

Thank You, Voters!

Approval of local funding will provide stable finances for years

With 72% approval, Minnetonka School District voters overwhelmingly approved local funding for operations and technology for the next 10 years. "Local funding is an essential component of the way we fund schools in Minnesota," shared Dennis Peterson. "As I have met and talked with various community groups in recent months, it is clear that community members are deeply invested in the success of our students and our schools. Our students are fortunate to have so many adults, beyond parents, who want to support their future success."

Strong schools are essential to a strong community, and recent real estate reports clearly indicate that the Minnetonka School District is a district of choice for families who value a strong community and excellence in education. In September, the average home sale value increased more than 8.4% over September 2014 and the number of home-sales-closed returned to peak pre-recession levels.

School Board Election Two incumbents and two new members were elected to the Minnetonka School Board on November 3: Incumbents Lisa Wagner and Lisa Sumner will extend their service another four years. Newcomers Mark Ambrosen and Katie Becker, parents of Minnetonka students, will also join the Board. Ambrosen and Becker are parents of children attending Minnetonka Schools.

School Board Chair Charlie Kanan and former Chair Karen Walkowski will end their Board service at the end of December.

Prior to being elected to a four-year term, Charlie served on the Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation, the Strategic Planning Team, the Innovation Team, the Community Education Advisory Board and the Minnetonka Diamond Club. A 1969 Minnetonka High School graduate who has lived in many cities around the country, Kanan returned to Minnetonka to settle down when his son was in school. "My family received so much care and guidance from staff in the Minnetonka Schools, I really wanted to give back as a volunteer and eventually as a Board member." Charlie has often shared stories of teachers and principals who gave him guidance in parenting. "Being on the School Board gave me an even deeper appreciation for how well-run this district is. Dr. Peterson has a vision for excellence and everyone he has



Charlie Kanan



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hired is committed to world-class excellence for kids." Charlie's mantra, "give more than you receive," means his volunteer work is just beginning. He continues to serve on the Diamond Club Board, is a member of the Lake Minnetonka Excelsior Rotary Club known for "service before self," and has been a VANTAGE mentor since the program's inception. "It has been a true honor to be of service to this community," Kanan said.

Karen Walkowski served eight years on the Board. Before joining, she was active with the Citizens Finance and Audit Committee and the District Strategic Planning Team. She served as an Action Team Leader and with high school academic and sports programs in which her children were involved.



Karen Walkowski

"I remember looking at the finances in 2004 and wondering what would become of the District with a declining enrollment projection and years of budget cuts on the horizon," shared Karen. "Instead, we implemented our Strategic Plan, restructured the budget to be more sustainable, and innovated our way through the recession. We've prudently invested in updating our schools, hired excellent staff, and expanded programs and opportunities for students. I'm proud of all we have done; this is a very different district than what might have been without the strategic decisions that we made." Karen has two adult children, both graduates of Minnetonka High School.

There will be a Farewell Reception for Kanan and Walkowski on Thursday, December 17, from 4-5:30 p.m. at the School District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka.

Message

from the Superintendent

The voters in Minnetonka spoke loudly on November 3, expressing their support for two ballot issues for helping fund the schools over the next 10 years. The entire community has stepped up on behalf of their schools and their students. We thank everyone who voted and encouraged others to vote. This is an incredible community and the students benefit from that support every day. The independent committee that ran the campaign worked tirelessly, and members deserve our appreciation as well.

The 71.5% yes vote for the operating levy increase and the 72.8% for continuing the technology levy were great conclusions. The past 10 years have been challenging for districts throughout Minnesota, and only Minnetonka has been able to reach 2015 without major disruptions to funding. This happened, despite the low 1.45% average state aid increase over the past 10 years, because Minnetonka has become powerfully attractive educationally to families throughout the Metro. The enrollment strategy has been a major factor in serving Minnetonka students and keeping property values strong, but we have run out of room for future increases in enrollment.

Congratulations to Katie Becker and Mark Ambrosen on their election to the Board and to Lisa Wagner and Lisa Sumner on their re-election. We will miss Charlie Kanan and Karen Walkowski, but the Board will continue to be strong and visionary.

Dennis Peterson,
Superintendent



Options create opportunities for students

If you ask parents and students what they like most about Minnetonka Schools, they say **variety of opportunities, great teachers and broad curriculum.** It takes all three to provide outstanding academic options that inspire our students.

KINDERGARTEN OPTIONS

Parents of incoming kindergarteners will choose from Chinese, English or Spanish immersion when enrolling for kindergarten. Regardless of the choice, all elementary students benefit from curriculum that leads the average Minnetonka fifth grader to perform beyond the 11th-grade level in reading and math.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PATHWAYS

Our middle learners really stretch in grades 6-8. From expanded world language options and accelerated science to computer programming and the arts, students begin to recognize their strengths in these years. Many choose to enroll in honors curriculum that offers preparation for rigorous high school courses, including Advanced Placement, beginning in 9th grade.

UNMATCHED CHOICE IN HIGH SCHOOL

The MHS guidance team helps students and families create a four-year, college-prep plan that can incorporate AP or IB courses; the full IB or IB Bilingual

Diploma; professional experience through VANTAGE; pre-engineering curriculum in Project Lead the Way and a choice of 20 courses offered through Tonka Online.

“For high school students, having choices promotes decision making and awareness of interests and strengths,” parents Anne and John Groton said. “Minnetonka High School has a tremendous array of classes for students to choose from as well as an impressive roster of extra-curriculars. Through these offerings, our children find where they thrive and are better equipped for the choices they will make after high school.”

Minnetonka’s staff are eager to help create a “just-right” plan that addresses the unique needs of every child.



Join Us for **Preschool Story Hour**
+ Open House
Tuesday, December 1

Tour our schools, meet our principals and see your child dream about the Kindergarten journey.

Clear Springs – 10am
Deephaven – 9am
Excelsior – 9:30am
Groveland – 10am
Minnewashta – 10am
Scenic Heights – 9am

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Minnetonka School District, ISD #276
Dennis Peterson, PhD, Superintendent
5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka, MN 55345
School Board
Charlie Kanan, Chair
Pam Langseth, Vice Chair
John Holcomb, Treasurer
Lisa Sumner, Clerk

Heidi Garcia, Director
Lisa Wagner, Director
Karen Walkowski, Director

6th Annual
TONKA TURKEY TROT

Thursday, November 26 | 8 a.m.
MHS Tonka Dome
For more info/registration:
tonkatourkeytrot.com

Minnetonka Schools Calendar

November	
7-21	MHS Fall Musical, “Nice Work if You Can Get It”
14	Clear Springs Pancake Breakfast/Book Fair, 8am
16	Minnewashta Gr 4 Concert, 7pm
16	MMW Gr 6 Choir & Show Choir Concert, 6:30pm
16	Navigator Parent Information Night for Prospective Applicants, DSC, 6:30pm
17	Clear Springs Gr 3 Music Program, Excelsior, 6:30pm
17	Groveland Gr 3 Music Program, MME, 7pm
19	Minnewashta Gr 4 Concerts, 6pm
20-21	MMW Fall Play, Cafeteria, 7pm
20	Scenic Heights Grade 3 Family Breakfast, 7:30am
24	Minnewashta Gr 3 Concert, 6pm
26	Tonka Turkey Trot, MHS Tonka Dome, 8:00am
26-27	No School K-12, Thanksgiving Break
30	Maynard’s Night for ICA Food Shelf
December	
1	Clear Springs Family Service Night, 6:30pm
1	College Financial Aid, MHS Forum, 4pm and 7pm
1	MME Gr 6 Choir Concert, 7pm
3	Scenic Heights Gr 4 Toys for Tots Sale
4	Scenic Heights Gr 4 Family Breakfast, 7:30am
4-5	Tonka Pride Pop-Up Store, DSC
5-20	MHS Holiday Shows
7	Clear Springs Gr 4 Orchestra Concert, 6pm; Gr 5 Choir and Orchestra Concert, 7pm
7	Wind Ensemble and Gr 8 MMW/MME Band Concert, Arts Center, 7pm
8	Deephaven/Groveland Orch Concert, DH, 7pm
8	Navigator Parent Information Night for Prospective Applicants, DSC, 6:30pm
8	MHS Band Concert, Arts Center, 7pm
8	Scenic Heights Gr 4 & 5 Orchestra Concert, 7pm
9	MHS Symphony & Middle School Orchestras, Arts Center, 7pm
10	Deephaven/Excelsior Gr 5 Choir Concert, Excelsior, 6:30pm
10	MHS Orchestra Concert, Arts Center, 7pm
10	Minnewashta Gr 4 & 5 Orch Concert, 7pm
14	MME Choir Concerts: Gr 7, 6:45pm; Gr 8, 8pm
14-15	MHS Choir Concert, 7pm
15	MME Gr 7 Band Concert, 7pm
15	Minnewashta Gr 5 Choir Concert, 6pm
15	MMW Gr 7 Band Concert, 7pm
17	Excelsior Gr 4 & 5 Orchestra Concert, 6:30pm
17	Groveland Music & Lyrics Concert, 7pm
17	MMW Choir Concerts, Gr 7, 6:45pm; Gr 8, 8pm
24-31	No School K-12, Winter Break

MINNETONKA THEATRE PRESENTS
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