



School Board News
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School Board News

March 7, 2024

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Recognitions

Girls Alpine Ski State Champions, Boys Alpine Ski State Runners-Up, Girls Nordic Ski State Qualifiers, Boys Nordic Ski State Qualifier, Varsity Cheerleading State Champions and National Runners-Up, JV Cheerleading State Qualifiers, High School Science Bowl State Runners-Up, Middle School Science Bowl State Champions and National Qualifiers, First Lego League State Qualifiers.

[Watch Recognitions](#)

Introduction of Chilean Student Teachers

In October of 2009, the District entered into an agreement to support the placement of student teachers in Minnetonka with Universidad de Concepción. The opportunity resulted in the placement of six (6) student teachers in our Spanish immersion program for ten (10) weeks during the spring of 2010. St. Cloud State was the third partner until 2018, when we entered into a partnership with the University of St. Thomas. This experience has been highly successful for our students and host families. The program has become incredibly attractive to education students at the University and has become a model program within the country of Chile. This program has opened many doors that have allowed us to develop partnerships at the K-12 level in Concepción. The last group of student teachers was here in the spring of 2020. After pausing due to COVID, we have relaunched the program. This year, we are hosting six student teachers from Universidad de Concepción for a twenty-week experience. All six student teachers will work in our Spanish immersion programs. The program will provide cultural and linguistic benefits to our students.

General Counsel and Executive Director of Human Resources Anjie Flowers provided an overview of the partnership between the school district and the university and introduced this year's Chilean student teachers. As Ms. Flowers shared, the District is pleased to bring this program back and looks forward to its continued success in the future.

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School News Report: Clear Springs Elementary

Clear Springs Principal Curt Carpenter and Assistant Principal David Wicklund updated the School Board on belonging efforts at Clear Springs. Two fifth-grade student leaders highlighted their roles as Student Mentors and what it has meant to their sense of belonging. School Board Director Kemerie Foss thanked the students and Clear Springs Leadership for their efforts and presentation. The students also spoke about what their favorite part of the day was.

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Community Comments

There were four people who spoke during community comments.

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Adoption of FY25 Health and Dental Insurance Premiums

Minnetonka Independent School District 276 has been self-insured for employee health and dental insurance since July 1, 2002. Self-Insurance for health and dental benefits means the District has its own plan for health and dental benefits, and then contracts out third party administration for the adjudication of claims.

The School Board are the Trustees of the Self-Insurance Fund. There is a self-insurance advisory committee made up of representatives of all the employee groups of the District. This body makes recommendations to the School Board on annual premium levels and plan benefit levels.

For several years there have been low or no increases. Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois shared that the Self-Insurance Advisory Committee met in February to review health and dental plan options and voted 12-1 to recommend to the School Board that for FY25 medical premiums be increased 19.8%, office visit and urgent care copays be increased by \$5 to \$35, deductible and out of pocket maximums be increased by \$300, and dental premiums be increased 7%. The School Board approved the adoption of FY25 Health and Dental Insurance Premiums. School Board Director Dan Olson said he doesn't like having to vote for this but in looking a premiums on the open market, those plans have much higher deductibles than Minnetonka's plans.

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Approval of Policy #417: Chemical Use Violations

General Counsel and Executive Director of Human Resources Anjie Flowers presented a policy update for approval. The change recommended for Policy 417: Chemical Use was due to recent legislative changes and subsequent changes to another policy, which is Policy 418: Drug Free Workplace. The Board approved the policy change. School Board Director Dr. Mike Remucal commented that the Board received feedback from a member of the community that they felt this policy was used for minor issues, but after meeting with several administrators and learning more about how this is used Dr. Remucal is confident the policy is being used appropriately.

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Approval of Policy #626: Secondary Grading and Reporting Pupil Achievement

Superintendent David Law gave an overview of the review the School Board has done on Policy #626: Secondary Grading and Reporting Pupil Achievement.

Mr. Law said the District had received some questions from parents about why the Minnetonka Schools policy regarding how AP/IB course grades were weighted differed from other school districts. In November 2023, the Board asked the District to review its policy and conduct surveys of stakeholders, which included MHS students, MHS AP/IB teachers, MHS parents and MHS counselors. As Mr. Law explained, the School Board reviewed the survey drafts and provided input in developing the questions for the surveys. Survey results were presented to the Board in January 2024. At that time, the Board consensus on changes seemed to be a move from earning a certain level of letter grade and test score to earning a certain level of grade OR a certain level of test score. That concept was then shared with all MHS teachers by MHS Principal Jeff Erickson, and the feedback from teachers was mixed. The policy was then again discussed at the February meeting, tabled, and then discussed at the February study session. At that session, the Board also looked at information from the original survey, as well as information about how many students would earn a weighted grade if the policy changed. It was determined hundreds of students would earn a weighted grade who had not in the past. There was a discussion about how the District would

measure the impact of the change.

Mr. Law said if this policy change passes, the impact of the change will be measured based on registration numbers in AP/IB courses, as well as in future, looking at how many students sign up for AP/IB assessments, and student scores on those assessments. Additionally, MHS AP/IB teachers can be surveyed at the end of next school year to determine if engagement levels changed in their classroom. The policy could be revisited if the District finds there is a negative impact from the change.

Prior to the vote, School Board Vice Chair Patrick Lee O'Halloran said he remains supportive of this change- as it removes barriers for some students and is similar to surrounding districts' policies. He said it also encourages more students to participate in rigorous courses. School Board Director Kemerie Foss said she would like to thank the Board for taking more time to research this, and she thanked the community for that, as well. She said she has received feedback from many members of the public who are in support of keeping this policy as is. She said she looks forward to analyzing the data of the impact, and she supports the Board as the Board is a cohesive unit, and she respects the Board members but wants to bring the voice of the community, as well. School Board Chair Meghan Selinger said there has been a robust, and respectful, collaborative conversation on this topic. The Board voted in favor (5-2) of making the change to the policy.

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Approval of Sale of 2024B COP Bonds for Deephaven Auto Queue

Minnetonka Schools has continually made adjustments to the parking lots and auto circulation for student drop off and pick up at all schools when funding has become available to pay for improvements. Significant changes to parking lots and auto queues over the past 17 years have been constructed at several of our schools. At Deephaven Elementary School, the student drop off and pick up queue has remained largely unchanged, with autos queueing up primarily on Vine Hill Road, with the auto queue often backing up over the bridge over the LRT bike trail, which blocks that bridge for police, fire and emergency vehicle access.

Funding for the auto queue construction will be from \$1,525,000 2024B Certificates of Participation Bonds, with payment of the annual bond payment coming from Operating Capital Revenues. The estimated interest rate is 4.79%. Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois asked the Board to authorize the sale of the 2024B Certificates of Participation Bonds to fund this project for completion by August 23, 2024 so that it is ready for use by the first day of school on September 3, 2024. Dr. Mike Remucal said as a parent who has sat in that queue, he is glad this is in consideration. The School Board approved the authorization.

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Approval of Consent Agenda

(Minutes of February 1, 2024 Regular Meeting, Closed Session of February 8, 2024; and Closed Session of February 22, 2024; Study Session Summary of February 22, 2024; Payment of Bills; Recommended Personnel Items; Gifts and Donations; Electronic Fund Transfers).

Board Reports

Director Dan Olson said the OPEB Trust and Citizen's Finance Committee meetings took place since the last Board meeting. He said the OPEB is in great shape to meet obligations. Regarding general finances, we are facing a deficit in the budget. He said once we finalize the budget, we'll land on what the final picture looks like and get to work on that.

Vice Chair Patrick Lee O'Halloran shared that the District held a successful Day at the Capitol and met with several legislators to advocate for additional school funding. There was a large group from Minnetonka of parents, administrators and School Board members. Please reach out to Vice Chair Lee O'Halloran or the Communications Department if you'd like to get involved.

Watch Reports

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Law shared the following: One of the Minnetonka School Board's goals for the school district is to ensure excellence in leadership and organizational support. Ensuring that District facilities meet the current and future needs of students is a component of this goal. To this end, the District will be creating a Facilities Study Task Force in April 2024.

The District is seeking representatives from across the school community and residential community to serve on the Task Force. From mid-April through mid-October 2024 (including over the summer months), the Task Force will tour and review each school and district building. The Task Force's work will also include studying the history and status of each facility, reviewing survey data from key stakeholders, and discussing suggestions of changes or additions that would allow the facilities to better support students' educational needs now and in the future.

From there, the Task Force will develop a set of recommendations for the School Board to review to help the Board determine whether future actions are warranted to ensure that District facilities can support the evolution of instructional programs of Minnetonka Schools' students far into the future.

If you would like to be considered to serve on the Task Force, please apply on our district website. You'll find the Facilities Study Task Force interest form on the [School Board section of the district website](#). We'll have that form open for the next two weeks.

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Announcements

No announcements.

Upcoming Meetings

- March 21, 2024 School Board Study Session, 6PM at District Service Center
- April 11, 2024 School Board Meeting, 7PM at District Service Center

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