

# MINNETONKA SCHOOL BOARD STUDY SESSION

District Service Center  
December 14, 2023  
6:00 p.m.

## AGENDA

- |      |    |  |
|------|----|--|
| 6:00 | 1. | Middle School Program Proposal   |
| 6:45 | 2. | Literacy Update  |
| 7:15 | 3. | Discussion on Board Leadership Positions, Board Meeting Dates and Committee Assignments for 2024 |

## CITIZEN INPUT

**6:00 p.m.**

Citizen Input is an opportunity for the public to address the School Board on any topic in accordance with the guidelines printed below.

### **GUIDELINES FOR *CITIZEN INPUT***

Welcome to the Minnetonka School Board's Study Session! In the interest of open communications, the Minnetonka School District wishes to provide an opportunity for the public to address the School Board. That opportunity is provided at every Study Session during *Citizen Input*.

1. Anyone indicating a desire to speak to any item about educational services—except for information that personally identifies or violates the privacy rights of an individual—during *Citizen Input* will be acknowledged by the Board Chair. When called upon to speak, please state your name, connection to the district, and topic. All remarks shall be addressed to the Board as a whole, not to any specific member(s) or to any person who is not a member of the Board.
2. If there are a number of individuals present to speak on the same topic, please designate a spokesperson who can summarize the issue.
3. Please limit your comments to three minutes. Longer time may be granted at the discretion of the Board Chair. If you have written comments, the Board would like to have a copy, which will help them better understand, investigate and respond to your concern.
4. During *Citizen Input* the Board and administration listen to comments. Board members or the Superintendent may ask clarifying questions of you in order to gain a thorough understanding of your concern, suggestion or request. If there is any response or follow-up to your comment or suggestion, you will be contacted via email or phone by a member of the Board or administration in a timely manner.
5. Please be aware that disrespectful comments or comments of a personal nature, directed at an individual either by name or inference, will not be allowed. Personnel concerns should be directed first to a principal or executive director of the department, then to the Executive Director of Human Resources, then to the Superintendent and finally in writing to the Board.

**School Board  
Minnetonka I.S.D. #276  
5621 County Road 101  
Minnetonka, Minnesota**

**Study Session Agenda Item #1**

**Title: Middle School Program Proposal**

**Date: December 14, 2023**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Over the past month, the middle school principals, in collaboration with the teaching and learning department, have developed a comprehensive middle school program proposal based on the findings from the program review presented to the School Board on November 16<sup>th</sup>. This proposal integrates the information gathered, including stakeholder feedback, during the program review completed over the past ten months.

**BACKGROUND**

On March 23, 2023, middle school and district leaders proposed the District engage in a comprehensive review of the current middle school program, including opportunities for student, family and staff voice and engagement. The Board supported that recommendation, and the program review process began in April of 2023.

The process has focused 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. The findings from that review resulted in significant changes to the middle schools, including the creation of honors level courses in all four subject areas, new courses supporting students in math, reading and organization skills, and multiple new elective courses with more flexibility for 8th graders when registering.

While these changes have served the school community well, the middle school program has continued to evolve with the addition of the Navigator program, Spanish and Chinese Immersion programs, and a considerable increase in open enrollment. These changes, coupled with significant program additions at the high school level, have 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.

## **PROPOSAL**

The Middle School Program Proposal addresses the five priorities identified and discussed at the November 16 School Board Study Session. 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, spanning two to three school years, beginning with the 2024-25 school year.

### 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.

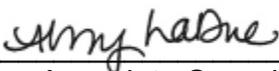
Both phases will include essential teacher professional learning and enhanced opportunities for collaboration. This professional learning and collaboration will shape the implementation of the initial phase and the design of the next iteration of electives and courses.

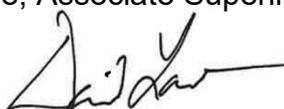
In conjunction with these proposed program improvements, it is proposed the District initiate a comprehensive facilities study to assess current and future needs at the middle level.

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## **RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:**

This report is provided to the Board as recommendations for the middle school program based on the recent comprehensive review.

**Submitted by:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy LaDue, Associate Superintendent

**Concurrence:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Law, Superintendent

**School Board  
Minnetonka I.S.D. #276  
5621 County Road 101  
Minnetonka, Minnesota**

**Study Session Agenda Item #2**

**Title: Literacy Update**

**Date: December 14, 2023**

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**OVERVIEW**

Each year, the School Board establishes annual, actionable goals for the Administration that align with the vision and direction for the District. This year as a component of the District Goal: Excellence in Student Learning and Support, an action step was developed aimed to:

*increase opportunities for improved academic outcomes for all students while additional efforts to improve student literacy at all levels and in all content areas as measured by student performance on standardized and benchmark assessments.*

Further, this goal outlines that *the District will implement an updated literacy plan, which will be shared with the community.* This plan will incorporate requirements of the READ legislation, new State English Language Arts (ELA) standards, and will span from early childhood through grade twelve.

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on District literacy efforts and the next steps for development and implementation of an updated E-12 literacy plan.

**READ Legislation**

The Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, known as The READ Act, was key new legislation included in the Omnibus Education Bill and signed into law by The Governor in May 2023. This legislation replaced the Read Well by Third Grade legislation which was one of five goals outlined for districts in the World's Best Workforce legislation. The goal of The READ Act is that every Minnesota child reads at (or above) grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and to support multilingual learners and students receiving special education services in achieving their individualized reading goals. It is the goal of Minnetonka Schools to ensure each and every child develops a high level of literacy proficiency as well.

Since its enactment, Minnetonka Schools has been taking steps to ensure the action steps for the Board's literacy goals are in alignment with this legislation and that teachers

responsible for reading instruction are becoming well-versed in evidence-based reading instructional practices. By the 2026-2027 school year, districts must provide evidence-based reading instruction through a focus on student mastery of foundational reading skills, oral language, and reading comprehension skills.

The legislation modifies literacy requirements for districts in the areas of the local literacy plan, leadership, professional learning, assessment, and literacy curricular resources. Additionally, the READ legislation strongly encourages districts to adopt a Multi-Tiered System of Support framework. Minnetonka Schools is in the second year of the three-year MTSS implementation plan which aligns with processes outlined in the legislation.

### **District Literacy Plan**

School districts in Minnesota have been required to develop and implement a local literacy plan in support of the World's Best Workforce goal of all students reading at grade level by third grade, also known as Read Well by Third Grade. District literacy plans are required to include multiple components encompassing assessment, progress monitoring, intervention identification and implementation, parent notification and professional learning. Each year in June, Minnesota school districts must update and post a Local Literacy Plan along with submitting this plan and literacy assessment data for kindergarten through third grade students to the Minnesota Department of Education under the Read Well by Third Grade (RWBTG) legislation.

With the passing of the READ Act, the District will be revising the Local Literacy Plan using updated guidance and requirements from the Minnesota Department of Education anticipated in March of 2024. Districts will be required to use this template for their local literacy plan and submit these plans by June 15, 2024.

### **District Literacy Lead**

By August 30, 2025, the READ legislation requires districts to employ or contract with a literacy lead who will collaborate with district administrators, facilitate the district's implementation of the READ Act, and support teacher implementation of structured literacy.

In the spring of 2023, the District hired a District Literacy Coordinator. This position was designed to provide leadership in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the E-12 literacy framework across all curricular areas and programs, including Immersion. The Literacy Coordinator supports the curriculum review and evaluation process for ELA and will continue to support the review process in all aspects of literacy across content areas with alignment to state academic standards. The position also provides leadership in the identification, implementation and evaluation of instructional practices, delivery models, resources, and assessments, ensuring alignment of literacy practices to the Minnetonka MTSS framework. This includes providing resources, guidance, and support for differentiated literacy instruction, intervention, and extensions to meet the needs of all learners. In addition, the Literacy Coordinator is developing, coordinating, and delivering

professional learning for teachers, principals and other school and district staff, serving as a resource for principals, leadership teams and PLCs to support building level literacy practices, initiatives, and systems.

## **Professional Learning**

The READ Act requires in-depth professional learning for evidence-based reading instruction via a program approved by the Minnesota Department of Education. Training must be completed by specific dates based on teacher roles. The Minnesota Department of Education continues to further define these requirements and as they provide more clarity, the District will continue to make appropriate adjustments.

### *Minnesota Department of Education Phase 1 of Professional Learning*

The READ Act divides educators into two phases for completion of required professional learning. Educators identified in the first phase must complete their learning by July 1, 2025. They include:

- PreK Classroom Teachers
- K-3 Classroom Teachers
- K-12 Reading Intervention Teachers
- PreK-12 Special Education Teachers responsible for reading instruction
- Curriculum Directors
- PreK-5 Instructional support staff who provide reading instruction
- Employees who select literacy instructional materials for a district

Minnetonka Schools has expanded the list to include additional personnel to best meet the needs of students and teachers. The additional staff deemed essential in this first phase are listed below.

### *Minnetonka Schools' Phase 1 of Professional Learning*

- Early Childhood (EC) Classroom Teachers
- Grade 4-5 Classroom Teachers
- EC-Age 21 Special Education Teachers responsible for reading instruction and support
- K-5 English learner teachers
- EC-5 Administrators

### *Minnetonka Schools Professional Learning Plan for Literacy*

The READ Act tasked the MDE, in partnership with CAREI, to identify at least three professional development programs that focus on the five pillars of literacy and the components of structured literacy by August 15, 2023. Although the programs were identified and posted on the MDE website, the MDE has not yet finalized contracts with the vendors and registration has not yet been made available to districts.

Minnetonka Schools aligned professional learning this fall for Minnetonka's Phase 1 teachers to the topics of research and evidence-based practices that will be included in these three programs. This provided teachers the opportunity to begin their professional learning ahead of the requirements and ensure their teaching practices align with what research says is best for teaching literacy. The following topics were covered during the first two professional learning sessions for Minnetonka's Phase 1 teachers:

- What the Science of Reading is and is not
- Brain research, including the four-part processing model
- How reading and writing are connected in the brain
- Models of Reading such as the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope, and the Five Pillars of Literacy (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension)
- Writing, including the Simple View of Writing, and the graphomotor area of the brain and how it is tied to the language areas of the brain
- Data Literacy and Assessment, including using Oral Reading Fluency data to determine the needs of students and make instructional decisions
- An overview of the components of Structured Literacy (explicit, systematic, sequential, and diagnostic)
- An overview of the components of language (phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics)
- Research on dyslexia and the role of schools in identifying characteristics of dyslexia
- How word recognition automaticity (orthographic mapping) leads to fluent reading and writing including how spelling is connected to reading
- Instructional practices to support foundational skills and language development in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, morphology, and multisyllabic word recognition

Additionally, time was provided for teachers to share their expertise, reflect, and collaborate with their PLC as an initial step toward application of their new learning. Throughout the professional learning sessions, best practice instructional and literacy strategies were modeled so teachers could envision ways to infuse engagement and literacy strategies in their classroom instruction.

Beginning with the upcoming professional learning day on January 2, 2024, Minnetonka Schools will work with CORE Learning, an approved state provider, to offer a customized professional learning session that will serve as an onramp to the state required learning. This session will be designed to honor the previous learning the staff completed this fall. Further, it will bridge to the next topics outlined in the Minnesota approved course. Additionally, it is expected that the State will require teachers to demonstrate their learning at the end of the professional learning series; therefore, each session will include a spiral of the most essential concepts and content to ensure teacher mastery.

The Minnesota Department of Education anticipates that the approved professional learning contracts will be available in early January. The District will evaluate these at that

time and design the plan for the remainder of this year and next year to complete all required learning by the July 1, 2025, deadline.

### *Minnetonka Schools' Phase 2 of Professional Learning*

Professional Learning Phase 2 requires all other teachers responsible for reading instruction to be trained by July 1, 2027. Specifically, the guidance from the MDE identifies these educators as needing the yet-to-be-identified approved programs for reading instruction. Because Minnetonka Schools strategically included more teachers than required by the MDE guidance, the list below is limited to those not yet included in Minnetonka's Phase 1.

- K-5 Specialists (art, media, music and phy ed)
- 6-12 Classroom Teachers responsible for reading instruction
- 6-12 Teachers who work with English learners
- 6-12 Instructional support staff who provide reading support
- 6-12 Administrators

Although the Minnesota Department of Education has not yet identified professional learning for Phase 2, Minnetonka Schools is taking steps to ensure that all teachers have access to professional learning opportunities that develop their skills for disciplinary literacy instruction. For this reason, the January 2, 2024, professional learning day will feature disciplinary literacy. The specific learning outcomes for that day include:

- Understand the difference between Content Area Literacy vs. Disciplinary Literacy
- Demonstrate the use of strategies, and provide time to embed them in authentic contexts
- Understand ways of building stamina for deep reading and reading of complex text vs. surface processing of text

Additionally, time will be provided for teachers to share their expertise and model the ways each of them read and respond to the text types prevalent in their discipline. For instance, technical reading is not the same as narrative reading. Teachers will leave the session with low prep and authentic methods of providing students with opportunities to read, write, and discuss in every classroom every day.

### *Additional Literacy Related Professional Learning*

Beyond the READ Act required professional learning, additional literacy training has been provided for the K-5 reading specialists. Facilitators from PRESS (Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites), which is housed in the Minnesota Center for Reading Research, a subsidiary of CAREI (the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement) at the University of Minnesota, provided a workshop in Tier 2 interventions, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making. The purpose of this workshop was to expand the resource repertoire of diagnostic tools, efficient evidence-based

interventions available in both English and Spanish and revisit the data-based-decision-making process.

Furthermore, a four-hour synchronous webinar on literacy will be provided for all Minnetonka paraprofessionals, regardless of their roles. Minnetonka is partnering with the Lee Pesky Learning Center for this webinar called "What Works in Reading Instruction: Tips for Paraprofessionals." As a learning organization, Minnetonka believes all educators, including paraprofessionals, must have an understanding of how children learn to read and the best ways to approach reading instruction. Understanding how reading works and how to support its development will ensure a literate and successful community.

## **Assessment**

The READ Act requires school districts to adopt and implement a K-3 universal literacy screener from the list of Minnesota Department of Education approved tools. Screening tools approved by the MDE include subtests to measure foundational reading skills as well as characteristics of dyslexia. By Fall of 2024, all districts must align their universal screening with the READ Act. FastBridge Early Reading (K-1) and CBM Reading (1-3) are among the tools approved to meet these requirements.

Currently, Minnetonka Schools utilize the FastBridge screening assessments with students in Kindergarten through Grade 5.

**FastBridge Early Reading:** This assessment is administered to Kindergarten students in the Fall, Winter, and Spring to help teachers identify student needs in the areas of Concepts of Print, Onset Sounds, Letter Names, and Letter Sounds. Additionally, starting in Winter, students are assessed on the skills of Word Segmenting, and Nonsense Words.

**FastBridge CBM Reading:** This assessment is administered to students in Grades One through Grade Five. They complete the Reading CBM Fluency Benchmark assessment in Fall, Winter, and Spring. With this assessment, students read out loud for one minute while the teacher tracks words read and records any errors.

Beginning in the Fall of 2024, The District will further align its universal screening with the READ Act based on the requirement that students in Grade One complete the FastBridge Early Reading assessments. The District will continue fall CBM Reading with students in Grade One based on their literacy development.

After students complete the FastBridge assessments in the Fall, the data are analyzed by K-5 teachers during their annual district-led data retreats. Interventionists review the data of students who may be at risk in Reading. Students identified as at risk may be further assessed, typically by a school reading interventionist, to identify specific needs and align instruction to respond to those needs.

To ensure parents are notified of their student's progress in reading, FastBridge Fluency results are shared with elementary school families during parent teacher conferences each year in October. Additionally, the assessment results are loaded into the Skyward Student Information System (SIS) for parents and teachers to view after each assessment window.

## **Approved Resources**

Starting July 1, 2023, when a district purchases new literacy curriculum, literacy intervention, or supplementary materials, those materials must be approved, evidence-based, and designed to ensure student mastery of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

In partnership, CAREI and the MDE, must identify by January 1, 2024, at least five evidence-based literacy curricula and supporting materials and post them on the MDE website. These identified resources will be evaluated by the District Elementary English Language Arts Curriculum Committee to determine which are the best fit to meet District identified literacy needs. Additional State supports and options related to resource acquisition and identification are outlined below.

- **Reimbursement:** A process for reimbursement of approved evidence-based structured literacy curriculum and supporting materials and intervention materials purchased after July 1, 2021, by districts, charter schools and cooperatives will be developed and communicated on the MDE website. Guidance on this process will be forthcoming.
- **Reconsideration:** The MDE and CAREI must provide districts an opportunity to request reconsideration for approved curricula and professional learning programs and must publish the request for reconsideration procedures on the department website. The request must demonstrate the curriculum or professional learning program meets the requirements of the READ Act, is evidence-based, and has structured literacy components. Guidance on this process will be forthcoming.

## **Curriculum Review Process**

The District is committed to continuous improvement. The goal of the curriculum review process is to advance the quality of curriculum and instruction and to promote excellence in student performance using the best possible instructional practices and resources. Aligning with the release of the new Minnesota Academic Standards in English Language Arts (ELA), the District's ELA curriculum review process will support the full implementation of new standards by the 2025-26 school year.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) completed the rulemaking process for the new Academic Standards in English Language Arts at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year. Academic Standards in English Language Arts address areas of literacy, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing,

spelling, listening, speaking, and viewing, and instruction is designed to meet these grade level standards. In addition, the MDE released test specifications for the new Reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, the MCA-IV, at that time.

During the 2023-24 school year, District curriculum review committees, made up of department chairs, expanded chairs, administrators, and literacy leaders, have reviewed the new ELA standards and test specifications, identified essential learnings, and engaged in evidence-based literacy training. Literacy training has focused on the shifts in the new standards, including the increased emphasis on foundational reading, as well as the broader literacy training highlighted earlier in this report. In addition, these curriculum review teams have begun identifying gaps in existing units and resources, which will ultimately inform future recommendations.

This work will continue throughout the 2023-24 school year. As the MDE and the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) finalize a list of evidence-based literacy programs and supporting materials, curriculum review teams will also identify instructional resources for future pilots and implementation.

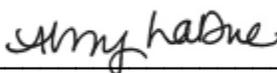
### **District Plan Moving Forward**

As the Minnesota Department of Education continues to provide guidance on requirements and options to meet the legislative requirements of the READ Act, Minnetonka Schools is prepared to respond in order to continue to develop, refine, and implement the District E-12 Local Literacy Plan.

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### **RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on District literacy efforts and next steps for this cornerstone of all education.

**Submitted by:**   
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Amy LaDue, Associate Superintendent

**Concurrence:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Law, Superintendent

**DISCUSSION**

**School Board  
Minnetonka I.S.D. #276  
5621 County Road 101  
Minnetonka, Minnesota**

**Study Session Agenda Item #3**

**Title: Discussion on Board Leadership Positions,  
Board Meeting Dates and Committee Assignments  
for 2024**

**Date: December 14, 2023**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Board will discuss Board leadership positions, board meeting and study session dates for 2024, and Board representation on District committees. The following dates are proposed for Board meetings and study sessions in 2024:

- January 4 and 18
- February 1 and 22
- March 7 and 21
- April 11 and 18
- May 2 and 23
- May 30 and June 13 (the May 30<sup>th</sup> date will function as the June meeting)
- July – Board does not meet
- August 1 and 15
- September 5 and 26
- October 3 and 24
- November 7 and 21
- December 5 and 19

**Submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_



David Law, Superintendent

**MINNETONKA SCHOOL DISTRICT #276 – 2023 SCHOOL BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Meeting Dates/Times</b>	<b>2023 Representatives</b>
AMSD (Association of Metropolitan School Districts)	Monthly – first Friday of the month at 7:00 a.m. @ AMSD offices	Mike Remucal
MTA Liaisons	As needed	Chair and Vice Chair
Finance Advisory & Audit Committee	Monthly – Tuesday mornings at 7:00 a.m.	Patrick Lee-O'Halloran
Materials Review Committee	As needed	Meghan Selinger
Teaching and Learning Advisory	Four times per year – Monday evenings at 5:30 p.m.	Meghan Selinger
Minnetonka Foundation	Monthly – second Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.	Chris Vitale
PTO/PTA Leaders	Monthly – second Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. (no mtgs in Dec and Feb)	Mark Ambrosen
Special Education Advisory	Determined by leadership	Katie Becker
Mental Health Advisory	Determined by leadership	Mike Remucal
Tonka CARES	Every six weeks – Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.	Mike Remucal/Mark Ambrosen
CASE	As needed during the legislative session	Lisa Wagner/Patrick Lee-O'Halloran
Community Education Advisory	Meets every other month on Monday evenings	Katie Becker
Preschool/ECFE Advisory	Monthly – alternates between evenings (7:00-9:00 p.m. and afternoons (12:45-2:45 p.m.))	Meghan Selinger/Chris Vitale
OPEB Advisory	As needed	Patrick Lee-O'Halloran
Intermediate District 287 Board	Second and fourth Thursday evening of the month <i>(with the exception of April, July, August, November and December)</i>	Michael Remucal