



Minnetonka School District, ISD #276
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AROUND MINNETONKA

WINTER 2021

NEWS FROM MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

At its January meeting, the Minnetonka School Board approved two building plans that will provide new homes for growing District programs. **Read on to learn what's in store for MOMENTUM and Minnetonka's new Transition Program.**

TRANSITION STUDENTS WILL COME HOME IN 2021-22 THROUGH NEW MINNETONKA PROGRAM

Minnetonka Schools serves students from early childhood through graduation and beyond. For the past 17 years, the District has partnered with the Hopkins and St. Louis Park school districts to provide special education services to students ages 18-21, focused on the transition to life after high school. With the approval of a new Minnetonka program, students will now be able to launch into their adult lives locally as part of the District's new Transition Program.

The unanimously-approved proposal includes the purchase and renovation of a professional building in Shorewood, located less than one mile from Minnetonka High School. "One of our foremost intentions in establishing our own program is to create and foster relationships within the Minnetonka community," said Christine Breen, Executive Director of Special Education. "Many of our students remain in our community long after the completion of high school, and we would like to better support the long-term goals of our students and families."

The Minnetonka Transition Program will build strong partnerships with community businesses, following the model of other District signature programs, allowing students to develop and maintain local working relationships to self-sufficiency and independence. Ground will break on the new project this spring to prepare for the program's launch in fall 2021.

MOMENTUM PROGRAM EXPANSION BRINGS DEDICATED AUTO SHOP AND MAKER SPACE TO MHS CAMPUS

MOMENTUM is Minnetonka High School's newest signature program, focused on design and skilled trades. Since its launch in the fall of 2020, the program has provided hands-on, real world experiences for students to explore pathways in manufacturing, construction, architecture, engineering & design and engine & automotive careers.

Encouraged by the program's growth and potential, the Minnetonka School Board unanimously approved an addition to the Pagel Center specifically for MOMENTUM, to be completed by the end of 2021. The 10,300 square foot facility will include a six-car automotive shop for students to utilize in automotive maintenance courses, as well as flexible-use maker spaces to provide dedicated room for other MOMENTUM courses, such as the Physics of Home Renovation. Bringing these experiences to the MHS campus was a priority for Principal Jeff Erickson and his team. Before the facility's approval, automotive courses were only available off-site through a partner program.

"We know that the space a class uses can encourage how learning happens, how engagement happens and how students collaborate," said Erickson. "A dedicated facility for the skilled trades will enhance the opportunities we can offer at MHS, so we can truly support every student toward achieving personal success."



Rendering of the MOMENTUM multi-use space, which will provide a classroom environment for automotive courses and other skilled trade opportunities. **IMAGE COURTESY OF ATS&R**



MINNETONKA SCHOOLS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: CHILD-CENTERED EXCELLENCE AWARDS

When you think of excellence in the Minnetonka Public School District, is there a person who comes to mind? A teacher? A staff member? A volunteer in the schools? Whether you are a parent, student, staff member or community member, you have the opportunity to nominate that person for a Minnetonka Schools Child-centered Excellence Award.

Award honorees are selected from the pool of nominations by a committee of past award honorees. Honorees will be recognized at the District's annual Celebration of Excellence Awards Ceremony on May 13, 2021. Additional details about the celebration will be provided as the event approaches.

Please take a few moments to learn more about the award categories and to acknowledge a school employee or community member for their dedication and impact at minnetonkaschools.org/celebrate

Nominations are open through February 28, 2021.

AWARD CATEGORIES INCLUDE:

- Bradley G. Board Award for Excellence in Elementary Education
- Charlie Parnell Memorial Award for Excellence in Special Education
- Minnetonka Employee Award for Child-centered Excellence
- Minnetonka Award for Child-centered Excellence in Teaching
- Team Award for Child-centered Collaboration
- Joyce Gustafson Memorial Award
- **NEW IN 2021:** Minnetonka Award for Child-centered Excellence in Teaching E-learners

MESSAGE from the Superintendent

Minnetonka has been a comprehensive high school for most of its existence, and we continue to provide a broad program to meet the interests and needs of every student in the school. Although we have developed a national reputation as one of the strongest academic high schools in the country, we have always made sure that the courses available for students who have less interest in attending a four-year college after graduation are held. We have maintained those courses even when student interest was low.

However, there has been a resurgence in interest for the Trades by more of our students. This has resulted in the District creating an even stronger program to serve those students' interests. We call the overall program 'MOMENTUM,' which is a name that students helped choose. This program today, just like many of the Trades themselves, is not the '60s and '70s version of what students have to learn to get great jobs. We have good facilities for many of our programs, but we have determined that another facility designed for the modern version of the Trades is needed.

The School Board has approved the construction of a new building attached to the Pagel Center, which is across the driveway from the main high school building. It will be designed for today's programs, and it will generate more interest among students whose passion is to pursue design and skilled trades following high school.

Another important program for a smaller number of our students that is going to have a new setting is our Transition Program (formerly called Transition Plus). This program will be placed in a remodeled facility off of Highway 7 west of Vine Hill Road. It will be designed specifically for students with special needs who have completed high school but are still entitled to services in the local district. They will be closer to home, and they will have interested employers in the community who will also provide experiences to move into a productive adulthood.

Both of these outstanding programs serve smaller numbers of our students, but they play valuable roles in producing excellent pathways to significant careers.

Dr. Dennis Peterson, Superintendent

MINNETONKA SCHOOLS IMPORTANT DATES

FEBRUARY 2021

- February is Black History Month
- 4.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 11.....Gr 8-11 Virtual "Experience Minnetonka," 5:30-8 p.m.
- 12.....Modified Learning Day, varies by grade
 - Gr K-5: Early Release, Professional Learning
 - Gr 6-8: No School, Staff Planning
 - Gr 9-12: Heart Week Activities/MAST
- 15.....No School K-12, DSC Closed, Presidents Day
- 18.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.

MARCH 2021

- 4.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 4.....Parent/Teacher Conferences, 4-8 p.m.
- 5.....No School K-12, Parent/Teacher Conferences, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 18.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.
- 26.....End of 3rd Quarter
- 29-31.No School K-12, Spring Break

APRIL 2021

- 1-2.....No School K-12, Spring Break
- 2.....DSC Closed
- 5.....No School K-12, Planning/Grading Day
- 8.....School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 22.....School Board Study Session, 6 p.m.
- 26.....Two-Hour Late Start

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