

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 Private and Independent Schools,

Back to school has a very different meaning than any other year. On behalf of the MISF board of directors and staff, we extend our best for a safe and healthy return to learning for all students, educators, leaders and families.

As you recall, last month the State of Minnesota provided masks and shields to all educators and staff in private, charter and public schools as part of the back to school effort. The second phase of this plan is providing each staff and educators in school access to a single saliva test. **[Please follow the instructions below to confirm your participation, total number of tests and the process required at the school level.](#)** **Note the deadline - this is a hard deadline and no extensions will be provided.**

Registration for the 2020 School Leadership Conference is open! While in a different format (virtual) and in a different location (your home/office and not Ruttger's) than the usual in person conference, you will find the topics and content inspiring and affirming. To supplement this conference, MISF has planned an ongoing leadership series throughout the year to help leaders stay on connected. **[More information is listed below.](#)**

As is the norm, there's lots of updates

- **[MISF's Covid-19 page](#)** continues to be a helpful "one stop shop" for resources, updates and documents - add this to your bookmarks
- MISF remains in frequent communication with MDE on issues of importance to nonpublic participation including transportation, nursing, guidance/counseling, special education and CARES Act funding and resources - please keep us posted on issues impacting your school community.
- CARES Act - the implementation, legal challenges and delays in implementation of the CARES Act continues to bring about frustration and confusion. On the federal level, our national **[Council for American Private Education](#)** is engaged in the ongoing saga with fellow national organizational leaders on working toward a positive and efficient resolution to the uncertainty.

Over the last six months, it's become apparent how vital a single and all-inclusive

organization like MISF is. We are proud to serve, coordinate, communicate and carry forward a unified voice for the entire sector. If you are not currently a member school - [now is the time to join our network](#). If you are a supporter or believer in the power of private or independent education, and would like to know more about our mission - we would love to talk and share our story.



Tim Benz  
President

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## Saliva Tests for all MN Nonpublic School Faculty and Staff Members

As part of the [Safe Learning Plan](#), one saliva test will be provided free of charge to all staff currently employed by Minnesota's K-12 public, nonpublic, and tribal schools.

Please follow the instructions in [this letter from the MDE](#) to confirm your participation, total number of tests needed by your school, and the process required at the school level.

**Note the deadline of Wednesday, September 16 - this is a hard deadline and no extensions will be provided.**

MISF will send reminder notices to all nonpublic schools through early next week so schools do not miss this important opportunity.

If you have questions about the saliva test and who should receive it, please contact [COVIDTesting.MDE@state.mn.us](mailto:COVIDTesting.MDE@state.mn.us).

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The September Newsletter is sponsored by



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Steven Lockwood  
MISF Sponsor at Gradelink  
(949) 682-7019 Cell  
800-742-3083 x106 Office  
[steve@gradelink.com](mailto:steve@gradelink.com)



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## STEM Scoop

### Teacher Events and Workshops

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

This is an interactive twice per month webinar series for STEM educators grades 5 - 12. 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. More Information: <https://engineering.mnsu.edu/teacher-training-institute/>

#### MN GIS Educator Day, Oct.9, Online

Save the Date for this annual conference, which becomes virtual this year. Details will be available soon. The conference contact email is [mngisk12@umn.edu](mailto:mngisk12@umn.edu).

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

Lower Cost, More convenient, Same great sessions! The conference is going online this year! Sessions will be evenings Thursday, Friday, Monday and Tuesday plus unconference sessions on Saturday morning. Watch for an announcement of details and the call for presentations. Registration for exhibitors is now available. Information at the MnSTA Conference website.

## School Programs and Resources

### 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](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.

### Just for Kids - Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge

Enjoy the Outdoors at Home. The US Fish and Wildlife service is offering distance learning packets for outdoor exploration at home, at the refuge or a neighborhood park. The elementary grade-banded packets feature videos from the refuge and hand-on activities. More Information.

[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota\\_Valley/visit/just\\_for\\_kids.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota_Valley/visit/just_for_kids.html)

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### **Funded STEM Program Opportunity** **Space Available for 4 more MISF Member Schools** **to Participate**

Schools will receive teacher training, curriculum, Solar Suitcase equipment and learning tools, and deployment of a Solar Suitcase to East Africa valued over **\$2,500**.

**Solar Suitcase Capstone Project (2020-2021) for 9-12 Grade Students**

**Interdisciplinary STEM & Social Studies Curriculum**



The **Solar Suitcase Capstone Project** 2020-2021 is a pilot program for **9-12 grade students**. The program is interdisciplinary with a science and a social studies unit that can be delivered via team-teaching, or by a single teacher focused on environmental science. **It is a 2-3 week in-class or out-of-class program that can be delivered in person or by virtual access.**

- Lessons focus on how solar works and the role that solar can play in the world of energy access.
- Students will build a stand-alone solar system, learning about user-centered design, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.
- The solar system built by the students will be deployed to light a school for refugee children
- Social studies lessons focus on the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals, global energy access and life in Uganda...particularly as a refugee.

#### Application Details

- MUST be a MISF member in the 2020-21 year to participate
- Curriculum will provide approximately 10 - 15 STEM lessons and 5 - 10 Social Studies lessons
- **Application deadline is September 18, 2020 - Room for 4 additional schools to participate. Complete Letter of Interest Application**
- [CLICK HERE to Complete Letter of Interest Application](#)

If you have questions about the application or program please contact  
 Lisa Vosbeek, Director of Development & Programs  
[lvosbeek@misf.org](mailto:lvosbeek@misf.org) or call 651-308-6454

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## 2020 Virtual School Leadership Conference

**Monday, September 28 - Tuesday September 29**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and concerns about social distancing, this will be a virtual conference for MISF members only.



### Conference Schedule:

**Monday, 9/28**

**> 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm President's "Zoomception" on Zoom**

*While we won't be able to gather in person at the Bear Pine Bar, we'll still get together - no*

*drink tickets necessary. Settle in with your laptop/phone/tablet and beverage of choice for conversation, laughs, and a game to bring out your competitive side... come wearing your school swag, too!*

### **Monday, 9/28**

**> 9:00 am - 9:30 am Welcome, introductions and MISF updates**

**> 9:30 am - 11:00 am Human Development and the Power of Alignment, presented by Paul Bernabei**

**> 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Cultivating Educational Leadership Through SEL, presented by Jessica Werner, Ph.D.**

## **Session Content and Presenters**

### **Human Development and the Power of Alignment**

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

We can enhance our leadership effectiveness by: (1) understanding the power of alignment on the growth and development of our students, staff, and self and (2) quieting our saboteurs (negative mental habits), and (3) accessing the five powers of our sage.

Bio ~ 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.

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### **Cultivating Educational Leadership Through SEL**

**by Jessica Warner, Ph. D. International Education Consultant**

What if we told you there was a way to increase your sense of resiliency and efficacy while simultaneously decreasing stress and the likelihood of burnout in the profession? We know there are benefits of SEL (social-emotional learning) for students and that these benefits apply to teachers and school leaders as well. Studies have shown that a greater focus on SEL skills for leaders promotes a positive school climate and leads to improved relationships between teachers and students and students and their peers. Furthermore, there is a link between developing teachers' and leaders' SEL competencies and better academic outcomes.

Bio ~ Jessica holds a doctorate in Educational Policy and Administration from the University of Minnesota, and a Master's and Bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame. She has worked as a classroom teacher in South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the United States. She currently teaches Classroom Management to pre-service teachers through the College of St. Scholastica in St. Paul, MN, and consults at schools as an instructional coach and mentor for teachers across the United States. Dr. Werner is also co-authoring a book, Thriving Teachers, Thriving Schools and is a senior facilitator of the Personal Leadership program which offers SEL-based strategies for leadership. She lives in Vadnais Heights with her husband and two children.

## **Conference Features, Registration & Fees**

- **Cost: \$85** and includes all sessions, course materials, and access to session recordings.
- **Title Funds may be available.** Check with your local LEA for more information



- Earn CEU's for each session you attend
- Last day to register is Friday September 25

**Click here to  
REGISTER**

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## Have you renewed your MISF membership?



If you've already renewed your MISF membership... THANK YOU! We look forward to serving you in the 2020-2021 school year.

If you haven't already renewed...it is our sincere hope we will retain your school as a member of our strong and vibrant cohort of private and independent schools. **Here are just a handful of ways your school community benefits from membership with MISF:**

- Looking for local professional development opportunities? MISF provides high quality, relevant topics, including access to recorded seminar and conference materials
- Have a question about legal requirements or services your school should receive? MISF provides member-only access to our Law Guide and Directory of Programs and Services for Nonpublic Schools
- Looking to build a network with other private school leaders? Make plans to attend the MISF School Leadership Conference, a supportive gathering focused on the unique needs of private schools leaders
- Not sure if you are receiving all your title services or nonpublic pupil aids? We're just an email or phone call away. We'll help problem-solve and ensure your students and school receive their equitable services
- Looking for STEM resources or funding? You'll receive access to member-only STEM grants, community partnership programs and periodic in-kind donations
- Have a question about ESSER or GEER funds? We're all over it! We can provide helpful guidance in working with your district to ensure you are provided accurate and transparent information
- Need to stay current on local, state and national issues impacting nonpublic schools? MISF is active at all levels to ensure consistent, accurate and timely information is conveyed to member schools

## Invoices have been emailed to all member schools

If you need a copy, please contact Debbie Kaliszewski at [dkalis@misf.org](mailto:dkalis@misf.org). We look forward to serving you in the 2020-21 school year.

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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](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](https://changemakersforimpact.mn.co/plans/47177?bundle_token=6665cc3e32c7319139196020e97f591b&utm_source=manual)

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

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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](mailto:tbenz@misf.org).

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## ***MN Zoo Zooms STEM Design Challenge: Engineering for Animals***

Looking for ways to engage your students in authentic integrated STEM? The **ZOOMS**

**STEM Design Challenge** offers students in grades 3-12 a chance to develop a solution to a 'real' problem faced by Zoo Keepers and staff at the Minnesota Zoo. While tasked with designing an enrichment for an animal at the Zoo, students will be challenged to use their science and math knowledge, creativity, problem solving, and research skills during the engineering design process in order to best solve the problem and present a solution.

Registered teachers will receive access to free design challenge resources and ongoing support throughout the school year from Zoo education staff. Register your class by clicking 'Apply Now!' by Friday November 13th to participate. For more information on the ZOOMS design challenge, visit <https://mnzoo.org/education/schools-teachers/zooms-design-challenge/>.

### **2020-2021 Enrichment Design Challenge: Develop an *innovative enrichment for the red panda***

As one of the most beloved animals at the Minnesota Zoo, our 9-year-old female red panda can often be found resting on her favorite tree branch in her Tropics Trail habitat that she shares with two Transcaspian urials. Described as sweet and shy, Min has been a challenge to provide enrichment for as she has shown minimal interest and hesitates to explore anything when the two urials are near. Zookeepers have identified goals for Min that they would like help achieving through enrichment, such as increasing activity levels and exploration of her habitat or finding a better way to cool down in the Tropics humidity to name a few. While considering these goals and Min's individual needs, developing an enrichment that also encourages natural behaviors will ensure she stays happy, healthy, and mentally engaged.

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## **Important Dates to Remember**

- September 28-30, 2020: [MISF Virtual School Leadership Conference](#)

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