

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 and advocates of private and independent schools:

I hope this finds you healthy and into the rhythm of a uniquely different school year. We applaud the extra care, diligence and commitment by leaders and educators to ensure a safe return to school.

First of all, **we thank the 160 schools that have renewed or joined MISF since July 1**. Membership is the lifeblood of our organization, and MISF is honored to connect a robust network of schools. This year, we have enhanced and added several new offerings for members to benefit school communities.

One highly anticipated offering is the [MISF Leadership Series](#). All sessions are free for members, and we expect a very robust registration. [More information is listed below](#).

There are several updates and newly published guidance documents and resources of note. All of these updates and documents can be found, or linked, on the [MISF COVID-19 page](#).

Minnesota Department of Education:

- Revised guidance on the [CARES Act and equitable participation of nonpublic schools](#). While this update is good for some schools, it is not beneficial to many more. If you have not heard from your LEA, now is the time to reach out.
- Updated [nonpublic transportation guidance](#) - favorable for schools in a daily in-person learning model
- [Updated food and nutrition information](#). The USDA has [extended the summer free meals for kids through December 31, 2020](#).

Minnesota Department of Health

- As you may know, MDH lists school buildings (public, nonpublic and tribal) that reported 5 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in students or staff who were in the building while infectious during a two-week reporting period. Click here: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html#k121>
- More detailed information can be found at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/stats/index.html>

We have learned some non-public schools have faced complaints about alleged non-compliance with MDH regulations. In all cases, the complaint was not correct in the application of the regulation noted. However, under state law MDH must investigate any complaint, regardless of severity. That's why it is important to remain vigilant and committed to protocols and ensure staff, parents, and students are following the guidance and rules you have communicated.

These past seven months have shown the critical need for an all-inclusive organization that advocates, informs, connects and supports the students, educators and leaders in private and independent schools. To further support the vital work of MISF, [make a donation](#) or contact me to discuss ways you can become a partner in MISF's mission.

Thanks for what you are doing, at a time that has never been more difficult. We are here for you.



Tim Benz
President

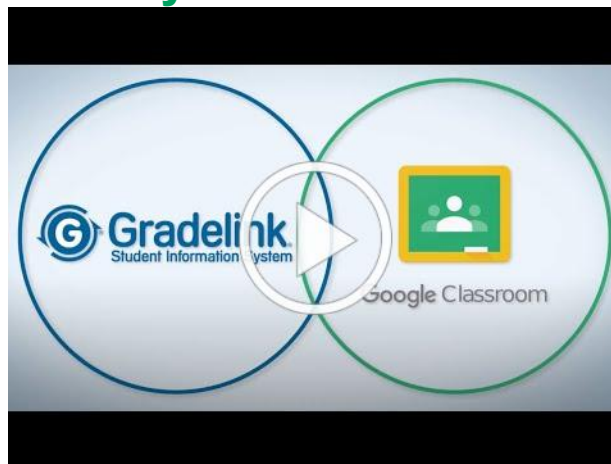
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STEM Scoop

PROGRAM UPDATE

The Teacher Resource Center/Lending Library (formerly known as Science House) at the Science Museum of Minnesota remains closed due to COVID-19 until further notice. MISF will inform schools when they resume their operations.

Science Museum of Minnesota - Learn from home

A community resource where Science, Equity, and Education come together. Meet scientists, create experiments, and dig into science stories. [Explore and Learn more...](#)

Guidance for science in-person and at-home instruction

The Minnesota Department of Education has developed several guidance documents for the [Student Instruction](#) COVID-19 Resources webpage including [Science Standards Support for Distance Learning](#). The Council of State Science Supervisors (CS3 "CS-cubed") to support science learning during distance and return to school, including advice for science leaders, teachers, families and students. Most recently, they have published [back-to-school guidance briefs](#) on instruction, assessment, curriculum, well-being and safety. They also produced a very helpful and [practical recorded lab safety webinar](#) by NSTA science safety consultant Ken Roy. These are available at this [STEM Teaching Tools website](#).

Minnesota State Centers of Excellence Teacher Training - Sep 16. - Dec. 2 - Online

Webinars will feature ready-to-implement activities and resources with guidance for implementing in virtual and distance learning settings. This series is designed to help educators inspire interest in students and set them on the right track to pursue career pathways that lead to high-demand (and high-pay in many cases) jobs in Minnesota.

- Oct. 21 | 3:30-4:30 | What Does a STEM Professional Look Like?
- Nov. 4 | 12:00-1:00 | Virtual Career Exploration
- Nov. 18 | 3:30-4:30 | "I'm Just Not a Good Test Taker"
- Dec. 2 | 12:00-1:00 | Food Products and Processing Careers Activity

[More information](#)

MnSTA Conference on Science Education, November 12 - 17, Online

We welcome you to share, learn, and grow together with us in our first entirely virtual

MnCOSE! Sessions will be evenings **Thursday, Friday, Monday and Tuesday plus unconference sessions on Saturday morning.**

Theme; A New Vision for Science Education in Minnesota; All Students, All Standards, All Voices! Conference strands are:

- Distance Learning
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Science Education
- Elementary Science Education
- Life Science Education
- Chemistry Education
- Physics Education
- Earth Science Education All strands will include a focus on the new science standards.

The member rate is \$50 and presenters register for \$25. Check out details at the MnSTA Conference website. Share your great ideas for teaching.

https://www.mnsta.org/cgi/page.cgi/2020_Conference.html

Green Ribbon Schools Award

Be recognized for environmental and sustainability efforts and spur your school to greater accomplishments. This award honors schools, districts and colleges who are

- reducing energy and resources consumption
- improving health and wellness
- providing effective environment education

Awardees receive a plaque for the school, local recognition, use of the Green Ribbon School Logo on their website, and an invitation to the national award ceremony and related activities in Washington, DC.

The information and applications are posted on the [MDE Green Ribbon Schools webpage](#) and are now available from john.c.olson@state.mn.us. The application is due in January.

Water Guardians

The Water Guardians program is a free, web-based curriculum designed for grades 5-8. It contains a set of 5 lesson plans and culminates with a student-led service-learning project. Whether teachers are starting the school year back in the classroom, with online distance learning, or somewhere in between, Water Guardians is designed to fit a variety of settings and needs. Learn more by checking out the Water Guardians website,

https://waterguardians.org/?_s=qpnwssbywphurcfr5qbf

Solar Energy Opportunity

A dramatic drop in the cost of solar panels, combined with new financing choices, has now made solar energy widely available. Additionally, schools are incorporating the solar array into their curriculum. Learn about the financial opportunities (including third party ownership), the educational benefits, the environmental impact, and the community leadership roles. [Clean Energy Resource Teams](#) is a not-for-profit organization that provides tools and services for implementing solar energy for schools.

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Educational Leadership Series

Open to all leaders, administrative staff, and educators

Developing Social-Emotional Learning in Students and Staff

Join MISF virtually for one, two, three or four sessions packed with insights and practical

strategies to create a safe and healthy culture for all members of the school community, and develop their potential to think, learn and communicate more effectively. Each session will consist of large group gatherings and small group breakout sessions.

REGISTER NOW!

Session 1 - Thursday October 22 (12:00 - 1:30 pm) Virtual/Live/Online

Living Above the Line: How Our Thinking Governs Our Experience

This session focuses on becoming aware of our thinking so we know when it is working and when it is not working. It explores (1) the conditions that come up in our life that invite us to go Below the Line, (2) indicators telling us when we are Below, (3) how to handle Below the Line experiences with more grace and dignity and (4) how to trampoline back Above the Line.

Paul Bernabei Co-Owner/Co-Founder/Senior Facilitator/Author/Director

Paul directs Top 20 Training and has been leading the initiative to transform American education and bring Top 20 to schools around the world. Paul travels the U.S. presenting Top 20 Training seminars. He has been an educator in Twin Cities schools for over 30 years and has conducted hundreds of retreats for youth and adults. He has co-authored Top 20 Teachers: The Revolution in American Education, Top 20 Parents: Raising Happy, Responsible and Emotionally Healthy Children and Top 20 Teens: Discovering the Best-kept Thinking, Learning and Communicating Secrets of Successful Teenagers. He has also authored Why Students Disengage in American Schools and What We Can Do about It. A graduate of St. John's University and the University of St. Thomas, Paul and his wife Paula, a retired kindergarten teacher, have four daughters and fourteen grandchildren. They live in St. Paul, Minnesota.



Series Features

- Earn CEUs for attending
- Access to recorded presentations

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR SESSION #1

Webinar Cost

MISF Member School Staff: FREE

- [CLICK HERE](#) to see if your school is a member of MISF

Nonmember School Staff: \$75 per session

- Check with your LEA about using Title funds for registration

4-PART SERIES DETAILS

Questions? Contact Lisa Vosbeek, 651-308-6454, lvosbeek@misf.org

Save the Date ~ 2020 Private & Independent Education Awards



Virtual Event
Thursday, December 10, 2020
7:00 - 8:00 pm

Watch your inbox and [this page](#) for more information.

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Updates from MDE:

On Facilities and Spectator Guidance

We know how important it is for families to be able to support their students while they are participating in activities, athletics, and school events. As a result we have worked with the experts at MDH to update the [2020-21 Planning Guide for Minnesota Public Schools](#) to safely allow spectators at events in school facilities while still prioritizing the health and wellness of our students, school staff, and communities. The updated guidance is as follows:

- ***Each team/group at an indoor event is allowed up to a total allocation of two spectators per participant. Consistent with other [Stay Safe guidance](#), spectators must be separated by at least 6 feet between households/spectator groups and event spaces can't exceed 25% of total capacity. For indoor events where 12 feet can't be maintained between participants and spectators, participants must be included in the total capacity count. If spectators and participants can be clearly separated by at least 12 feet, then participants do not need to be included in the total capacity count. No venue may exceed a capacity of 250 spectators.***
- ***In some situations, small venues may only allow for an allocation of one spectator or less per participant, depending on the size of the venue. Spectators are only allowed at official competitions or events. If the participants are young children who may need adult support to dress, use the restroom, or otherwise participate in a practice or rehearsal, each participant may have one support person attend. If a participant has a medical need for additional adult support then that support person is allowed at practices or rehearsals.***
- ***School districts and charter schools must require advanced reservations and/or ticketing (e.g. on-line, app-based, email, will-call). Walk-ins, impromptu purchases or admittance will not be allowed.***
 - ***Names, phone number, and/or email must be collected as part of the reservation so that quick notification can be done if an individual develops COVID-19.***
- ***Schools must schedule arrival times for longer than their typical duration to minimize the congregation of spectators waiting. They must establish staggered admission-times, entry-times and durations to minimize overlap and congregating of spectators at choke-points (e.g. access points, security check-points, admission areas, concession areas).***

- **Please also refer to MDH's [COVID-19 Sports Guidance for Youth and Adults](#) and guidance issued by the [Minnesota State High School League](#) if you are planning an athletic event.**

District or charter school owned or leased facilities that are only used for non-instructional athletics or activities must follow the [Stay Safe guidance](#) and [COVID-19 Sports Guidance for Youth and Adults](#).

On Immediate Distribution of Saliva Test Codes

Starting on August 31, 2020, all school districts, charter schools, and nonpublic and tribal schools began receiving saliva test URL codes from MDE. **These codes should have been immediately disseminated to all staff according to the guidelines in the email from MDE. If your school's codes have not been sent out to staff, please do so.**

Follow these steps:

- Open the email that was sent to all COVID-19 Coordinators and superintendents, charter leaders, nonpublic leaders and tribal school leaders. It has the directions and FAQ in it.
- **Issue the URL codes right away to your educators and staff regardless of your learning model.** Track codes assigned to individuals in case someone loses their code. The State will not know how you assigned the codes.
- Contact covidtesting.mde@state.mn.us with questions.

For answers to additional questions about the saliva tests, see [MDH's COVID-19 Saliva Testing for Public and Private Teachers and School Staff](#) as well as the [COVID-19 saliva test frequently asked questions document](#). Also remember that these saliva tests should not be used as an occupational health test for staff. If a school wishes to test all of their staff at once, they must seek other methods of testing for that purpose. State-provided test codes are for staff to access at their own discretion if they are experiencing symptoms or are a close contact to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Districts and schools that wish to buy additional saliva tests directly from Vault can respond to [this survey](#) and a Vault representative will reach out.

Requesting Additional Saliva Test Codes for School Staff

Approximately 167,000 URL codes have been distributed as part of Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan and the Walz-Flanagan Administration's commitment to providing access to COVID-19 testing for Minnesotans working in schools. Moving forward, requests for additional URL codes for new hires from public and private schools will be sent to the vendor on the following three dates:

1. October 15, 2020
2. November 5, 2020
3. November 26, 2020

We suggest that those requesting additional testing do so before the designated dates above. Requests can be made by emailing covidtesting.mde@state.mn.us.

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Join the MISF Member School Network



We would like to invite MISF members to join us on the **MISF Member School Network**, a private, personalized MISF Group, in partnership with ChangeMakers for Impact.

Participation in this collaborative network is a NEW member benefit that we believe will be

of high value as we continue to navigate an ambiguous educational environment. There has never been a greater need for leaders to have a place online where they can connect and be resourced that is accessible anytime.

This NEW member benefit will provide member schools with **FREE** access to our private group - **MISF Member School Network** and the larger [ChangeMaker for Impact Network](#).

Explanation & Benefits

As a member of the **MISF Member School Network**, we want you to get immediate value from being a member.

- **Network** and connect with MISF member school members
- **Authentically collaborate**, connect, and resource one another virtually
- **Access timely information** to navigate a full range of issues
- Access exclusive **professional development training** and resources
- **Stay up to date** on program opportunities, training, and events to support you in your work

Access Instructions

- The **MISF Member School Network** can be accessed via a web browser on your computer or download the Mighty Networks app from the app store to access on your device!
- Click on one of the links below to connect to our partner site, Incubate to Innovate.
- Once connected, access our private site by clicking on GROUPS in the left menu and choose MISF Member School Network.
- BOOKMARK the MISF Member School Network for direct future access.
- Review WELCOME article for more instructions on how to use the site.

Ready to Join?

- **New members** join here: https://changemakersforimpact.mn.co/plans/47176?bundle_token=c587f1edbb98e28626925922be2f27e0&utm_source=manual
- Those **already members of ChangeMakers for Impact**, but want to join the MISF Member School Network join here: https://changemakersforimpact.mn.co/plans/47177?bundle_token=6665cc3e32c7319139196020e97f591b&utm_source=manual

Questions: Lisa Vosbeek, Director of Development & Programs
lvosbeek@misf.org or call 651-424-4930

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MINNESOTA
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL FORUM

Welcoming our Newest Member Schools

MISF welcomes

- [St. Anastasia School](#) in Hutchinson
- [St. Bernard's School](#) in Thief River Falls

We're glad you're here!

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Questions about becoming a member of MISF?

To learn about membership, [visit our membership page](#). For new school members, there is a new member incentive **including a reduced member rate for the first year**. To learn more about this special offer, send an email to tbenz@misf.org.

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Important Dates to Remember

- Thursday, October 22, 2020: [Educational Leadership Series: Living Above the Line](#)
- Thursday, December 10, 2020: [Private and Independent Education Awards](#)

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