

Minnetonka Public Schools

Advanced Learning Opportunities

Serving Strengths for Continuous Growth



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Welcome!

Welcome to Minnetonka Public Schools' Advanced Learning programs. We offer services at all grade levels—elementary, middle school and high school.

THE MISSION OF MINNETONKA'S ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAM IS TO:

1. provide programs and opportunities for students to discover, develop and realize their potential as individuals and as contributing, responsible members of the community and
2. support achievement at a level commensurate with the student's ability.

"Every child has a unique profile. Minnetonka's Advanced Learning programs extend and challenge students in areas of strength and passion. Children have the right to be curious and challenged every day. My goal, and that of the entire staff in the Advanced Learning program, is to offer the most comprehensive program that will properly meet the academic, social and emotional needs of each and every one of our students. Through excellence in gifted and talented programming, and unique learning opportunities at every stage, Minnetonka has distinguished itself as a District that embraces and serves exceptional learners."

DIANE RUNDQUIST
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCED
LEARNING PROGRAMS

THE VISION OF MINNETONKA'S ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAM IS TO DEVELOP STUDENTS WHO:

- think creatively and critically to innovate
- demonstrate tenacity and resilience in the face of challenge and setbacks
- collaborate by listening deeply, viewing wisely, speaking mindfully, and acting courageously
- consider multiple perspectives in decision-making and in leadership
- seek balance in cognitive, social and emotional health
- contribute responsibly to the global community

ACCESSING ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAMS

If you and your child are interested in learning more about Advanced Learning programs, please be prepared to share details about your child, including their strengths and their hopes. Please reach out to:

- **Grades K-5** Your child's classroom teacher or Advanced Learning teacher
- **Grades 6-8** One of your child's classroom teachers, school counselor or Advanced Learning teacher
- **Grades 9-12** One of your child's teachers, school counselor or the MHS Advanced Learning Coordinator
- The Navigator program, for exceptionally gifted students (2-5), follows an online application process.

minnetonkaschools.org/advancedlearners

Minnetonka's Advanced Learning programs are designed to meet the needs of learners who may be intellectually gifted, academically advanced, or both! By having a variety of programs—each thoughtfully designed to extend specific learning strengths—we provide additional challenge to students in the areas they need to grow and flourish.

INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

Children with unique intellectual ability as demonstrated through significantly advanced abilities to problem solve and synthesize knowledge and high levels of divergent, critical, logical, and abstract thinking. These learners have IQ scores two standard deviations or more above the norm and are capable of high performance on reasoning tasks when compared to others of similar age, experience and environment. The Wings program at the elementary, and HP Seminar at the middle level, are designed to serve gifted learners, both intellectually and affectively.

ACADEMICALLY ADVANCED LEARNERS

Children who demonstrate exceptional performance in one or more academic areas. Exceptional performance includes working well beyond grade level and possessing and/or applying knowledge in transformative, complex ways. Academic Extension, Academic Enrichment, Independent Investigations, and PROJECTthink are all programs that serve academically talented students at the elementary level. Honors and accelerated courses meet needs of academically talented middle school students. Minnetonka High School offers an unparalleled array of academic choices so that students can maximize their high school experience, pursue their passions and prepare for college and career.

Opportunities for academic extensions are available at all schools, through in-school experiences or after-school academic clubs and activities. Many students have the opportunity to participate in regional, state and national academic competitions.

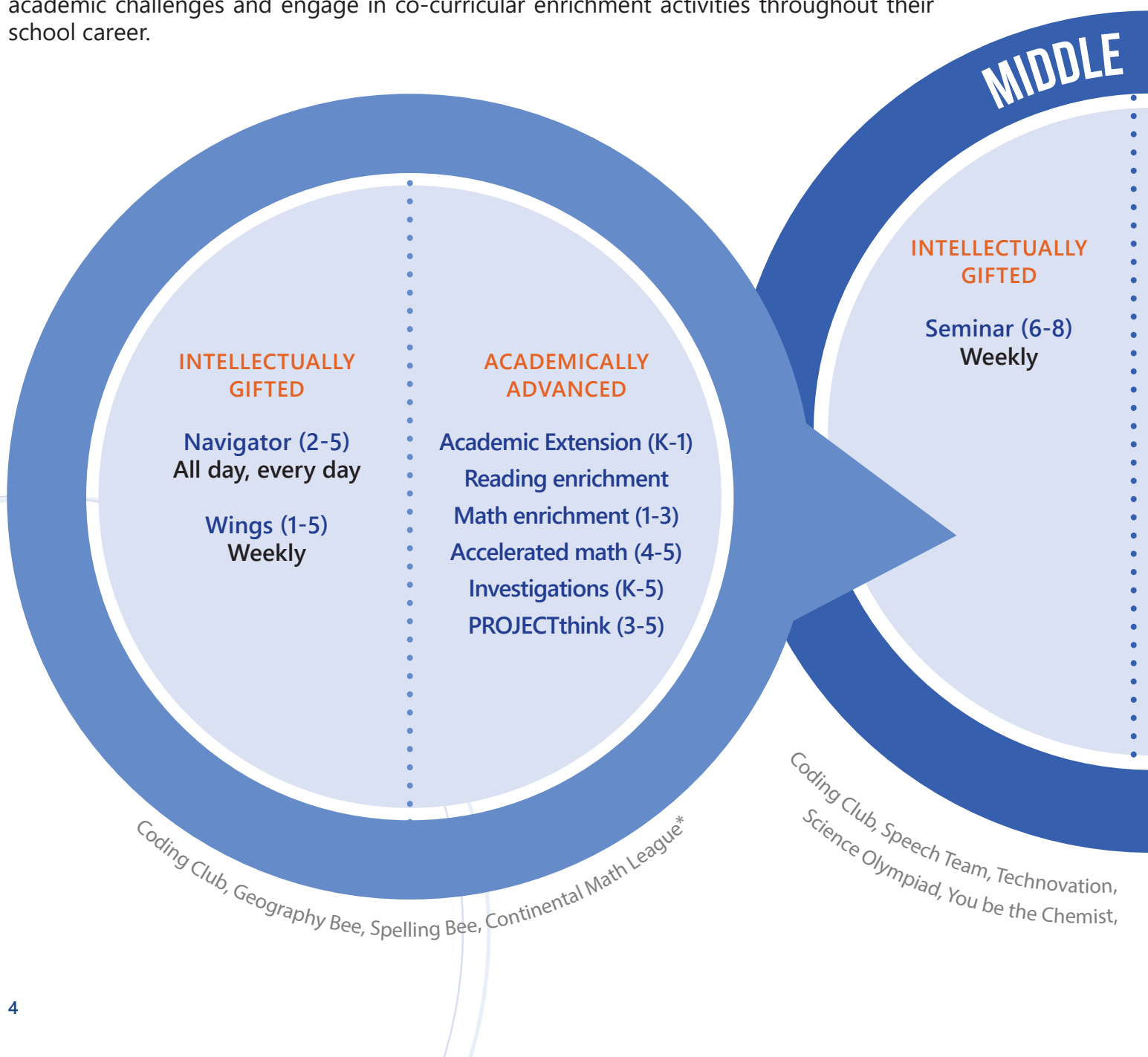


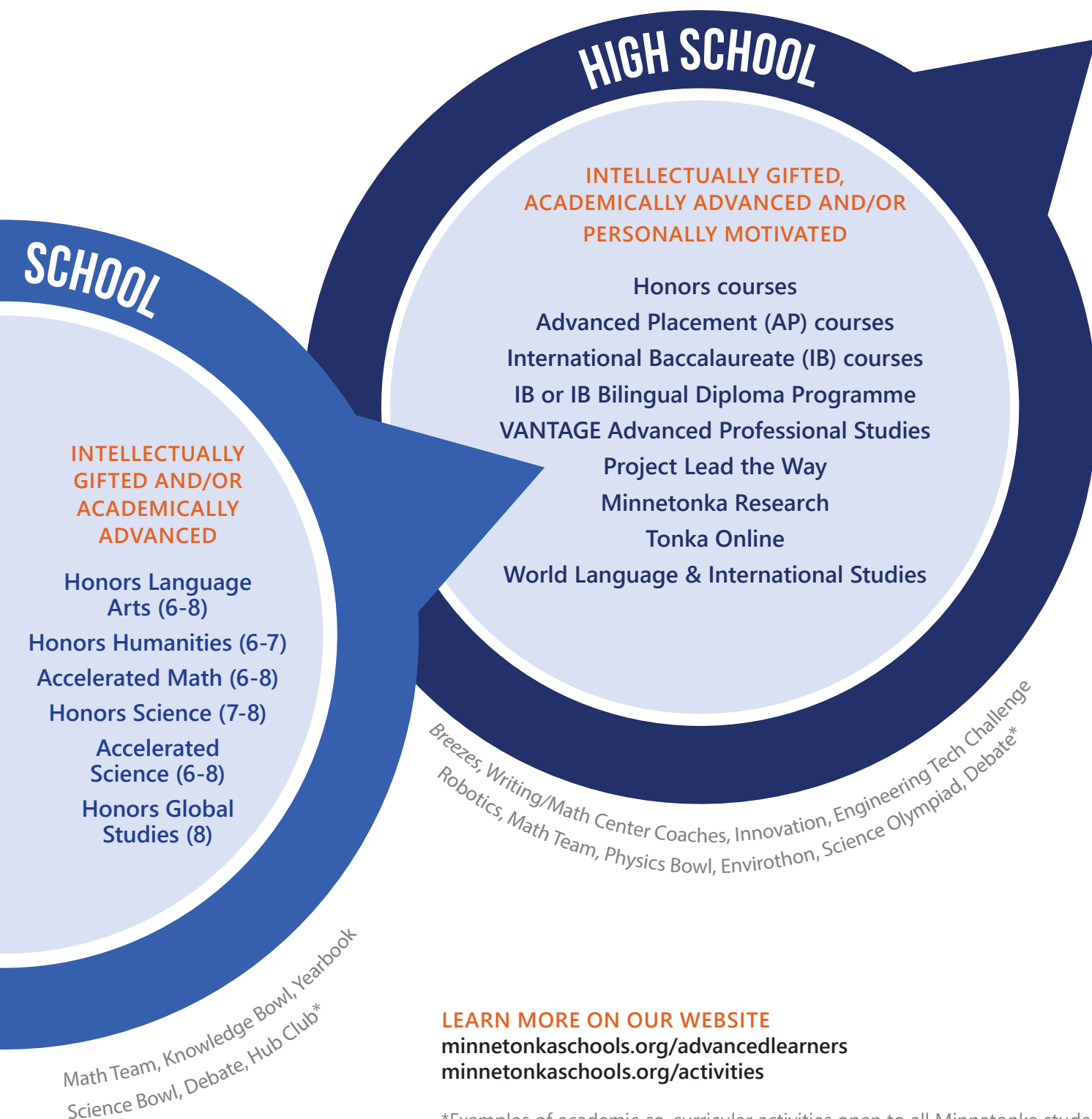
A full description of each Advanced Learning program is available on the Minnetonka Schools website.

Serving Strengths for Continuous Growth

Learning is developmental. Children are unique and will develop in their own way and in their own time. Minnetonka's advanced learning programs, each with meaningful identification processes, challenge the very different learning strengths of children to ensure continuous growth.

Our classroom and Advanced Learning teachers continually communicate, looking for developmental growth and creative strategies to enrich your child's learning K-12. Our varied programs provide opportunities for students to join when they demonstrate readiness. As you see in this graphic, there are many, many opportunities for your child to undertake academic challenges and engage in co-curricular enrichment activities throughout their school career.







MINNETONKA NAVIGATOR *program*

OVERVIEW OF THE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

For exceptionally gifted students in grades 2-5, the Navigator Program serves a small, very unique group of learners with IQs of 140 and above.

Eighty years of research shows that the academic, social and emotional needs of exceptionally gifted students cannot be met in regular classrooms or the District's Advanced Learning programs. The Navigator Program provides a specialized learning environment which capitalizes on the unique intellectual strengths of its learners. By providing advanced academic content through differentiated instruction, the Navigator Program develops students' tenacity and cognitive stamina needed for challenging work. Social-emotional development is enhanced through engagement with intellectual peers and working with teachers who understand the highly gifted child. The Navigator classrooms are located in Excelsior and Scenic Heights Elementary Schools, but serve students from across the District.

NAVIGATOR CURRICULUM

MATH

Math instruction is highly differentiated. Students work at levels which are appropriate to their knowledge and readiness, and are not restricted by age or grade level. The rigorous core curriculum, Project M3: Mentoring Mathematical Minds, is designed specifically for gifted learners. The Transitions Math and Saxon Algebra programs support pre-algebra and algebra learning. Investigating, discovering, reasoning, explaining and writing are components emphasized in each unit of study.

SCIENCE & HEALTH

We strongly believe inquiry is at the heart of science learning. Our core curriculum, the Full Option Science System (FOSS), is a research-based, hands-on program which encompasses the tenets of STEM education. In addition, Navigators engage in authentic inquiry projects in which students develop their own questions and systems for gathering and analyzing data.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Navigator Language Arts program is comprehensive and multi-faceted, which includes:

- Literature Study: Through interpretive reading and student-centered discussions that incorporates the Socratic Seminar model, students unlock challenging texts and develop comprehension, critical thinking and writing skills.
- Word Study/Grammar: At all levels, students study complex vocabulary/spelling word lists. They also analyze Latin/Greek stems, study meanings and develop projects which demonstrate language mastery.
- Communications: Developing excellent communication skills is an essential part of the Navigator Program. Students write, deliver speeches and make presentations in all content areas. Expository, persuasive, creative, and narrative writing skills are emphasized.

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Our humanities and social studies programing helps students understand the complexities of the human endeavor. In-depth studies (e.g., Consumerism, Government, Memorials, Revolution) require students to develop critical thinking and collaboration skills as they expand their understanding of geography and history and the subsequent impact on our lives today.

SPECIALS

Students participate in physical education, music, art and media.

IMMERSION

For students who transfer from a Language Immersion program into the Navigator Program, Minnetonka is committed to continued language development in their target language. Although it is not an immersion classroom experience, the Navigator language program is designed to increase fluency by providing instruction in the target language at least four times per week outside regular school hours. Instruction is provided through two platforms: 1:1 online tutoring by a native speaker and after-school, small group instruction. These platforms provide experiences in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Exceptionally gifted students share many of the following characteristics:

- Works independently at an early age and concentrates for longer periods
- Driven to learn for its own sake; insatiable curiosity
- Perceives connections between seemingly unrelated things
- Learns new concepts with minimal practice
- Emotionally sensitive, shows a developed sense of compassion and urgency to bring change
- Ability to think in an abstract way at an early age
- Unusually reflective, seeks deeper meaning
- Large vocabularies, the ability to read deeply
- May be skeptical, critical and evaluative
- Maintains a large storehouse of information on many topics
- Shows persistent intensity in intellect, emotion and imagination

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Academic and intellectual challenges are critical to the healthy development of a highly gifted child. Equally important is the development of social and emotional capacities. The Navigator Program supports student growth in the areas of self-knowledge, motivation, peer relationships, perfectionism, stress management, positive self-concept, organization, and more. Programs utilized include Habits of Mind, Executive Functioning Support and the Responsive Classroom.

TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Minnetonka's commitment to the exceptionally gifted child extends through middle school and high school. It is with intention that Navigator students move to our highly differentiated middle schools which are designed to provide the academic rigor with a broadening social experience.

HOW TO APPLY

If you think the Navigator Program may be a good fit for your child, please follow these steps:

- Step 1: Parents Attend Information Sessions and Open Houses
- Step 2: Parents Complete Online Application (if outside the Minnetonka School District, begin open enrollment process concurrently)
- Step 3: Parents Provide Student Achievement Data
- Step 4: Students Complete the WISC V Assessment (students with scores of 140+ will be invited to participate in the next step)
- Step 5: Students Participate in a Simulation Experience
- Step 6: Placement Committee Communicates Placement Decision

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.minnetonkaschools.org/navigator

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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