

# New Year, New Opportunities in 2016

## Newly Elected School Board Members Take Their Seats January 7

### Meet Mark Ambrosen, School Board Treasurer

Mark lives in Excelsior and has two children, one MHS alum and one currently enrolled at the high school. He holds a B.A. in Political Science from Winona State University.

"I am very proud to be able to serve the students, parents, teachers, and staff of the Minnetonka School District. My wife, Ann, and I have lived in the District since 1993. Both of our children, Delaney '15 and Zach '18 have been in Minnetonka schools since kindergarten. We have witnessed firsthand the incredible education that they have received. My goal is to ensure that the Minnetonka School District continues to give all of our students the best possible preparation for life after graduating."



### Meet Katie Becker, School Board Director

Katie lives in Eden Prairie and has two children at Scenic Heights Elementary. She holds a B.A. in Psychology from the Univ. of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

"I am honored to be serving our students, parents, teachers and community members on the Minnetonka School Board. I have been an active parent volunteer since moving into the District in 2009. I will continue the pursuit of innovative programs that inspire children to reach their highest level of academic and personal achievement while keeping our district fiscally responsible and ensuring success in our schools. I am committed to you and your family because your child deserves an outstanding education and school experience."



## MHS Students: More Choice and Flexibility for 2016-17 Academic Year

High school registration for 2016-17 will begin February 22, with exciting new opportunities for students to reach their highest aspirations.

### SCIENCE RESEARCH LAB SET TO OPEN SEPTEMBER 2016

In December, the Minnetonka School Board approved the remodeling of the northeast wing (second floor) of Minnetonka High School to create additional science classrooms and laboratory space needed to support our growing science curriculum. The renovation includes a new authentic research lab—flexible space equipped to support individualized science projects, science club activities, and skill-building for competitive, post-high-school pursuits.

### TONKA ONLINE EXPANDS TO MEET STUDENT DEMAND

Building on the success of the Tonka Online program that opened in summer 2014, new courses are being added to help students prepare for advanced coursework and/or make room in their schedule for additional classes of interest. This summer, students can choose from preparatory math classes and pre-AP courses in biology, chemistry and U.S. history designed to develop skills, confidence and success in advanced courses.

Bringing the total number of courses to 24, Tonka Online is also adding AP Art History, AP World History, Chemistry Honors, Excel and Statistics in Biology, and Independent Living.

### VANTAGE ADDS ENGINEERING COURSE

The VANTAGE Project-based Engineering course, available to juniors and seniors, has been revised to include AP Calculus BC and Project Lead the Way Principles of Engineering, two courses that provide the rigor colleges look for when admitting students to engineering programs.

VANTAGE is offering eight study areas in 2016-17, bundling relevant coursework with real-world professional projects that give students exposure to industry mentors and professional settings. VANTAGE now includes Business Analytics, Business in a Global Economy, Healthcare & Sports Science, Graphic Design & Marketing, Digital Journalism, Advanced Topics in Food Science and Research, and Psychology of Learning and Instruction.

# Message

from the Superintendent

Part of the great start to 2016 for the Minnetonka District is the transition of the Board with two new members. As noted in the articles on this page, Mark Ambrosen and Katie Becker will continue the tradition of excellence as part of the seven outstanding board members who oversee the District. Additionally, the academic program will move forward this spring with new opportunities for students in the 2016-17 school year.

The highly successful VANTAGE program will be expanding with new strands that enable students to prepare for a rich collegiate experience. The initiation of the authentic research program for science and math students will be a powerful opportunity for students to prepare for college and work. The Spanish and Chinese Immersion program will be offered to tenth-graders for the first time with expanded opportunities to develop second language skills. New science labs are being developed within the existing high school building, as the overall facility is being prepared for about 3,500 students eventually.

As described to voters over the past few months, enrollment will grow slightly in the coming years. We expect the high school to have about 3,250 students and the District to have 10,415 next year. Revenue from Open Enrollment will continue to be a critical resource for all students, and the new referendum funding will be available in 2016-17.

Dennis Peterson,  
Superintendent

## Hour of Code Week

“Computer coding teaches you grit and teaches you not to give up... ever,” wrote a Scenic Heights Elementary fifth-grader. This level of perseverance and enthusiasm could be seen in thousands of K-12 students who participated in Hour of Code activities in December. In the classroom and after school, students logged 7,843 hours of coding, surpassing the District-wide goal of 6,000 hours.

As the first District in the state to introduce K-5 coding curriculum, Minnetonka’s Hour of Code week augments lessons delivered in classrooms throughout the year. Students learn math, logic and patterning skills as they program small robots, develop games or create apps. Even the very youngest students are naturally collaborative as they solve challenging problems giving bee-bots instructions.

“Students are consumers of technology all the time,” Technology Coach Jeremy Engebretson said. “With coding, we flip the perspective so the students become producers. They realize they can tell a computer what to do. It’s a different mindset than wondering, ‘What can I do with a computer?’”



As Minnetonka students move into middle and high school, they will be able to choose from a robust computer science curriculum, including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses.

The Code.org website offers cloud-based coding tools for use in the classroom and at home. To appeal to younger learners during Hour of Code week, Code.org introduced new tools this year with themes based on *Star Wars* and the movie *Frozen*.

## 2016 DREAM MAKERS

Tickets on sale now!  
 Three-course dinner, auctions  
 and more to support  
 all Minnetonka students  
[minnetonkafoundation.com](http://minnetonkafoundation.com)

**February 6**  
**Radisson Blu**  
**Minneapolis**

# Minnetonka Schools Calendar

### January

- 11 District Band Festival Gr 5-12, MHS, 7pm
- 12 Excelsior Kindergarten Info Night, 6:30pm
- 12 Groveland Kindergarten Info Night, 6:00pm
- 12 MMW Speech Tournament, 4-8pm
- 14 Minnewashta Kindergarten Info Night, 6pm
- 14 Clear Springs Kindergarten Info Night, 6:30pm
- 14 MME & MMW Gr 6 Orchestra Concert with the Minnetonka Philharmonic, Arts Center, 6pm
- 17 ECFE & Preschool Maynard’s Fundraising Event, 5pm
- 18 No School/District Offices Closed, MLK Jr. Day
- 19 MMW Gr 6 Band Concert, Cafeterium, 7:30pm
- 19 Scenic Heights Gr 5 Choir Concert, 6:30pm
- 21 Excelsior Imagination Fair, 5pm
- 21 District Children’s Choir, Arts Center, 6:30pm
- 21 Scenic Heights Kindergarten Info Night, 6pm
- 22 ECFE and Preschool Pizza & Movie Night, 5:30pm
- 22 Scenic Heights Gr5 Family Breakfast, 7:30am
- 23 MME & MMW SAT Test, Gr 7 & 8 at MME, 7:30am
- 25 No School, Grading/Planning Day
- 26 MMW Gr 6 Band Concert, Arts Center, 6:30pm
- 27 MHS Junior Parent Program, Arts Center, 4:30pm & 7pm
- 28 Freshman Parent Night, Arts Center, 7pm

- 28 Groveland Imagination Fair, 6:30pm
- 28 Kindergarten Registration Deadline
- 28 Love, Limits and Logic Speaking Event, MCEC, 6:30pm
- 28 Minnewashta Imagination Fair, 6pm
- 29 Scenic Heights Carnival, 5:30pm
- 30 Preschool and ECFE Open House, 9:30am

### February

- 1 District Orchestra Festival, MHS West Gym, 7pm
- 1 Gr 8 Parent Night, Last Names A-K, MHS, 5:30pm & 7pm
- 4 Gr 8 Parent Night, Last Names L-Z, MHS, 5:30pm & 7pm
- 3 Sophomore Parent Night, Arts Center, 7pm
- 4 IB Info Meetings, MHS Forum, 9:30am and 4pm
- 6 ECFE Online Registration for 2016-17 Opens, 8am
- 6 Preschool Online Registration for 2016-17 Opens, 8am
- 6 Dream Makers Dinner Gala, Radisson Blu, 5:30pm
- 8 District Choral Concert, Wooddale, 7pm
- 9 Jazz Festival, Lake Conference, Arts Center, 8am-1pm
- 9 Parenting with Purpose, Arts Center, 6:30pm
- 12 2-Hour Early Release K-12, Teacher/Staff Development
- 15 No School K-12, Presidents Day
- 25 Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 26 No School K-12, Parent/Teacher Conferences



**Hop to it!**

**Kindergarten registrations due  
January 28**

**Preschool & ECFE Open House  
January 30 • 9:30am**

Minnetonka Community Education Center  
 4584 Vine Hill Road, Deephaven



Minnetonka School District, ISD #276  
 Dennis Peterson, PhD, Superintendent  
 5621 County Road 101  
 Minnetonka, MN 55345

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Katie Becker, Director  
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