**MINNETONKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #276**

**District Service Center**

**5621 County Road 101**

**Minnetonka, Minnesota**

**Summary of August 19, 2021 Study Session**

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in study session at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 19, 2021 in the Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Chairperson Chris Vitale presided. Other Board members present were: Mark Ambrosen, Katie Becker, John Holcomb, Mike LeSage, Lisa Wagner and Superintendent Dennis Peterson, ex officio.

**UPDATE ON SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS**

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Dr. Amy LaDue and Executive Director of Special Education Christine Breen updated the Board on three different summer learning programs that were offered to provide opportunities for academic and social emotional learning for students. Students were identified by teacher or IEP team recommendation and district standardized assessment data.

The three summer learning programs included:

* Extended School Year (ESY) for students receiving special education
* English learner (EL) for students who would benefit from continued English Language exposure and development
* General education opportunities for rising first through eighth graders

**Extended School Year (ESY)**

Students participating in ESY were identified based on state criteria within three areas of eligibility: regression/recoupment, self-sufficiency, and unique need. Decisions around eligibility involved IEP teams reviewing individual student data collected during the school year in order to determine whether or not ESY services are necessary for a student to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Historical numbers indicate Minnetonka traditionally serves roughly 75 students annually in ESY programming. Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, special education saw an increase in students qualifying for ESY services. This summer, our program served 115 students from early childhood through 12th grade. Early childhood programming was held at Minnetonka Community Education Center, kindergarten through eighth grade was held at Clear Springs and ninth through twelfth grade students’ ESY programming was held at Minnetonka High School.

In addition to traditional eligibility, districts were charged with identifying students who might require compensatory services due to learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic. Minnetonka identified five students in need of compensatory services and offered these services during our traditional ESY time period. Minnetonka will continue to assess the need for compensatory and recovery services once students return to in-person learning this Fall.

Students attending ESY range from federal setting I to federal setting III students with needs crossing all categories of eligibility. Students focused on academics, functional skills, social and emotional learning, independence and much more. ESY was offered in-person as well as online this year, as it was in the summer of 2019-2020. The traditional offering for students is to attend up to three days a week, anywhere from 90 minutes to 180 minutes a day for four weeks. If and when IEP teams determine a student requires services that look different than this traditional offering, unique and creative programming is designed to meet their unique needs. Decisions as to frequency and duration are determined on an individual basis by IEP teams.

**English Learner (EL) Summer Learning Program**

Minnetonka Public Schools serves roughly 200 English Learner (EL) students each year. EL students are identified for services through entrance criteria set forth by the State of Minnesota. Districts serving EL students receive Title III funding, which requires a portion of these grant monies to be spent on extended year programming.

Minnetonka spends roughly one third of its annual Title III budget on supporting this population of students throughout six weeks of the summer. In partnership with Excelsior PTA and Excelsior United Methodist Church, Minnetonka is able to offer a robust summer educational enrichment program for these students. This program is held off-site at Excelsior United Methodist Church due to proximity to many of our students and families given that transportation is not provided for this program. Students were able to attend up to six hours per day, three days a week, for six weeks in total. Students work on reading, writing, math and speaking the English language throughout.

NWEA, MCA, and ACCESS standardized assessment data will be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of this programming on students’ progress toward becoming proficient in the English language and exiting the EL program following criteria set forth by the State. Students proficient in the English language should additionally be meeting standards on state assessments.

**Summer Learning Program**

Minnetonka Public Schools offered a Summer Learning Program for rising first through eighth grade students. The elementary program offered opportunities for English, Spanish Immersion or Chinese Immersion programs. Middle school programs focused on the English program. Two-hundred and fourteen students registered, with 171 from the elementary and forty-three from the middle school level. Of the students who registered, two hundred and seven participated.

For this program, teachers identified students who would most benefit from additional time and support to develop essential skills to be ready for instruction at the next grade level. Students were identified using a combination of teacher recommendation and spring assessment results.

The program focused on core academics, reading/language arts and math, with additional opportunities for social and emotional learning, peer interaction and engagement in a variety of activities.

This in-person program was offered 4-days per week for four weeks with students having an opportunity for 16 days of instruction. The Summer Learning Program school day was three hours long. This was a districtwide program with all Elementary students attending Groveland Elementary and all Middle School students attending Minnetonka Middle School East. Transportation was provided for any district resident student who requested it.

Student attendance was strong throughout the program, with 79% of participants attending 75% of the time or more. Additionally, 18% of the students attended every day. Families reported the main reason for being absent as a summer vacation. Additionally, both formative assessments and anecdotal reports indicated that students demonstrated further growth and development in academics, social and emotional skills and attitudes as a result of the program. At the elementary level, of the students who participated in both pre- and post-assessments, 91% showed improvement in reading, 68% showed improvement in math, and 72% showed improvement in SEL skills. Fall assessment data will be analyzed against spring assessment results to further analyze the effects of the summer learning program.

Board member Wagner asked Dr. LaDue if any of the lessons learned this summer would be carried into the fall. Dr. LaDue noted that the District has completed their MTSS evaluation and the Teaching and Learning Department is working with District and building leadership to focus on systemic supports that relate to academic and social emotional learning needs.

**UPDATE ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois began his update by noting that the District has significant construction and long-term facilities maintenance projects under way currently. He provided information and shared photos of the following projects:

* R-22 HVAC replacement
* Cabinet and tile replacement at Clear Springs
* MHS west restrooms
* Arts Center parking lot addition
* Einer Anderson retaining wall replacement
* MOMENTUM Design and Skilled Trades addition to Pagel Center
* Conversion of Shorewood building to house the SAIL (Students Achieving Independent Life) Transition Program

Chairperson Vitale thanked Mr. Bourgeois for the update and noted that families are very excited about the SAIL Program and all that it will offer to our students.

**REVIEW OF PROPOSED PLANS FOR VANTAGE AND MOMENTUM**

Mr. Bourgeois and architect Dave Maroney from ATS&R led the discussion regarding the possible construction of a facility at 5735 County Road 101 (next to Clear Springs) to house existing and future VANTAGE programs and future MOMENTUM programs. Mr. Bourgeois noted that additional work fine-tuning the facility requirements and the associated estimates indicate that a facility of 36,300 square feet at an estimated cost of $12.9 million will meet the current and future needs of the programs. The facility is proposed to be paid for with funding from $250,000 remaining from the 2020D Certificates of Participation, $2,650,000 in new Certificates of Participation issued in Calendar 2022, $6,100,000 in new Certificates of Participation issued in Calendar 2023, and utilization of approximately $3.9 million of excess assets over and above the liability from investment earnings in the OPEB Revocable Trust.

Mr. Maroney then shared an updated site plan and possible floor plans for the facility with the Board. He noted that the District has met with the City of Minnetonka to review the proposed project and receive input. The City conducted a traffic analysis of the proposed project and is recommending that traffic to the building be routed through the Clear Springs loop (the intersection of Highway 101 and Hanus Road).

Mr. Maroney noted that the updated floor plan now shows the building having more of a “barbell” shape. It will be a three-level building, with a centralized main entry at the mid-level. The mid-level will include a Forum area, and two pods—one for MOMENTUM and one for VANTAGE. The upper level will include science and art pods, and the lower level will have classroom space, a business pod, and a tornado shelter, which is required for new construction of this type. If the Board approves the project and timeline, the building would be ready for occupancy by July of 2023.

In the discussion that followed, Board members discussed the timing and the option for some Clear Springs students to occupy part of the new building while the temporary classroom wing at Clear Springs is removed and then replaced. Board members asked Dr. Peterson to set up a time for them to walk both the proposed site and the current Clear Springs temporary classroom wing.

Chairperson Vitale noted that this item would be brought back to a future Board meeting or Study Session for further discussion.

**CITIZEN INPUT**

Chairperson Vitale extended an invitation to members of the audience who wished to address the Board on any topic. He also read the guidelines for Citizen Input, for the benefit of those who wished to comment.

The following people addressed the Board regarding the possible mask requirements for the fall and expressed their desire that masks not be required in school buildings:

* Excelsior resident David Evans
* Shorewood resident Brigid Kern
* Excelsior resident Jennifer Shawgo
* Eden Prairie resident Angela Potas
* Shorewood resident Aleshia Hansen
* Shorewood resident Allison Taffe
* Minnetonka resident Jesse Paul
* Minnetonka resident Emily Paul
* Minnetonka resident Adrienne Schnurr
* Excelsior resident Nicole Nejezchleba
* Excelsior resident Jennifer Senescall
* Chanhassen resident Kevin Eichhorn
* Excelsior resident Jenny Lang
* Chanhassen resident Faith Staut
* Excelsior resident Kathryn Bonine
* Chanhassen resident David Befort
* Minnetonka resident Matt Riggs
* Excelsior resident Jen Winegarden
* Eden Prairie resident Kevin Cristadoro
* Chanhassen resident Julian Janes
* Deephaven resident Zach Proctor
* Shorewood resident Thomas Lambert

The following people addressed the Board regarding the possible mask requirements for the fall and expressed their desire that masks be required in school buildings:

* Minnetonka resident Amy Stern
* Minnetonka resident Nick Lambertz
* Minneapolis resident Scott Thielen
* Minnetonka resident Amy Cho
* Eden Prairie resident Brian Hill
* Minnetrista resident Elizabeth Reed
* Excelsior resident Eleanor Johnson
* Minnetonka resident Erin Bix
* Minnetonka resident Carrie Hahn
* Excelsior resident Melinda Kohlmyer
* Hopkins resident Walter Truong
* Eden Prairie resident Joshua Scharback
* Excelsior resident Jenn Price
* Minnetonka resident Kristina Whitesell
* Eagan resident Renee Schwartz
* Eden Prairie resident Lannon Grady
* Minnetonka resident Dan Olson
* Minnetonka resident Patrick Lee-O’Halloran
* Minnetonka resident Katie Mark
* Minnetonka resident Christine Poston
* Minnetonka resident Heidi Calhoun-Lopez
* Minnetonka resident Leslie King-Schultz
* Eden Prairie resident Camellia Ramos

The following people addressed the Board regarding other subjects:

* Deephaven resident Mike Dutton—start and continuation of school year
* Chanhassen resident Jeff Engel—politically neutral classrooms
* Golden Valley resident Serena Harad—Goal 2
* Wayzata resident Isabelle Geurkink—Goal 2
* Excelsior resident Michelle Ebben—curriculum
* Minnetonka resident Lena Pak—Goal 2
* Minnetrista resident Dawn Janes Bartley—COVID quarantine protocols

Chairperson Vitale thanked members of the audience for their comments and then adjourned the study session at 9:55 p.m.