

MISF connects and strengthens Minnesota's independent schools through exceptional training, resources, and advocacy so they can be student-centered and mission-driven.



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## **Letter from the President**

Dear friends of independent and private education,

While February is the shortest month of the year, based on the weather challenges, it probably feels like the longest month for schools across Minnesota.

I had the privilege of testifying in support of [SF580](#) in the Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee. This proposed legislation would expand guidance and counseling services via the nonpublic pupil aids legislation to elementary students. This has been a topic of great interest from many schools in helping address the mental, emotional and social needs of our youngest learners. Thank you to Senators [Justin Eichorn](#), [Paul Utke](#) and [Andrew Mathews](#) for sponsoring this important legislation supporting students.

During the past month, I had the privilege to visit several member schools (Mother Nature postponed a handful of others). A few observations that are pretty consistent across these visits that I wanted to share:

- Leaders are feeling positive about current enrollment and re-enrollment trends
- Very positive feedback about accessing much of our professional development via webinar
- The attention to detail by school maintenance teams to keep facilities impeccably clean
- A greater sense of connectedness being part of MISF and our statewide network

Don't forget the due date for STEM grants is Tuesday, February 19. Having read a few of the LOI submissions, it's clear the innovation happening in our schools is remarkable - needless to say the STEM Advisory Committee will have some very difficult decisions to make.

There are lots of opportunities to connect with MISF in the next few months. Check out our [calendar of events](#) and keep your eyes out for registration information.

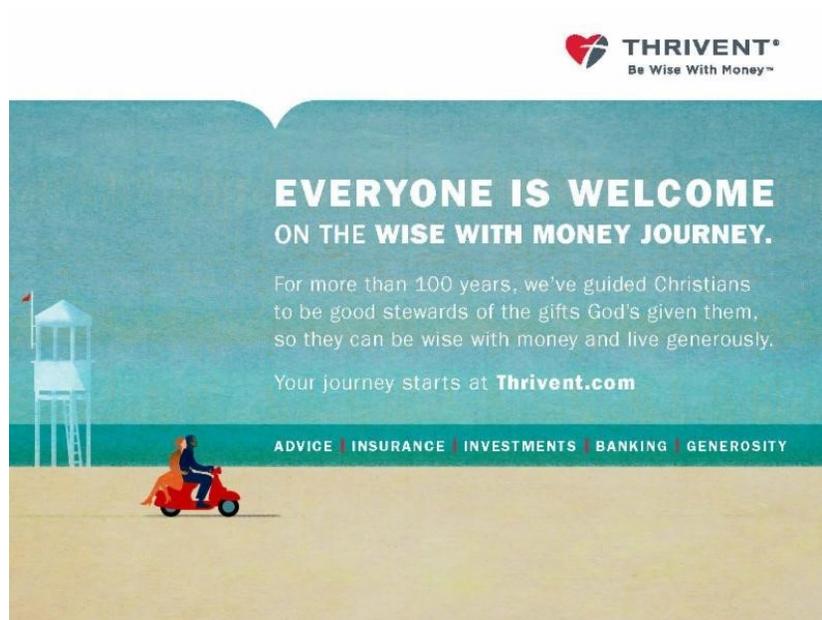
*Tim Benz*

Tim Benz  
President

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## February's Newsletter is sponsored by Thrivent Financial



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**REMINDER: STEM Grant applications are due  
by 6:00 pm on Tuesday, February 19th**



## STEM SCOOP

### STEM Resources from Xcel Energy



#### Xcel Energy's Energy Classroom

Teachers are invited to learn about energy and conservation. Xcel Energy is making these educational resources available because they believe informed energy consumers will make wise choices to assure a bright energy future for all of us. Here you can find materials for teachers, help for students doing projects, video stories, experiments to try, and interactives games and puzzles.

Visit Energy Classroom anytime to learn more about how power is made, energy conservation, power and wildlife, and careers in energy. Also take a virtual power plant tour.

Classroom teachers throughout our service areas helped us develop this site. And while it follows the 3rd to 5th grade science learning standards, its videos on energy topics, interactive games and puzzles, and interesting facts about energy, can make learning about energy fun for everyone.

Visit Energy Classroom by clicking: <http://energyclassroom.com/>

#### Xcel Energy's e-SMARTkids

We recognize that teachers play a critical role in helping students learn to use energy safely. The e-SMARTkids website provides kids, teachers, and parents with resources to learn about electricity and natural gas, and how to use them safely. There are curriculum-based games and videos for kids, lesson plans, and safety book order forms for teachers and important safety information for parents.

We target 3rd-6th grade elementary educators and students in schools in our service territories, offering printed material and online information to help teach and learn about staying safe around electricity and natural gas. The material also addresses national science learning standards for this age group.

<http://www.e-smartonline.net/xcelenergy/index.php>

## MDE News

### Second Draft of the Minnesota Science Standards

The second draft of the 2019 Minnesota Science Standards which will be published Feb. 14. It will be available for feedback until Feb. 28. The draft and the feedback survey will be posted on the [MDE Science page](#).

The Department of Education will hold virtual Town Hall meetings (webinars) to explain the draft, answer questions and take comments on February 19, at 7 AM, noon, 4 PM and 7 PM. Connection information will be posted on the MDE Science Page on Feb. 14. The MN Science Teachers Assn. will hold Feedback Sessions for the draft. [Check the MnSTA website](#) for information.

The final draft will be published in May with full implementation of the standards and a new version of the MCA exam in three or four years.

### **Write items for the MCA Exam**

We would like to invite you to apply to be part of Building Capacity for Science Assessment: Science MCA-IV Item Writing Workshop in the summer of 2019. The workshop will be 5 days total, starting with a virtual training on June 14 followed by in-person meetings on June 26-27 and July 15-16. Approximately 15-20 additional hours may be needed to complete the item writing assignments.

This item writer workshop is intended to train and support educators as Science MCA-IV writers using new 2019 Minnesota science standards. Emphasis will be given to unpacking the new standards and the writing of one cluster of items based on a phenomenon. In addition to providing training in assessment development and literacy, this workshop includes time for collaboration and feedback from your peers.

If you are interested in being part of this MCA-IV item writer workshop this year, contact us for more information or enter your information by March 15, 2019 at this location <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L3PJ9ND>. If you have colleagues that might be interested in participating, please share this information. For more information: [Jim.wood@state.mn.us](mailto:Jim.wood@state.mn.us)

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## **Teacher Events and Workshops**

### **Grow Healthy Conferences, March 1 & 2, Chaska (Landscape Arboretum)**

Schoolyard Gardens Conference, March 1 8:30 - 4:00

Share ideas and resources for building and sustaining school gardens. From nutrition programming to building valuable community partnerships, the conference agenda highlights practical and inspirational tools from the leading experts and educators.

Learn more: <http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/schoolyards2019.aspx>

Garden-to-Plate Food Conference, March 2 8:20 - 3:00

Many Minnesotans are growing food for their communities. This conference will bring together the latest research and best practices to ensure Minnesota community food growers bring a bounty of safe produce to their communities. Learn more.

<http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/gardentoplate2019.aspx>

### **Green Schools Conference & Expo, April 8 -9, St. Paul**

This national event brings together all the players involved in making green schools a reality. And it is coming to the River Center in St. Paul. This year GSCE is co-located with IMPACT, the leading event for sustainable development in the Midwest. The conference offers engaging educational sessions, case studies, hands-on workshops and lectures from today's green school experts. GSCE provides an unmatched opportunity for green school advocates nationwide to collaborate and learn from one another - all with a vested interest in making a positive difference in our children's futures. Check out the conference website.

<http://greenschoolsconference.org/>

### **MN Codes Summit, May 16, Minneapolis**

Join us for a day of hands-on sessions that explore ways to empower ALL learners by integrating computer science, coding, and computational thinking into a variety of curricular areas, from K-12! The event will be 9 am - 4 pm at the University of Minnesota. The keynote speaker is Joan Freese of TPT/SciGirls.

Learn more. <http://www.mncodessummit.org/>

### **Native Skywatchers Workshop, June 10 - 11, St. Cloud**

This two-day workshop is designed for all educators & persons interested in increasing their knowledge of Ojibwe and D(L)akota Star Knowledge. A new focus this year will include: Earth and Sky, and interdisciplinary STEM connections. The workshop includes multiple hands-on activities so participants will be able to experience the culture and the science in the most authentic and meaningful way possible. Learn more here.

[https://web.stcloudstate.edu/planetarium/native\\_skywatchers.html](https://web.stcloudstate.edu/planetarium/native_skywatchers.html)

### **Green and Sustainable Chemistry Workshop, June 18-20, Minneapolis**

The Center for Sustainable Polymers in partnership with the Minnesota Corn Growers Association are offering a FREE three-day workshop at the University of Minnesota to high school chemistry teachers on green and sustainable chemistry. The workshop was developed through the University of Minnesota Materials Research Science and Engineering Center (MRSEC) Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) program. A stipend, graduate credits and lab materials are available. Applicants from across the state of Minnesota are welcome. Applications are due March 15. Learn more.

<https://csp.umn.edu/green-chemistry-workshop/>

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### **Rivers Institutes: Mississippi, June 24- 26; St. Croix, July 22-24**

Join us this summer as Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education (CGEE) presents its acclaimed Rivers Institute, a FREE, three-day, field-based professional development opportunity for educators. The Rivers Institutes are designed to increase teachers' science content knowledge and investigation skills and help area educators translate their professional experiences into meaningful, engaging classroom investigations. Learn more. <https://www.hamline.edu/cgee/riversinstitute/>

### **Become a SciGirls Strategies Trainer, June 25 - 28, St. Paul**

Twin Cities PBS (TPT) invites schools and school districts across Minnesota and Wisconsin to participate in SciGirls Strategies: Gender Equitable Teaching Practices in CTE Pathways for High School Girls! This National Science Foundation -funded Train-the-Trainer program provides high school-level Career and Technical Education and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math teachers and district leaders a FREE four-day workshop on employing gender-equitable equitable teaching strategies with the goal of attracting and retaining more female students in CTE/STEM classes.

This course will be held at Twin Cities PBS (TPT) studios in St. Paul and trains participants to provide professional development. Transportation and lodging will be reimbursed along with a stipend and funding for implementation. For more information contact Alex Dexheimer, [adexheimer@tpt.org](mailto:adexheimer@tpt.org)

### **WaterWorks! A Drinking Water Institute, August 5-7, Oakdale**

Enrich your water-related curriculum, investigate drinking water quality and chemistry, learn about inquiry-based models for your classroom, and find water resources within your community. This three-day, hands-on workshop allows grade 4-10 science teachers to gather information from expert presenters about how safe, reliable drinking water is delivered to your community, as well as drinking water issues facing Minnesota. Meals and resource binder provided. Choose between two graduate credits or stipend. Join the ranks of over 400 teachers that have participated in WaterWorks! throughout Minnesota over the last 18 years. Funded by the Minnesota Dept. of Health and the American Waterworks Association. Learn more. <https://www.hamline.edu/education/environmental/cgee/waterworks/>

### **Minnesota Zoo: ZOOMS INSTITUTE for Teachers: August 5-8, Apple Valley**

See the Zoo in a whole new way! This four day workshop will engage teachers in utilizing animals and the Zoo as a tool to integrate engineering concepts into their curriculum, based on the Minnesota State Science Standards. Sessions focus on Engineering BY Animals, Engineering FROM Animals (biomimicry), and Engineering FOR Animals. Through hands on activities, expert talks and behind the scenes experiences, see how STEM is being used by aquarists, conservationists, and zoo staff to help care for and conserve wildlife both in the zoo and in the wild. Learn more.

<http://mnzoo.org/education/schools-teachers/stem-programs/>

### **Code.org Computer Science Workshops, St. Paul**

Designed to support middle and high school teachers before and during their first year teaching Computer Science Discoveries or Computer Science

Principles: <https://code.org/educate/professional-learning/middle-high>

The Code.org Professional Learning Program begins with a five-day, in-person summer workshop followed by four additional sessions throughout the year. Best of all? No previous experience teaching computer science is needed.

We welcome elementary school teachers to sign up year-round for our no-cost, high-quality one-day professional development workshops for Computer Science Fundamentals courses from an experienced computer science facilitator.

Full scholarships are available for all Minnesota teachers. Contact Hadi Partovi at [hadi\\_partovi@code.org](mailto:hadi_partovi@code.org) for details.

## **Presidential Award for Mathematics and Science Teaching**

Celebrate great teaching! Nominate a colleague or yourself for the Presidential Award, which brings state and national leadership opportunities and \$10,000. Two teachers from each state receive this award from the White House. This year applications are sought from secondary teachers with a deadline of May 1. Information and nomination site. <https://www.paemst.org/>

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## **School Programs and Instruction**

### **On-line AP Physics Course**

This is an opportunity for high schools that are not offering Advanced Placement physics to enroll at no charge 1 - 8 qualified student in this AP Physics 1 program. Boston University and West Virginia University are seeking partner high schools for the National Science Foundation funded program called Project Accelerate. For further information contact Mark Greenman at Boston University [greenman@bu.edu](mailto:greenman@bu.edu)

### **Eyes on the Wild: Citizen Science for your classroom**

Research scientists at the U of M are trying answer a number of biological questions such as "whether simulated wolves induce a behavioral response in prey that is strong enough to trickle down and affect plant and soil communities" using the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in East Bethel, MN as their laboratory. To answer questions like this, they have divided the reserve up into a grid and placed trail cameras throughout the property to capture wildlife activity. They have enlisted the help of citizen scientist volunteers to go through the hundreds of thousands of pictures that have been taken and help them identify the wildlife in the pictures.

Click here <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/meredithspalmer/cedar-creek-eyes-on-the-wild/about/research> if you would like to get involved in this project, or other similar citizen science projects on the Zooniverse website. <https://www.zooniverse.org/about>

## **Student Programs, Awards and Competitions**

## Lake Superior Youth Symposium May 16-19, Duluth

Youth in grades 8-12 will experience the science, art, culture and challenges of protecting one of the greatest bodies of freshwater on the planet - Lake Superior. Activities will include hands-on workshops, research, field trips in the Duluth area, dynamic speakers and a final night pizza party and dance at the Great Lakes Aquarium!

Work with scientists, engineers and artists to explore the many ways you can engage with the environment and pursue your passions. Internationally known speaker and 2013 CNN Hero Chad Pregracke is slated for the keynote address to talk about his career cleaning up rivers which started when he was 17.

Start planning now for your group to come to UMD and be part of this amazing experience. The registration fee is \$200 per participant and includes housing meals and activities. Scholarships to low-income students will likely be available. Visit the symposium website for more information: <https://scse.d.umn.edu/lsys-2019>

## Materials Science Camp for High School Students, July 9-13, Minneapolis

The University of Minnesota Materials Camp excites and engages young, aspiring minds. The camp is offered at no cost to students entering their junior or senior year. Industry professionals take great pride in influencing the next generation of engineers and scientists. Materials Camp utilizes hands-on learning principles of applied math and science; a truly unique, team-based problem solving experience that explores materials science and engineering principles. Applications are due March 31. Learn more. <http://www.mnasm.org/camp/>

## Science and Engineering Competitions

- Minnesota Science Olympiad <http://www.minnesotaso.org/>
- Science and Engineering Fair and Science Bowl <http://www.minnesotaso.org/>
- FIRST Lego League, FIRST Tech Challenge, FIRST Robotics <http://www.minnesotaso.org/>
- Supermileage Challenge <https://www.mteea.net/index.php/competitions/supermileage>
- Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision <https://www.exploravision.org/>
- NSTA Angela Award - girls grades 5-8 <https://www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx#angela>
- MN Scholars of Distinction-high school <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/gifted/sod/>
- National Youth Science Camp-2 Minnesota Delegates <http://www.nysf.com/w/programs/nysc/>

## Connected Science Learning

Did you know Beth Murphy, MISF's STEM Program Manager, is also the field editor for Connected Science Learning-an open-access, online journal that features STEM education experiences that bridge the gap between in-school and out-of-school settings?



Click [here](#) to explore the most recent issue on encouraging youth to pursue STEM careers, including Beth's editorial, as well as the article archives. There's also a link to subscribe to have the journal delivered to your inbox every month. Feel free to [contact Beth](#) if you'd like to learn more [about writing for CSL](#) or serving as an external reviewer.

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# 2019 Private & Independent Education Awards

***Save the Date!***  
***Sunday, April 28, 2019***  
***University of St. Thomas, St. Paul***

The 11th annual Private & Independent Education Awards celebrates and highlights the amazing people and programs found in Minnesota's nonpublic schools. School leaders, teachers, staff, volunteers, and community members will be recognized and honored at this inspiring and uplifting celebration. Invite your staff, family, donors and friends, and join us!

Registration begins soon. Watch your inbox and [www.misf.org/ed-awards](http://www.misf.org/ed-awards) for more information.

[Check out videos about last year's award winners here.](#)



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## Admissions Lunch & Learn Seminar

***Thursday, March 21***  
***11:30 AM - 1:30 PM***

Save the date for the next Lunch & Learn Seminar and Webinar. Watch your inbox and [our website](#) for more information.

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MINNESOTA  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL FORUM

Lunch & Learn Seminars

## Nonpublic Pupil Aids: Fiscal Year 2020 Rates of Entitlement

Please read the [Nonpublic Pupil Aids memorandum](#) from Greg Sogaard, Division of School Finance. Public school districts are reimbursed for expenditures incurred in providing pupils the instructional materials and pupil support services required when pupils are attending a nonpublic school (includes home schools), which are established and operating within the district's boundaries.

If you have questions about this memo or other issues related to nonpublic pupil aids, contact us at [info@misf.org](mailto:info@misf.org). We're happy to help.

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### K-12 Education Subtraction and Credit

Minnesota has two programs to help families pay for education expenses. The K-12 Education Subtraction and the K-12 Education Credit can lower the tax families pay or increase their refund when filing their Minnesota income tax return.

Families may qualify for the subtraction, credit, or both - if they save their receipts.

[Click here for a flyer with more information that you can print and distribute to parents at your school.](#)

[Click here for the flyer in Spanish.](#)

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### February CAPE Outlook

A record 40,549 National School Choice Week events and activities took place across the country from January 20-26th.

[Read more and download the latest copy of the CAPE \(Council for American Private Education\) here.](#)



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### Dates to Remember:

- February 19, 2019: STEM Grant applications are due
- March 21, 2019: Admission Lunch & Learn Seminar
- April 28, 2019: Private & Independent Education Awards
- May 16, 2019: STEM/Technology Lunch & Learn Seminar
- June 20, 2019: Development Seminar
- August 8, 2019: STEM Education Conference
- September 23-25, 2019: School Leadership Conference



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**Join us!**

## Not an MISF member school? Join us today!

MISF connects and strengthens Minnesota's independent schools through exceptional training, resources, and advocacy so they can be student-centered and mission-driven.

You can be independent, but not alone! We invite you to [learn more about membership](#) in our cohort of over 150 schools throughout the state. If you have questions, please contact Tim Benz at 651-297-6716 or [tbenz@misf.org](mailto:tbenz@misf.org)

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