District will convene a Facilities Task Force that will examine the District's facility needs, challenges and opportunities, and that will include looking at common spaces to help alleviate when there are crowded areas in schools. Superintendent Law said that there will be more information about this task force at the Board's study session in February and the plan would be for the task force to start work in March. It will be comprised of staff, parents and community members, and more information will be forthcoming. Board member Lee-O'Halloran echoed Board member Browne's comments and said the Board would not be considering this change if the Board didn't think it was necessary financially and that if the Board does not do this, there would be a worse impact on students. Board members Selinger and Vitale both noted that the Board wishes there were other ways to increase funding.

Olson moved, Vitale seconded, that the Board approve the enrollment cap, including limits by grade and site, as shown in the board packet. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

8. **APPROVAL OF IPAD LEASE PURCHASE**

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois led the discussion. By way of background, he noted that on May 31, 2018, the School Board had approved a Master Lease Purchase Agreement with Apple, Inc. for the three-year lease purchase of iPads. The Master Lease Purchase Agreement was set up so that subsequent lease purchase agreements could be added to the Master Lease Purchase Agreement as a new schedule of documents.

The District set up this rolling 3-year rotation so that all iPads could be replaced on a three-year rotation. This ensures that all iPads are updated at the same time from the same Apple production runs so that they all function the same internally. This process ensures that a software solution to run on one iPad will then run on all the iPads from that same production run. It also ensures that the computing power of the iPads are improved every three years so that they have the capability of running the most recent versions of the instructional software of the District.

At this time, the District will be lease purchasing 8,100 iPads and associated equipment such as covers and Apple Pencils on the same three-year lease purchase rotation, and will

be purchasing 200 Apple MacBook laptops at a total cost of \$2,770,595. The cost of the iPads will be \$2,570,595, or \$317.36 per unit (lower than the 2021 cost of \$335.98 per unit), and the MacBooks will be \$1,000 per unit. Apple is offering these units to the District at 0.00% interest. The District is purchasing the units using State Contract pricing.

Principal payments will be made from the Capital Projects (Technology) Fund as follows:

04/05/2024	\$100,000.00
07/08/2024	\$823,531.67
07/08/2025	\$923,531.67
07/08/2026	\$923,531.67

Later this fall, after they have been collected and catalogued, the District will be selling approximately 8,000 “retiring” iPads in a reverse auction to bring in revenue to partially offset a significant amount of the purchase price of the new tranche of iPads. Past reverse auctions have brought in sales revenue of over \$125 per unit, so it is a conservative estimate to assume that these iPads could also bring in revenue of \$125 or more each. Any sale proceeds will be deposited back into the Capital Projects Fund.

Vitale moved, Foss seconded, that the Board approve the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District 276 does hereby approve the lease purchase of 8,100 iPads and support equipment and 200 MacBook Air laptops in the amount of \$2,770,595 and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District 276 does hereby approve the Master Lease Purchase Agreement, Exhibit 1, and Exhibits D, E and G and authorizes Administration to execute the necessary lease-purchase contract documents to complete the acquisition of the iPads and support equipment in time for deployment of the equipment for the start of the Fiscal Year 2025 School Year on September 3, 2024.

Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously. Board member Olson noted that the funds for this purchase must be used specifically for technology and cannot be moved to another fund and/or used for another purpose, such as salaries and benefits. Mr. Bourgeois confirmed that this was the case.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF BID FOR WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM REPLACEMENT AT MME

Mr. Bourgeois presented this item to the Board. He noted that as part of the rolling Long Term Facility Maintenance 10 Year Plan, replacement of the original 1964 MME heat exchanger and condensate tank for hot water has been scheduled for future years. Also, the replacement of the original 2008 ultraviolet light filter system for the Aquatics Center Pool has been scheduled for future years. However, good bid results on other projects for summer 2024 makes it possible for these projects to be moved up and undertaken in 2024.

The MME heat exchanger and condensate tank will be replaced by energy-efficient gas-fired water heaters as well as a new recirculation pump, condensate tank and water softeners. In the pool area, the original 2008 ultraviolet light filters that were reaching the end of their service life will be replaced with new ultraviolet light filters with double the capacity, which will add redundancy to the system.

The budget estimate for the project is \$700,000. Bids were opened at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. Three bids were received for the project as follows:

Northland Mechanical Contractors	\$612,200.00
Uhl Company	\$651,000.00
Peterson Sheet Metal	Non-Spec Bid

Mr. Bourgeois recommended that the Board accept the low bid.

Lee-O'Halloran moved, Olson seconded, that the Board approve the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED that the School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District 276 does hereby accept the low bid of Northland Mechanical Contractors in the amount of \$612,200.00 for replacement of water supply system components at Minnetonka Middle School East in summer 2024.

Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.

10. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Vitale moved, Remucal seconded, that the School Board approve the recommendations included within the following Consent Agenda items:

- Minutes of January 4 Regular Meeting and Closed Session; and Closed Sessions of January 18, 2024
- Study Session Summary of January 18, 2024
- Payment of Bills – in the sum of \$13,991,620.56
- Recommended Personnel Items
- Gifts and Donations for January 2024: \$163.80 from the American Online Giving Foundation and \$150.00 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund; both to be placed in the Groveland Elementary School Principal Discretionary Fund. \$1,000.00 from the Deephaven PTA to be placed in the Deephaven Elementary School Teacher Grants Fund. \$3,901.01 from the Minnewashta Elementary PTO to be placed in the Minnewashta Elementary School Classroom Enrichment Fund. \$100.00 from Jimmie Sneed to be placed in the MCE Fund. \$100.00 from Bobby & Frankie Hogue to be placed in the MCE Leslie Kaufman Memorial Fund. \$15,000.00 from Medical Information Technology, Inc. to be placed in the Minnetonka Public Schools General Fund. \$5.60 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund to be placed in the MMW Principal Discretionary Fund. \$102.95 from the Blackbaud Giving Fund to be placed in the

Minnewashta Elementary School Principal Discretionary Fund. \$2,500.00 from the Gene Haas Foundation to be placed in the MHS Robotics Team Fund. \$70.00 from Charities Aid Foundation America to be placed in the Deephaven Elementary School Principal Discretionary Fund. \$3,564.00 from the Kopp Family Foundation to be placed in the MCE Preschool Scholarships Fund. \$500.00 from Knewtson Family Chiropractic to be placed in the MHS Baseball Program Fund. \$2,750.08 from Eldridge S. Chase III to be placed in the Excelsior Elementary School Sam Chase Fund for Kindergarten Programming and Curriculum. \$30,000.00 from the Clear Springs Elementary PTO to be placed in the Clear Springs Elementary School Field Trip Fund. Total Gifts and Donations thus far for 2023-24: \$507,463.03.

- Electronic Fund Transfers
- American Indian Parent Committee Resolution
- Pay Equity Report
- Out of State Student Travel

Upon vote being taken on the foregoing Consent Agenda items, the motion carried unanimously.

11. **BOARD REPORTS**

Board member Olson noted that he had recently attended the monthly Finance Advisory Committee meeting where they discussed budget challenges, the CASE committee's advocacy work with the legislature, and the District's health insurance plan. They also took a tour of the new VANTAGE/MOMENTUM building.

Board member Foss reminded everyone of the upcoming Dream Makers event, put on every year by the Minnetonka Foundation. She noted that the event is sold out, but those not able to attend can still bid on items in the silent auction. The link to the auction can be found on the Foundation's website.

12. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent David Law shared that the District's 19th annual Celebration of Excellence Awards event is coming up in May and that nominations for all of the awards categories opened today. He encouraged everyone to nominate a teacher, para, other staff member or school volunteer for an award.

Superintendent Law also shared that Board member Lee-O'Halloran has been working hard in leading the CASE (Community Action for Student Education) Committee and that he's helping the District to make progress on connecting with elected officials to further the District's legislative priorities. There is a CASE meeting coming up on February 12 for anyone who would like to get involved in advocating for school funding. Those interested can reach out to Carrie Voeltz at the DSC.

13. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Board member Lee-O'Halloran shared that the CASE Committee will be meeting on Monday, February 12 at 5:00 p.m. at the DSC in the Community Room for anyone interested in joining and assisting with legislative advocacy.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

Vitale moved, Foss seconded, adjournment at 9:10 p.m. Upon vote being taken thereon, the motion carried unanimously.



Chris Vitale, Clerk