

Special Work Session Meeting

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 5:00 PM

Mary Merrill Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Headquarters, 2117 West River Road, Minneapolis, MN 55411

1) Call to Order

1)a. Opening Remarks by the President and Chair & Superintendents

2) Staff Report

2)a. Partnership Updates

3) Discussion

4) Adjournment

Joint Meeting of the Minneapolis School and Park & Recreation Boards



August 12, 2026

Agenda

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions
2. Opening Remarks by the President and Chair/Superintendents
3. Reports from Staff
 - a. Partnership Updates
4. Questions/Discussion
5. Adjournment

Opening Remarks by the President and Chair/Superintendents



Reports from Staff

- Partnership Updates
 - Expansive programming
 - Facilities and Land Use: Collaborative planning
 - Programs and Services: Full-Service Community Schools
 - Communications and Marketing: Collaboration Update
 - Environmental Stewardship Highlights
 - Safety Highlights

Facilities and Land Use: Collaborative Planning



Collaborative Planning: Fastpitch Softball

Joint MPS & MPRB Fastpitch Softball

- Lease and Use Agreement approved by MPS & MPRB in December 2025
- Design completed and bids received February 2026
- Construction began in Summer 2026
- Aiming Fields to be ready for Spring Play 2027, with contingency plans in place if field turf needs more time for establishment



Sites

- Jackson Square Park
- Creekview Park
- Todd Park

Ongoing discussions between MPRB and MN Twins and private donors exploring opportunities for additional JV field improvements at Todd Park



Collaborative Planning: Fastpitch Softball

Fastpitch Varsity Fields – Amenities



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Collaborative Planning: Fastpitch Softball

Creekview Park



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Collaborative Planning: Fastpitch Softball

Jackson Square Park



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Collaborative Planning: Fastpitch Softball

Todd Park



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Collaborative Planning: Willard Park



Willard Park Subdivision & Conveyance

- 2022 - MPS declared buildings surplus
- 2024 - Purchase Agreement for Sale, included subdivision and conveyance of Lot 2 to MPRB as part of Willard Park
- Preliminary plat approved by City Planning Commission on 5/4/2026
- Final plat submitted to Hennepin County
- City Planning Commission Public Hearing date TBD



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Program Collaboration Update



Communications and Marketing: Collaboration Update

- Staff have identified and implemented ways to increase ease of use for residents:
 - Both organizations are using Arux software for childcare registration
- Staff to staff communications continue to improve, a strong network of key stakeholders has developed in the past five+ years
- MPS established a Community Partner Severe Weather Notification process to alert community organizations when MPS cancels school or after school programs due to severe weather.
- Cross marketing programs and events are happening consistently through an acknowledgement and website listing in each agency's seasonal guides and through MPS' streamlined process for MPRB program staff to distribute print or digital activity fliers



Community Education and Recreation Area: Collaboration Update

- MPS Community Education and MPRB continue to strengthen our partnership through shared planning and programming.
- Joint fall professional development will focus on Positive Youth Development, strengthening collaboration and shared practices across both organizations.
- MPS Community Education will be joining the North Commons Back to School Event in August.



Community Education and Recreation Area: Collaboration Update

- Submitted a joint 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant proposal.
- Proposal would serve 620 youth across 5 MPS Community Education and MPRB sites.
- Programming is designed around three community informed priorities:
 1. Culturally Affirming Enrichment
 2. Youth Employment & Skill Development
 3. Nature-Based Learning



Youth Employment Fair 2026



Minneapolis Community Education, MPRB, MPS and Achieve Twin Cities partnered to host a "Summer Starts Here" youth employment fair at South High School on Thursday, February 19th from 3:30 – 6:00 pm. Providing the opportunity to explore summer jobs for youth – in nature, recreation, aquatics, school-aged childcare, internships and more!

Organized by Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board.



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Program and Services: Park & Campus Coordinator

- Community partnerships provide after school programming at no cost
- Support Families (services/eliminating barriers)
- Provide program support at Folwell and Lucy Laney
- Family Engagement Events (school year & summer)
- Summer Jam Events
- Park/Campus role expansion



Environmental Stewardship Highlights



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Environmental Stewardship Highlights

2025–2026 School Year & Summer **Neighborhood Naturalist Program**

- Environmental Educators (EE) staff provided **82 hours of free Drop-in Discovery programs during recess at nine park-school sites**, resulting in just under 3,000 interactions with students
- EE staff led **40+ hours of free after school programming** over 22 weeks for one park/school site in the fall, and two in the spring
- EE staff worked with **ECFE programs at two park/school sites** for an additional **80 hours of programs**



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Environmental Stewardship Highlights

2025-2026 School Year & Summer Neighborhood Naturalist Program

- EE staff led **field trips for 3rd to 8th grade** MPS programs at Theodore Wirth Park and along the Mississippi River, **serving 883 students.**
- This past fall, Water Quality Education focused on a new set of school visits, teaching youth in their classrooms about watersheds and aquatic environments. **Five MPS sites received 32 hours of programming including nearly 900 students in 3rd to 5th grades.**



Environmental Stewardship Highlights

2025–2026 School Year & Summer

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary (EBWG)

- Naturalists led **28 Kindergartners** from Webster Elementary School on a Sensory Hike in May.
- Also, in May, **22 adults** from MPLS Community Education 55+ enjoyed a one-hour Garden Tour led by Garden Naturalists.
- EBWG hosted and co-led an ECFE program on August 4 with ECFE staff. **29 pre-k and parent participants** enjoyed stories, nature crafts, and a walk in the Garden.



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Environmental Stewardship Highlights

2025-2026 School Year & Summer **KROENING NATURE CENTER**

- **469 students' grades 2nd-5th grade** from Bethune, Cityview and Jenny Lind came to NMiss **three times for a total of 60+ hours programming aligned to MN Science standards.**
- Hosted the first **Children Art & Nature Festival** for six elementary schools between the weeks of May 12-16 and May 28-22, with four partner organizations-**Wilderness Inquiry, DNR, Mississippi Park Connections** and **Mississippi Watershed Management.**
- Student artwork connected to their field trip experiences was exhibited.
- A commissioned puppet show based on student experiences at NMiss was performed for 430 students, staff and families



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Environmental Stewardship Highlights

2025–2026 School Year & Summer – Kroening cont'd

- **243 3rd grade students from Green, Emerson and Las Estrellas visited NMiss three times** with support from bilingual Roosevelt student volunteers. Field trip content aligned to MN Science standards and dual language vocabulary development.
- **Kroening staff collaborated with Wilderness Inquiry to provide 46 Camden High School students** with science activities/lessons using our stream table and geology resources.
- **71 5th graders from Jenny Lind, Bethune and Cityview paddled the Mississippi River** as an end of year capstone experience from Kroening Nature Center to Boom Island through a partnership with Wilderness Inquiry
- **Kroening naturalists provided an outdoor educator training for seven Minneapolis Summer Scholar teachers to be outdoor adventure teachers.** Kroening naturalists collaborated and provided coaching and equipment for each of the teachers and provided support during their field experience days in MPRB parks as well as hosting summer scholar schools at Kroening.
- Provided BEETLES Activity for parents and students at Kenwood Elementary Schools new outdoor classroom during End of Year Picnic – *highlighting how nature is a vehicle for teaching and learning outdoors.*

Kroening Nature Center staff continue to partner with MPS Community Ed to provide programming for Adults with Disabilities and 55+.



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Environmental Stewardship Highlights

Youth Employment & Training Initiatives (YETI) staff work with MPS staff and its career centers to recruit youth ages 14 to 24 for summer employment opportunities

Teen Teamworks is a foundational employment program for ages 14 to 18. **Employed 181 high school students; 88 were MPS enrolled students. Employed 21 adult seasonal staff hired; 10 of whom were employed by MPS during school year.**



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Environmental Stewardship Highlights

- **Teen Teamworks** participants are **eligible for elective credits towards their high school diploma** through an educational partnership with Project for Pride In Living. This curriculum is delivered in MPS classrooms at South High School and Edison High School.
- In partnership with MPS staff, **Teen Teamworks** hires and supports a Garden Crew out of **South High School to help maintain the school's garden** as well as gardens at MPRB recreation centers.

The Minneapolis Park Corps, an employment program for ages 18-24, continues to do outreach to career centers, CTE, Transition Plus, and other MPS programs for older students.



Environmental Stewardship Highlights

Forestry

- Planted 12 trees in Bethune Park with 96 1st-4th grade students for Arbor Day.
- Planted 9 trees at Cedar Lake East Beach with 31 students from Kenwood Elementary.
- Offered tree-climbing at Waite Park Elementary and Pillsbury School carnivals.
- Tree Watering with 60 students at Kenwood Elementary.
- Tree Talk with Community Ed. 55+.



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Safety Highlights



Working Together

Cross collaborations between safety teams

Community Connections and Violence Prevention and **Emergency Management Safety & Security**

- Informational quarterly meetings with program staff
- Share training and development opportunities
- Collaborative intervention programming



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Working Together

- May shooting near North High School and North Commons.
 - communication about after school activities
 - shared resources for support and care
 - Staff support and communication with law enforcement



Current Agreements

- All agreements between the two organizations are [posted here](#).



Questions/Discussion

Adjournment



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