

Welcome!

2012-2013 GUIDE TO MINNETONKA SCHOOLS
KINDERGARTEN OPTIONS



MINNETONKA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Minnetonka, Minnesota 55345

952.401.5000

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www.facebook.com/minnetonkaschools



MINNETONKA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Let me and my friends tell you why Kindergarten in Minnetonka rocks! With top-notch teachers and so many options, we've got something for everyone.



IN MINNETONKA, WE KNOW THAT EVERY CHILD IS AS UNIQUE AS EVERY PARENT'S HOPES AND DREAMS FOR THEIR CHILD. THAT IS WHY WE OFFER A VARIETY OF LEARNING OPTIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN. REGARDLESS OF THE OPTION CHOSEN, PARENTS CAN REST ASSURED THAT THEIR KINDERGARTEN CHILD WILL BE WELL-PREPARED TO SUCCEED IN FIRST GRADE AND IN LIFE.

EACH OF OUR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS HAVE A GENUINE LOVE FOR CHILDREN AND LOVE FOR KINDERGARTEN. THEY INSPIRE IN CHILDREN A PASSION TO WONDER, DISCOVER, CREATE AND EXCEL. THEY IGNITE A LOVE OF LEARNING THAT BURNS BRIGHTLY FOR MINNETONKA STUDENTS THROUGH GRADUATION AND BEYOND.

ALL MINNETONKA KINDERGARTEN CLASSES ARE TAUGHT BY HIGHLY-QUALIFIED, FULLY-LICENSED KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS. KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS SHOULD BE FIVE YEARS OLD BY SEPTEMBER 1. PARENTS MAY REQUEST EARLY ENTRANCE CONSIDERATION FOR CHILDREN TURNING FIVE BY OCTOBER 31.

Did you know? Class sizes in Minnetonka are among the smallest in the metro area.



Kindergarten Options

HALF-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Minnetonka's half-day program is well respected for its strong curriculum, outstanding teachers and high levels of parent involvement. Our early literacy curriculum, math experiences, group time and hands-on activities instill in children a love of learning and prepare each child to succeed in first grade.

Our half-day program is ideal for children who have the opportunity to spend the other half of their day participating in learning activities with a parent. The half-day experience is also an excellent fit for children whose kindergarten experience will be their first "school" experience, as it offers a more gradual entry into the world of learning and the structure of the school day.

EXTENDED DAY KINDERGARTEN

Extended Day Kindergarten, offered at each elementary school, combines our half-day Kindergarten curriculum with a half-day of fee-based enrichment opportunities. Children spend the day with the same highly-qualified, licensed Kindergarten teacher. This provides seamless transitions from the Kindergarten curriculum to enriched learning opportunities throughout the day. Extended Day Kindergarten is designed for children who are ready for a longer day in an enriched and nurturing learning environment. It is not intended to accelerate students, but rather to provide enrichment and extend learning time. Most children in the Extended Day program have experience being away from parents or family for longer periods of time. The enrichment half of the day is tuition-based, offered through Community Education. Tuition is \$4,100 for the year. Payment options are available.

READY START KINDERGARTEN

Ready Start Kindergarten is a program designed for a small number of children with summer birthdays who may not be ready, socially or academically, for a traditional half-day of Kindergarten. This half-day, every-day Kindergarten option is tailored to younger attention spans, and class size is limited. Choice time and hands-on activities provide students more opportunities to strengthen social and emotional skills. A language-rich environment builds early literacy and academic skills through stories, math manipulatives, puppets and themes, such as letter of the week. Parent involvement is a strength of the program.

Transportation is provided for District children to Ready Start Kindergarten, which is currently offered at two schools. Ready Start Kindergarten was developed for families struggling over the decision to start Kindergarten or wait another year. For more information about Ready Start Kindergarten, contact your school principal.

LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS

Minnetonka offers either a Chinese or Spanish Language Immersion option at each of our neighborhood schools. These options provide English-speaking children the opportunity to acquire fluency in a second language while still in elementary school. In an Immersion classroom, 100% of the Kindergarten curriculum is taught in the second language, beginning the first day of school. The children will come to know their teacher as someone who understands English, but only speaks in Chinese or Spanish. Students develop proficiency by hearing and using the Immersion language to learn all school subjects. Families interested in Immersion are asked to make a six-year commitment to the Language Immersion curriculum.

The Immersion option is provided as a half-day or Extended Day Kindergarten program.

The Immersion curriculum parallels Minnetonka's English Kindergarten curriculum, except all subjects are taught in the Immersion language.



TECHNOLOGY

Minnetonka is a national leader in using classroom technology as an accelerator of learning and to connect with all types of learning styles.

In Minnetonka, all Kindergarten classrooms are equipped with SMART Boards [interactive white boards] that allow teachers to quickly project visual images from the computer to assist with instruction. Teachers also wear wireless microphones which gently amplify and distribute their voices to all four corners of the classroom, enhancing children's ability to hear new words and sounds and creating a calm and nurturing classroom.

Throughout the school district, Minnetonka has installed 561 SMART Boards which allow teachers to create interactive lessons, keeping students engaged and interested in learning. There are also more than 572 Sound Field Solutions in District classrooms.

Did you know?
Minnetonka Schools
rank highest in elemen-
tary parent satisfaction.
98% rate
Minnetonka Schools
good or excellent!



Language Immersion

SPANISH OR CHINESE LANGUAGE IMMERSION OPTIONS ARE OFFERED AS A SCHOOL-WITHIN-A-SCHOOL AT EACH OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS. FAMILIES ELECTING THE LANGUAGE IMMERSION OPTION ARE ASKED TO MAKE A SIX-YEAR COMMITMENT TO THE LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM.

WHAT IS IMMERSION?

Over thirty years of research indicates that Immersion is the most effective type of foreign language instruction. Students are “immersed” in a foreign language in their classroom. The new language is the medium of instruction as well as the object of instruction. The goal of language Immersion is for students to become proficient in a second language and develop increased cultural awareness.

Students develop proficiency in the second language by hearing and using it to learn all of their school subjects, rather than studying the language by itself. The Immersion teacher speaks the new language 100% of the time with students. Although Kindergarten students will speak to their teacher and classmates in English, within a few years students learn to speak the Immersion language 100% of the time as well. By fifth grade, a student’s reading and speaking fluency will be on par with a fifth grader native to the language.

WHY BEGIN A SECOND LANGUAGE IN KINDERGARTEN?

The young child’s brain is developmentally ready to learn a new language. Children just have this capacity. A child’s brain has twice as many synapses (connections) in the brain as an adult. The young brain must use these connections or lose them. After this window of opportunity in which a child naturally learns a language, the brain slowly becomes less receptive. When children wait until high school to start studying a foreign language, the task is much harder.

LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

- Has a positive effect on intellectual growth and enhances a child’s mental development
- Develops flexibility in thinking, sensitivity to languages and a better ear for listening
- Improves a child’s understanding of his/her native language
- Gives a child the ability to communicate with people s/he would otherwise not have the chance to know
- Opens the door to other cultures and helps a child understand and appreciate people from other countries
- Increases career opportunities where knowing another language is an asset

SPANISH AND CHINESE OPTIONS

All families have the option of Kindergarten taught in English, Spanish or Chinese.

Chinese, offered at Excelsior and Scenic Heights, is the #1 native language in the world, spoken by one-fifth of the world’s population. Since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, Chinese has become an important state and federal priority. Minnetonka Schools have a long and positive language history and were among the first in Minnesota to teach Chinese.

Spanish is offered at Clear Springs, Deephaven, Groveland and Minnewashta. The Hispanic population is the fastest growing demographic within the United States which presents great career opportunities for bilingual professionals. Spanish is the most common choice for a second language among Minnetonka students.

HOW WILL LEARNING EVERYTHING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE AFFECT MY CHILD’S ENGLISH LANGUAGE LITERACY?

Research consistently finds that the Immersion experience actually enhances English language development (Cloug, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000), but it is important to remember all children learn differently. Since Minnetonka began its Immersion Program in 2007, NWEA and MCA data indicate no significant difference among Immersion students and their English-only peers in Reading or Math tested in English. This is contrary to international research which has found that during the primary years (K-3) English reading and spelling scores may lag. Minnetonka’s Immersion model, which begins direct instruction in English in third grade, is working well. Much research also finds that learning a second language actually helps students learn their first language better.

Visit www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/Immersion to learn more about Language Immersion.

IS THE IMMERSION PROGRAM A GOOD FIT FOR ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS?

The Immersion Program is a good fit for any Kindergarten child whose family values learning a second language in elementary school. However, Immersion may not be a good fit for every child or every family.

- Families who prefer their children have a profound command of the English language before learning a second language usually choose our Kindergarten program taught in English.
- The Immersion Program is a long-term commitment. Electing Immersion because a friend or neighbor made that choice is not wise. Make your decision based on the best interest of your child.
- Developing second language skills will follow a similar pattern to a child’s first language development. If your child was older than most children in acquiring verbal skills or letter and number recognition in English, your child may be more successful in the English program.
- The Immersion Program may not be a good fit for a child who has a language-processing disorder.
- If you are not sure whether Immersion is a good fit for your child, contact your school principal for further consultation.

Curriculum

THE ENGLISH PROGRAM

All kindergarten classrooms feature a literature-rich environment where students are immersed in songs, chants, big books, phonemic awareness and writing activities that build a strong foundation for reading.

Because kindergartners exhibit a broad range of development, reading instruction is differentiated through small group, guided reading instruction.

Thematic social studies, science and health units provide opportunities for vocabulary growth and deep concept development. The math curriculum teaches foundational math concepts on the concrete level first and then moves students toward the abstract level. Daily work with hands-on materials and math manipulatives provides children with opportunities for learning and applying concepts.

We foster the social and emotional development of each child through directed group and independent choice activities within in a nurturing environment.

THE IMMERSION PROGRAM

Immersion classrooms follow the Kindergarten curriculum (described above), except 100% of classroom instruction and culture will be in the second language (Spanish or Chinese).

In Kindergarten, the Immersion teacher will speak to children only in the second language; however, the teachers realize that their students will not understand everything they say. Teachers use body language, visuals, manipulatives, exaggerated

facial expressions and expressive intonation to communicate their meaning. To draw students into the language, teachers use songs, useful phrases, chants and rhymes and carefully structure the day with familiar routines.

Children speak in English to their teacher and peers. It is helpful if parents reassure children that the teacher can understand English. Children should feel comfortable speaking to their teacher in English.

Outside of their classroom, at lunch or recess, children may talk and play in English and interact with children from both the English program and other Immersion classrooms. This interaction will continue throughout their elementary school years.

In grades K-2, all classroom instruction in is the Immersion language. Specials—music, art, physical education and media—are taught in English. Typically in first or second grade, a classroom will make the decision to try to only speak the Immersion language. This is a gradual, but exciting process.

In third grade, direct instruction in English begins in the classroom. Specials in music, art, physical education and media continue in English. By fifth grade, about 75% of the day is in the second language and 25% is taught in English. Special Education and High Potential Services are only provided in English in all grades.

Childcare

EXPLORERS CLUB OPPOSITE KINDERGARTEN

For families who are seeking a full-day experience only a few days a week or children who are not ready for the structure of a full day of school but who require childcare during non-Kindergarten hours, Minnetonka Community Education offers the Explorers Club.

Explorers Club offers flexible enrollment. You may register your child for two, three, four or five days per week. Explorers Club opposite Kindergarten provides a four-hour extension of the Kindergarten day. During this time, children have lunch and enjoy a variety of fun learning activities and indoor and outdoor play. Explorers Club is staffed by experienced, creative and caring professionals. Staff-to-student ratio of 1 to 10 allows for individualized attention for children.

Explorers Club opposite Kindergarten is offered at the Minnetonka Community Education Center and Excelsior Elementary. Children who attend Kindergarten at other schools are transported by bus to or from Excelsior or the Minnetonka Community Education Center.

Explorers Club registration information and fee schedules can be found at: www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/explorers

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Minnetonka Explorers Club, before and after school care, is available at all schools for all children grades K-5. Explorers Club is open from 6:30 a.m. through 6 p.m. For information, call 952-401-6832. Note: A separate online registration for Explorers needs to be completed in addition to school enrollment forms.



**Did you know?
26% of my
elementary friends
enroll in Explorers
Club for before or
after school
care.**

School Services

TRANSPORTATION

Kindergarten children who enroll in a half-day program are assigned to A.M. or P.M. classes according to the program chosen and home location. A.M. and P.M. boundaries are modified each year to balance class size and minimize student bus ride time. Your school will send a tentative A.M. or P.M. assignment in early June. Extended day kindergarten children ride the bus to and from school with 1st through 5th grade children.

School buses transport students to and from the bus stop nearest their home address. An alternate stop may be arranged for day care or a second household. Open enrolled students are eligible to ride the bus from any stop located within the school attendance area. Parents requiring daycare, second household or open enrolled stops will need to submit an "Annual Request For Daycare/Alternate Transportation" form which is available on the District website.

Bus stops in your neighborhood have been established to serve all children. Stops generally have been in place for many years and proven to be safe and accessible. Bus stops for our Kindergarten-only runs at mid-day may be established a little closer to home. Parental assistance is needed and appreciated at all bus stops.

BUS FEE FOR STUDENTS

Minnesota state law requires the District to provide transportation services to all students who live outside a two-mile distance of their school. For children who live within the two-mile boundary, there is a fee for bus service. The

driving distance is measured using the District's bus routing computer program. The bus fee is \$100 per child with a \$250 maximum per family. If your home is within the two-mile area, you will be sent a notice in spring following registration. Bus passes are mailed in August.

Transportation registration forms and information may be found at www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us by selecting Services > Transportation.

LUNCH SERVICES

Minnetonka Public Schools Child Nutrition Services offer a wide variety of healthy choices that teach children how to develop healthy, lifetime eating habits. Current research reinforces the importance of fruits, vegetables and whole grains in the diet. Minnetonka Public Schools receive fresh bakery products with no trans-fats or preservatives. Additionally, the District participates in a federal fresh produce program, helping to defray costs.

During the first weeks of school, many school volunteers assist our Extended Day Kindergarten children in going through the lunch line, selecting meal choices, and checking out. In mid-August, all families will receive a food service personal identification number (PIN) and instructions for making payments. To view lunch menus, make payments, check account balances and see other information about Child Nutrition Services, visit www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us. Click Services > Nutrition.

HEALTH SERVICES

Minnetonka Schools have Licensed School Nurses on staff who supervise health office staff. If your child is ever required to take medication while at school, it will be administered by our health office staff. If your child has allergies or other chronic conditions, please record this important information on the Annual School Health Form included with your registration materials.

Immunizations

Your child's immunization record must be on file at the school before your child may attend. Please complete the immunization form included with your registration packet and mail it to school before August 1.



Watch your mail for an invitation to go on a practice bus ride the week before school starts!

PARENT OPTIONS PLAN

Families may use the Parent Options Plan to enroll at any Minnetonka school, on a space available basis; however, transportation is only provided within school attendance areas.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Minnetonka Public Schools welcome open enrollment and nonresident students. The application is available from Minnetonka's Registration Office and should be returned by January 15. Minnetonka may continue to accept students after January 15, on a space available basis. Once a child is enrolled through this program, the child may attend Minnetonka Schools through high school.

EARLY ENTRANCE

Children turning five between September 2 – October 31 may be eligible for early entrance into kindergarten. Parents considering early entrance should contact Joan Larson, Early Enrollment Coordinator at 952-401-6950 before April. Application materials for early entrance consideration are available on the District website at www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us. Click on Academics > Elementary Education > Kindergarten > Registration. Applications materials are due on or before May 1.

Registration

REGISTERING FOR KINDERGARTEN NEED NOT BE A STRESSFUL PROCESS. AT MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THE PROCESS IS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. VISIT OUR SCHOOLS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT THEY OFFER AND HOW DIFFERENT OPTIONS FIT YOU AND YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS.

1 ATTEND A KINDERGARTEN OPEN HOUSE. All Minnetonka Public Schools hold Kindergarten Open Houses and Story Hours each December and January. Visit our schools. Meet the principal and teachers.

2 INDICATE WHICH SCHOOL YOUR CHILD WILL ATTEND. Minnetonka School District has six equally-excellent elementary schools. Most children attend their neighborhood elementary school. The Parent Option Plan is available for families if they wish to send their child to a different elementary school than their neighborhood school. We also welcome open enrollment and non-resident families. The state deadline for applying for open enrollment is January 15; students may be accepted after the deadline if space is available.

3 LEARN MORE ABOUT MINNETONKA'S KINDERGARTEN OPTIONS. Minnetonka has seven outstanding Kindergarten options. English, Spanish and Chinese, half-day and extended-day programs, plus Ready Start K. Kindergarten Options videos are posted to each school website. Kindergarten information meetings are scheduled at each school in mid-January. Contact the elementary school for the date and time of these sessions or visit our website: www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/openhouse.

4 SELECT A KINDERGARTEN OPTION THAT BEST FITS YOUR CHILD. Try to determine which program you want to enroll your child in before the registration event in February. This may be a difficult decision. Speak with your principal, ask your child and talk with friends and family who have recently enrolled their child in Kindergarten.

5 REGISTER YOUR KINDERGARTNER Kindergarten Registration Night is February 2, 2012. Parents may drop by to submit forms, present the child's original birth certificate, complete the Kindergarten registration process and have your questions answered by the school principal. Staff will also be available to assist with enrollment forms. If you do not receive a registration packet or you are unable to attend, please contact your school office or the District enrollment office.

Student Last Names A-L
Monica Clark, 952-401-5009
monica.clark@minnetonka.k12.mn.us

Student Last Names M-Z
Lori Schwartz, 952-401-5012
lori.schwartz@minnetonka.k12.mn.us

6 UPDATE YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNIZATIONS. For the safety of all children, Minnesota law requires written proof that your child has been immunized against seven diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTP), measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and polio. Children entering Kindergarten must also be immunized for varicella (chicken pox) and a series of three hepatitis B shots. We cannot allow your child to attend school until you provide a statement including the month, day and year of each of these immunizations. Since this can become a difficult issue, we encourage you to get these immunizations completed immediately. If your child has a medical reason for not receiving immunizations, a signed statement from your physician or clinic is needed. Families who object to the immunization must provide a notarized declination form. If you have any questions, please contact your school health office.

7 PARTICIPATE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING. State law requires that all children be screened through Early Childhood Screening in a school district, or have proof of comparable screening by a non-school provider. This becomes the basis for your child's health file for K-12. Please fax or mail a copy of the screening information to your elementary school health office. If your child needs to be screened, please call the Minnetonka Early Childhood Screening Office at 952-401-6840.

8 RECEIVE YOUR CHILD'S ASSIGNMENT. In June, you will receive a tentative Kindergarten assignment for your child, along with Kindergarten Bus Ride invitation. The Bus Ride is always the Thursday before school starts.

9 BRING YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE TO REGISTRATION NIGHT OR THE DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER. School officials must see an official or certified copy of the birth certificate or passport to verify the date of birth and child's legal name. If you did not present an official birth certificate during your Minnetonka Early Childhood Screening or at the time of registration, please bring it to the District Service Center, located at 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, no later than one week before the first day of school.



Did you know?
If you read to me
or with me every
day, I will do
better in school.

Reference



CLEAR SPRINGS ELEMENTARY

Principal: Curt Carpenter
5701 County Road 101
Hours: 8:40–3:20
A.M. K: 8:40–11:10 a.m.
P.M. K: 12:50–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–6950
Absences: 952–401–6954
Fax: 952–401–6955

DEEPHAVEN ELEMENTARY

Principal: Bryan McGinley
4452 Vine Hill Road
Hours: 8:00–2:40
A.M. K: 8:00–10:30 a.m.
P.M. K: 12:10–2:40 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–6900
Absences: 952–401–6904
Fax: 952–401–6906

EXCELSIOR ELEMENTARY

Principal: Lee Drolet
441 Oak Street
Hours: 8:00–2:40
A.M. K: 8:00–10:30 a.m.
P.M. K: 12:10–2:40 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–5650
Absences: 952–401–5655
Fax: 952–401–5657



Minnetonka students consistently score among the best in Minnesota on state reading, writing, math and science tests.



GROVELAND ELEMENTARY

Principal: Dave Parker
17310 Minnetonka Blvd.
Hours: 8:40–3:20
A.M. K: 8:40–11:10 a.m.
P.M. K: 12:50–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–5600
Absences: 952–401–5604
Fax: 952–401–5606

MINNEWASHTA ELEMENTARY

Principal: Cindy Andress
26350 Smithtown Road
Hours: 8:40–3:20
A.M. K: 8:40–11:10 a.m.
P.M. K: 12:50–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–5500
Absences: 952–401–5504
Fax: 952–401–5506

SCENIC HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

Principal: Joe Wacker
5650 Scenic Heights Drive
Hours: 8:40–3:20
A.M. K: 8:40–11:10 a.m.
P.M. K: 12:50–3:20 p.m.
Phone: 952–401–5400
Absences: 952–401–5404
Fax: 952–401–5412

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COOL LEARNING LINKS: WWW.MINNETONKA.K12.MN.US

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MINNETONKASCHOOLS