

Strengthening Minnesota's K-12 independent schools through
advocacy and advancement



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Letter from the President

Dear MISF Member Schools, Staff, Colleagues, and Friends of Independent Schools:

This seems to be the month of reminders, so please bear with me on a few very important items.

On April 24, MISF will host the 8th annual Private and Independent Education Awards. We hope to see many of you there as we join together and show the strength of our private school community. We will recognize and celebrate the special people and programs in our schools.

The early response to the 2015 SCOPE survey is very encouraging. To date, 51 schools have completed the survey and another 71 schools have completed portions of the survey. We encourage all nonpublic schools in Minnesota to take the 30-45 minutes to complete this survey. It provides valuable data about private and independent schools in Minnesota, which amplifies our collective voice. If you have not received an invitation to complete the survey, please let us know. Thank you for your time and effort.

The legislative session is entering its sixth week, with lots of activity around education. There are several proposals that would benefit private and independent school families. Please keep your eye out for our advocacy updates and calls to action emails during the coming month. A strong voice from parents, school leaders and advocates to their legislators will be key to our success as the session nears conclusion.

Don't forget to block September 26-28, 2016, on your calendar for our School Leadership Conference at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge. This conference, an MISF member benefit, is designed and planned specifically for private and independent school leaders.

Thank you for your support of private and independent education.



Tim Benz, CFRE
President

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STEM Scoop



TPT *SciGirls* - Changing How Girls Think about CTE/STEM

Twin Cities PBS (TPT), producer of the acclaimed PBS Kids STEM program *SciGirls* is looking for high school teachers and guidance counselors who teach and advise girls in career and technical education (CTE) and STEM courses to be part of an innovative effort to change how girls think about their future.

After a successful pilot year, TPT is recruiting schools for the second year of *SciGirls Strategies: Gender Equitable Teaching Practices in CTE Pathways for High School Girls*. With funding from the National Science Foundation, *SciGirls Strategies* is a professional development and research initiative to recruit and retain more girls in CTE/STEM pathways, especially computing, engineering and manufacturing.

Teachers who participate will attend a six-session (18-hour) course at TPT in St. Paul. Their female students will participate in a pre-post survey and one year follow up. Teachers will receive a \$600 fee, reimbursement for travel to the training and continuing education credit.

Read more here: [SciGirls Strategies School Flyer.pdf](#)

If you're interested in participating or have questions about this project, please contact Leah Defenbaugh (ldefenbaugh@tpt.org) at TPT by the end of April 2016.

Minnesota on the Map: Middle/High School GIS Mapping Competition

Minnesota Middle and High School students in grades 6 to 12 in public, private or home schools

are invited to enter the online GIS mapping competition. The competition runs now to May 27, 2016.

The five maps deemed the best in each division - Middle School (grades 6-8) and High School (grades 9-12) - will each be awarded \$100. All participating students and teachers receive a free GIS Map Competition t-shirt. Winning students and their teachers will be invited to the GIS/LIS Conference for lunch and to present and receive commendations, Friday, October 28, 2016

Complete Information: <https://sites.google.com/site/minnesotamapcontest/home>

For questions, please contact Scott Freburg, GIS Admin/K12 GIS Lead, Minnesota Department of Education, 651-582-8789, scott.freburg@state.mn.us.

Learn more about Science House

Membership to the [Science House](#) (located behind the Science Museum of Minnesota) is available to all MISF members as a \$0.50 per student opt-in fee on your membership dues.

As Science House members, your entire staff has access to:

- \$500,000+ worth of [resources and materials](#) to use with students in the classroom. (Remember, materials are applicable and useful for **all disciplines**-not just the STEM classroom!)
- informal consulting about teaching and learning with our knowledgeable staff
- a fantastic space to relax (or grade papers...!)

[Emilie Hanson and the team at Science House](#) would love to get to know more of your teachers, especially those who have yet to visit Science House.

How to connect your educators with Science House

Have an upcoming staff development day or all-staff meeting? Or scheduling next fall's teacher welcome back week or new teacher orientation? They'd love to visit your school and tell your staff more about what Science House has to offer!

- Call 651-221-4563 or email sciencehouse@smm.org to schedule a time for them to come visit your staff.
- Teachers are also welcome to drop in during Science House open hours from 3:30 to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday! Individuals may contact them to schedule an orientation outside of Science House hours. ([Free Science House parking](#) is available during open hours!)

They invite you to forward this information to your staff as well.



Private and Independent Education Awards

Private & Independent Education Award Winners & Finalists

Honor Teacher Finalists: K-8

Diane LaBeau~Risen Christ School

Erin McBurney~Annunciation Catholic School

Kirsta Welle~St. Pascal Baylon School

Honor Teacher Finalists: 9-12

David Pearson~DeLaSalle High School

Ned Thompson~Totino-Grace High School

Kate Woolever Martinez~St. Paul Preparatory School

Award Winners

Leadership Award (K-8)

Jane Nordin~St. Joseph's School (West St. Paul)

Leadership Award (9-12)

Cade Lambert~New Life Academy

Community Champion Award

Jack & Mary Ann Remick~Rochester Catholic Schools

Behind the Scenes Award

Marion Sandfort~Calvin Christian School

Program Award

Project Based Learning~New Life Academy

Registration ends on April 17th

Mark your calendars and join us as we celebrate private and independent education at the Awards event on Sunday, April 24 from 4:00 - 7:00 at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul.

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Information from MDE

Guidance for Eligible Post-secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

Courses

The following information was communicated to all post-secondary institutions offering PSEO courses to Minnesota high school students on March 17, 2016. Please share the following MDE guidance regarding eligible PSEO courses with your counselors and pertinent school staff who work with PSEO students.

To meet the intent of Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, the following types of courses are *not* eligible for PSEO payment:

- Courses that are specifically for education of students (a) to prepare students to become ministers of a particular religion; (b) to enter upon some religious vocation; or, (c) to prepare them to teach theological subjects.
- Courses that are based upon one particular set of religious beliefs.
- Courses that are intended to propagate or promote any one religious belief or viewpoint.

Subdivision 2 states that the purpose of the PSEO program "is to promote rigorous academic pursuits and to provide a wider variety of options to high school pupils by encouraging and enabling secondary pupils to enroll full time or part time in nonsectarian courses or programs in eligible post-secondary institutions".

If you have PSEO course or program questions, please contact Beth Barsness at beth.barsness@state.mn.us or 651-582-8336. If you have PSEO finance or aid entitlement related questions, please contact Jeanne Krile at jeanne.krile@state.mn.us or 651-582-8637.

The Annual Statement of Assurance Form for postsecondary institutions can be found on the [PSEO Program](#) or [PSEO Finance](#) pages of the MDE website.

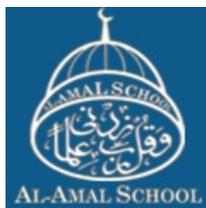
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Meetings in April and May 2016

With the passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has an opportunity in the coming months to engage with a variety of stakeholders as we begin to gain feedback in preparation for the development of our system under the new law.

MDE plans to host meetings in April and May on ten different topic areas to share and clarify the ESSA law, gain input and better understand stakeholder priorities. Stakeholder feedback will inform future workgroups. Given that the final guidance from the U.S. Department of Education is not expected until October, we do not expect to reach consensus during these meetings nor produce final recommendations for implementation. However, the input gathered from these meetings will have a significant impact on shaping Minnesota's new system.

MDE is planning to have ten topic area meetings, and you can find the full meeting schedule on the [MDE ESSA page](#). If you would like more information about the upcoming meetings or have general questions related to ESSA, please contact mde.essa@state.mn.us.

Member Schools in the Spotlight



Al-Amal School is located in Fridley, and joined MISF in 2010. Al-Amal was founded in September of 1994, by parents and community members who wanted an alternative to public schools for their children. The school believes that children are the future of Muslim communities, and strives to prepare them to succeed in a changing and diverse world. [Click here to read more about Al-Amal School.](#)



Central Minnesota Christian Schools is an MISF Legacy school, located in Prinsburg. Their school was founded in September of 1911, with 65 students and two full time teachers. Today, CMCS serves 360 students in grades K-12, with 28 teachers. Their mission is to provide a Christ-centered, quality education to equip students for a life of service. [Click here to read more about Central Minnesota Christian Schools.](#)



Zion Lutheran School is one of MISF's newest member schools, joining in July 2015. They celebrated their 125th anniversary last fall! Among their objects is to equip their students to function as living, loving Christians now and as adults, and to help them develop the ability to study and find information to increase knowledge, learning and understanding now and in the future. [Click here to read more about Zion Lutheran School.](#)

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