



MINNESOTA
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL FORUM

October 2021 Newsletter

Be Independent, Not Alone

We've moved!

5200 Willson Road
Suite 310
Edina, MN 55424

**Be sure your
school's faculty
and staff have
subscribed to our
newsletter!**

**Important
information about
STEM grants,
Professional
Development
sessions,
advocacy,
conferences and
more.**

Share the link.

**MISF STEM
Learning
Community**

Read more

MISF Jobs Board

Member schools can
post job listings for free.

Read more

Dear Friends of Private and Independent Education:

Throughout the past 20 months, MISF has been at the center supporting private and independent schools through an exhaustive changing landscape for schools, educators, leaders and their communities. One school leader summarized it very simply, "Thanks. I would never know about these without you." The awareness of MISF has increased significantly and resulted in welcoming 22 new member schools since July, 2020. In addition, our member retention rate has increased to nearly 95%.

During this period, the MISF board of directors began setting the stage for the next organizational strategic planning process. In preparation for this, the board of directors began the in-depth process of reviewing and affirming the work, mission and impact of MISF. This process began in November 2020, and included a willingness to look at the organizational brand, message and, (egad!) the name of the organization. The process was extensive and truly allowed MISF to capitalize on the increased awareness and prominence gained throughout the past 20 months.

This intensive work was thoughtful, deliberate and expansive. The end result is a very exciting outcome - MISF is becoming MINNDEPENDENT! (For English majors: we know it's not a "word", but we will explain that shortly.) To review the steps in the process, the meaning behind the new name and how this will visually change in the coming weeks, [here is the final presentation delivered and approved by the MISF board of directors](#). Over the coming weeks, you will see the new brand, look and messaging take shape in our physical, virtual and digital assets.

One thing is certain – this does not change what MISF has been and what MINNDEPENDENT will become. This process provided a unique opportunity to become crystal clear about what we do, how we do it and why it matters to the entire private and independent ecosystem.

A special thanks to the steering committee of Teri McCloughan, Anna Lima, Mike Brennan and Lisa Vosbeek. A tip of the cap to Megan Junius of [Eight Moon](#) who walked us through this successful journey. We are excited to become MINNDEPENDENT and look forward to charting a bright future in the coming months.

During the last two years, private and independent schools have shined – and we are honored to be a trusted partner for private

and independent schools. Thank you for your firm belief and support.



Tim Benz
President

This month's newsletter is sponsored by



HOW TO SYNC

500+ APPS WITH



Sync 500+ apps with Gradelink SIS

Sync 500+ apps with Gradelink using the Clever Secure FTP (SFTP). Sync with apps like Kiddom, ParentSquare, McGraw Hill and more. Rosters from Gradelink are pushed to Clever, on a nightly basis, which are then pushed to the apps you use most. Say goodbye to manually syncing rosters using spreadsheets.

[Learn more here.](#)

MISF is becoming MINNDEPENDENT



For nearly 50 years, **Minnesota Independent School Forum (MISF)** has served private and independent schools in Minnesota. Originally founded to serve independent high schools, we grew to serve the entire K-12 private and independent school community, bringing a broader array of services. In 2020, we recognized that our name no longer represented our expanding mission, vision and voice, so we are relaunching as **MINNDEPENDENT**

Why MINNDEPENDENT?

The name combines key elements of our mission – Minnesota and independent – to create a unique and memorable name. Our refreshed brand look helps reintroduce our broadened service model and reinforce our long-standing purpose as a trusted beacon for private and independent schools, delivering professional development, partnerships and public policy initiatives on their behalf.

We are grateful to our private and independent member schools and supportive partners who have been integral on this journey, and we are excited to welcome new members and partners to be a part of our continued growth.

STEM SCOOP

Getting Ready for the New Minnesota Science Standards

Self-paced online professional development in partnership with

Science from Scientists

Earn 6 CEUs

\$75 for MISF Members (use discount code MISF75)

In this self-paced online course, you'll engage with the Science & Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts – central to MN's new science standards and the Next Generation Science Standards – and explore how they transform science teaching and learning. This course is designed for classroom educators as well as school leaders who support their work.

Upon completion, you'll receive a certificate for 6 clock hours of professional development. This course has been approved for continuing education credits by the Minnesota Board of School Administrators.

Course Fees

- Regular price: \$89
- MISF member price: \$75 (use code MISF75)

What participants are saying

- "... the online accessibility ... made it fit into my schedule and allowed me to work at my own pace."
- "The descriptions of the SEPs and CCCs were awesome [and the] ... handouts helped me to look more deeply at how to implement this more clearly."
- "I ... liked the discussions, to see what other educators were thinking."
- "I really liked the format of this class because it has a good variety of tasks to complete."
- "The handouts that were included [were valuable], because I can not only use them for my benefit but also display them in my classroom."
- "The assignments made me think beyond my comfort level, which was very effective in promoting my individual growth in the science standards."

Instructors

Beth Murphy PhD

Beth is an independent consultant with more than 25 years of experience designing, leading, and evaluating science and STEM education programs – including professional development for educators – in K-12, higher-ed, and out-of-school settings. Beth works with a variety of Minnesota-based and national clients, including serving as MISF's STEM program manager. She also serves as a director on the boards of Science from Scientists and SciMathMN. Beth holds a PhD in experimental physics.

Renee Nesnidal, PhD

Renee is a lead instructor for Science from Scientists (SfS), with over 20 years' experience working in science education at K-12 and college levels. Prior to joining SfS, she worked as a consultant with several Minnesota schools to incorporate more hands-on science, lead science workshops for students and educators, and teach summer STEM camps and in-school enrichment programs for students of all ages. She holds a PHD in atomic physics, specializing in laser and optical engineering.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to use PayPal to pay for the course?

At this time we only offer online payments through PayPal. You can pay with any major credit card and do not need to have a PayPal account for this option.

Is it possible to invoice my school?

We allow invoicing for groups of four or more registering together. For more information please contact Renee Piersa at renee@sciencefromscientists.org.

REGISTER NOW

<https://scisci.thinkific.com/courses/getting-ready-for-the-new-minnesota-science-standards>

Minnesota State Engineering Center of Excellence ENGINEERING MACHINE DESIGN CONTEST

STEM Educators, are you ready to engage your students' curiosity?!

The Engineering Machine Design Contest is an opportunity for teams of 3-12 students to design and build a complex machine using everyday objects with the guidance of a coach. The completed machine will use multiple steps to complete a simple task. Teams showcase and exhibit their machine at a regional contest with the opportunity to advance to the Engineering Machine Design Championship. Teams are scored on a Team Journal, Team Presentation, and Machine Design and Operation.



Divisions

Junior Division | 5th-8th Grade
Senior Division | 9th-12th Grade

Learn More... <https://engineering.mnsu.edu/engineering-machine-design-contest/>

MN Department of Transportation STEM education & Outreach

MnDOT launched a virtual collection of transportation-related activities and offerings for you to explore. Students and families can download activities or take a virtual tour of the 35W@94 construction project, and teachers can connect with project engineers for virtual classroom presentations or online classroom activities. MnDOT provides high quality activities and initiatives to help promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in schools across Minnesota.

- Start exploring today: [35W@94 STEM Activities](#)
- Also check out additional [free STEM activities and resources](#).

Math Teacher Resource Sites

- [The Math Forum](#): Includes K-12 resources for teachers, students and parents.
- [The AMS math resource site](#): Includes websites recommended by the American Mathematical Society.
- [Minnesota Council of Teacher of Mathematics](#) – Classroom resources
- [MATHCOUNTS](#): Problem of the week: Every week, they release a new multi-part problem related to a holiday season, special event of cool STEM topic...completely for free.

Professional Development Webinar Technology is not Neutral ~ a two-part series

Technology today is evolving more rapidly than our ability to recognize and understand its long-term impact on our schools and our children. Technology creates unprecedented opportunities while many features are designed to keep us tethered to our digital devices, without regard to how addictive features impact wellbeing, especially for children and young people. In this workshop, we will address the effects that the overuse and misuse of technology has on five dimensions of student wellbeing. This illuminating and interactive workshop will provide an overview of the complexities of the digital

world for teenagers, parents, and schools. The voices of young people will be woven into the workshop. We will consider immediate solutions to begin the initial steps toward addressing this complex issue and toward creating and sustaining a Digital Wellbeing culture. The outcomes from the workshop will include the following:

- Increased awareness of persuasive design and how behavioral psychology strategies are used to keep individuals tethered to digital devices
- Increased knowledge about the effects of screen overuse and misuse on child and youth development
- Increased knowledge about how distraction, social comparison, cyberbullying, and more impacts student health and mental wellbeing
- Increased understanding of the role school leaders can play to promote student and staff digital wellbeing
- Increased knowledge about the actions school leaders can take to support a sustainable Digital Wellbeing culture

Dates:

Thursday, October 28 ~ 12:30PM-2:00PM

Thursday, November 11 ~ 12:30PM-2:00PM

Note: registration is for the two-part series

Cost:

MISF members: FREE

>[click here](#) to see if your school is a member of MISF

Nonmembers: \$175 for the series

>*check with your LEA about using Title Funds for registration*



Presented by

[LiveMore ScreenLess](#)

Maree Hampton, MEd Youth Development and Leadership, CHES, LiveMore ScreenLess, Co-Founder and Director of Strategy and Health Promotion

KK Myers, MEd Secondary Education, LiveMore ScreenLess, Co-Founder and Director of Youth Engagement and Education

**Click here to
REGISTER**

Need to Know Changes to the College Planning Process
A FREE Webinar for schools, parents and students

This past year has resulted in some of the most significant changes to the college planning process in decades.

- Schools have gone ACT/SAT optional, but not necessarily when they award scholarships.
- Recent legislation included substantial changes to the FAFSA and college financial aid
- Behind-the-scenes rules have changed on how colleges can recruit students and award scholarships.

Join College Inside Track to learn how these changes may impact your family, and new strategies to consider to give your student the best opportunity to be admitted and maximize scholarships and

financial aid.

This is incredibly important info for 9-11 students, parents and schools. Register today!

Thurs, Oct. 28 - 8:30 pm - [Register here](#)

2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Application Now Available

The U.S. Department of Education has released the 2022 [National Blue Ribbon Schools](#) program application.

Everything that private schools will need to apply for the program is now available on the CAPE (Council for American Private Education) Blue Ribbon School's web page. As explained on that page, schools interested in applying will have to pre-register for the program by **November 1, 2021**. Schools not pre-registered will not be able to apply.

Find the pre-registration link [here](#).

Michigan Parents File Lawsuit Against Nation's Strictest Blaine Amendment

The lawsuit flows from the changes Congress made to "529 accounts" in 2017. A 529 plan is an investment account for education expenses. [Read more in this month's issue](#) of the CAPE (Council for American Private Education) Outlook.

MDE & MDH Updates



COVID-19 Coordinator Contact Information

As we get ready for the upcoming school year, we ask that superintendents, charter directors, tribal school leaders and nonpublic school leaders submit email addresses for their School COVID-19 Program Coordinators so that we can share important information with the appropriate staff. Complete the [2021-22 School COVID-19 Coordinators](#) contact information form.



Host a Community COVID-19 Vaccination Event

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), local health departments, vaccine providers, and community partners are working together to provide local community vaccination opportunities. Community vaccination events bring vaccines to people who would otherwise have a hard time getting vaccinated.

For more information about hosting a vaccination event, [click here](#).

THE VAULT

MISF is proud to announce a partnership with **CARE Counseling** to bring member schools invaluable resources to **teach social and emotional learning (SEL)** as well as practice **self resiliency**.



The VAULT is a customized online portal uniquely created for MISF member schools. Think of this as an **“on-demand”** library of videos to support your vocation as a leader, educator, or school staff. **This is a NEW member benefit that we hope you will find helpful.**

SEL provides a foundation for safe and positive learning, and enhances students' ability to succeed in school, careers, and life as well as provides additional support to **LEADERS, EDUCATORS, AND STAFF**.

- The Vault is a **FREE RESOURCE** for MISF member schools
- Each individual user will create their own username and password so they can work through the modules at their own pace
- Videos are divided by topic
- New content will be added monthly
- On-demand, self-paced video resources
- Earn CEUs - certificates will be generated upon completion of each module

[Click here to read more about this member benefit.](#)

Important Dates to Remember

- Thursday, October 28: Professional Development Webinar: Technology is not Neutral (Pt.1) (12:30-2:00pm)
- Thursday, October 28: Changes to the College Planning Process Webinar (8:30pm)
- Thursday, November 11: Professional Development Webinar: Technology is not Neutral (Pt.2) (12:30-2:00pm)