

MINNETONKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #276
District Service Center
5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Summary of August 20, 2020 Study Session

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in study session at 9:40 p.m. on Thursday, August 20, 2020 in the Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Chairperson Katie Becker presided. Also present were Board members Mark Ambrosen, John Holcomb, Mike LeSage, Christine Ritchie, Chris Vitale, Lisa Wagner, and Superintendent Dennis Peterson, ex officio. The study session was also livestreamed on the District's YouTube channel.

CITIZEN INPUT

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

Minnetonka parent Kirk Heitz addressed the Board at this time. He spoke of his concern with the e-learning plan for MHS students for the fall. He requested that the Board consider allowing the students to have more in-person instruction, citing concerns over mental health, and social and emotional well-being. He noted that the current number of cases in Hennepin County is trending down, and case numbers for Minnetonka are much lower than the county numbers overall. He asked the Board when the school opening plan may be revised, and when more students would be allowed back in the schools.

Dr. Peterson noted that it was safe to say that the wish for more in-person instruction for MHS students was shared by many people, however, to modify the high school schedule would require younger students to be at home more. He noted that trend numbers are tricky to interpret, and the District needed to look at those numbers over a two-week timeframe. He also said that while he believed that the District will be fully open at some point during the upcoming school year, it is not possible at this time to predict when that will happen.

Minnetonka parent Shannon Heitz then addressed the Board, expressing similar concerns regarding the e-learning plan for MHS students. She also expressed her desire that the high school students have more in-person instruction in the fall than what the current plan allows.

Chairperson Becker thanked both Mr. and Mrs. Heitz for their comments.

PRESENTATION OF MN STUDENT SURVEY DATA FOR MINNETONKA BY RACE AND GENDER

Director of Assessment Dr. Matt Rega and MHS Math teacher Matt Breen led the discussion. They began with some background:

Since 1989, the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) has been administered every three years to students in regular public elementary and secondary schools, charter schools, and tribal schools. All public school districts in Minnesota are invited to participate in the survey. From 1989 through 2010, students in 6th, 9th and 12th grades participated in the survey. In 2013, the grade levels surveyed changed to 5th, 8th, 9th and 11th grades.

The MSS includes questions about a wide variety of youth behaviors, including risk behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, violence and sexual activity, as well as positive behaviors and connection to family, school and community. Questions about some of these topics are only asked of 9th and 11th grade students.

The MSS is optional on the part of school districts, but over time the majority of districts have chosen to participate. Most districts had all designated grades participate. Minnetonka Schools participates and includes all grades designated. The MSS is an anonymous survey; no names or identifying code numbers are collected, and survey answers cannot be traced to an individual. Students can decline to take the survey. If they take the survey, students can skip any question or stop at any point.

Minnetonka Schools has spent considerable time over the past year with the released 2019 data. The District has done comprehensive analysis of the MSS data sets for all grades, and completed detailed data comparisons by gender and grade from 2013 to 2016 in addition to comprehensive analysis of data comparisons of Minnetonka students with the state averages of all students. In order to get further data sets to analyze the MSS in relation to how our students of color are doing, Minnetonka needed to request this additional data from the state. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) states that students are asked to choose one or more racial/ethnic groups to indicate how they might describe themselves. Because more than one group can be chosen, it is no simple matter to report survey results.

Regarding the report itself, Dr. Rega and Mr. Breen said it provided additional information and further analysis about the health and well-being of adolescents from the major racial/ethnic groups in Minnetonka with comparisons to the total student populations. Within this analysis, there are comparisons regarding well-being and substance use between Minnetonka overall Male and Female, respectively, responses compared to Asian, Black and Hispanic responses for Ninth and Eleventh Grades. Additionally, for Eighth Grade, there is a comparison between the overall Male and Female responses and District Asian populations at MME and MMW, respectively. Dr. Rega noted that the District was unable to receive Black and Hispanic numbers for Eighth Grade because of

sample size concerns from the state. The results regarding substance use revealed no consistent trends between races for any of the three included grades. The well-being responses, however, revealed some notable trends within the District Hispanic population, particularly in the Ninth Grade group. Further, the Asian population at MMW typically provided fewer positive responses than the corresponding overall by-gender groups or the Asian population at MME. A more encouraging result was that of the high school Black population for both Ninth and Eleventh Grades, which was closely behind the overall Male group in terms of most positive well-being responses.

Dr. Rega and Mr. Breen then shared the following highlights from the report:

- Out of these 164 responses, Minnetonka compared favorably on 134, unfavorably on 26 and equal on 4.
- On the 0-3 scale we used to measure the tone of the response, Minnetonka averaged a 2.07 while the state average was 1.97 out of 3.
- The Hispanic group ranked most negative in 20 of the 21 comparisons.
- For the Grade 9 rank out of the five groups for each statement or question, overall Male had the most positive average rank, followed by Black, Asian, overall Female and Hispanic population.
- For the Grade 11 rank out of the five groups for each statement or question, overall Male and Black tied for the most positive average rank, followed by Asian, overall Female and Hispanic.
- While Hispanic students had the lowest average for Grade 11, their responses were not as outlying. They ranked 5th out of the five groups for 9 of the 21 statements or questions.
- For Grade 8, overall Male and the MME Asian population averaged the most positive responses, followed by the overall Female group and MMW Asian population.

REVIEW OF COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL DATA

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois presented this item to the Board. He said that every year, the District reviews comparative data to gauge the District's performance on various financial metrics. He said the information is developed using the latest financial data available from a variety of State reports and other sources. Highlights included:

- We are low on state aid compared to other districts.

- In total levy per pupil, we are on the low end compared to other districts.
- Net tax capacity per pupil shows that we are not a property-rich district; rather, we are highly residential vs. commercial/industrial.
- Our taxpayers have traditionally stepped up to support and approve referendums.
- Net tax capacity per pupil in 2019 is \$9,512; compared to \$12,619 for the group average and \$9,920 for the state average.
- FY2019 transportation expenditures per ADM is \$457 or 3.83% - lower than the group and state average.
- FY2019 building operations and maintenance expenditures per ADM is \$763 or 6.4% - lower than the group and state average.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the Study Session at 10:45 p.m.

/cyv