



# MINNDEPENDENT

## April 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends of Private and Independent Education,

We are very excited to celebrate the [\*\*2023 Private and Independent Education Awards\*\*](#) on April 30. Check out this year's slate of amazing recipients and the many generous partners that continue to support this remarkable event. [\*\*Register to attend here.\*\*](#)

The Minnesota Legislature returned from its Easter/Passover break this week, with approximately 6 weeks to finish its work for the 2023 session. [\*\*Here is an update\*\*](#) on the myriad issues and priorities that MINNDEPENDENT continues to monitor and advocate. [\*\*Keep your eyes out for further updates\*\*](#) as the session progresses towards its conclusion.

As we announced in March, Governor Tim Walz signed into law the [\*\*Free School Meals Bill\*\*](#). Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, this program provides free universal breakfast and lunch to students attending school districts, charter schools and nonpublic schools in Minnesota. MINNDEPENDENT, in concert with our nonpublic education partners, worked to amend the original language of the legislation to ensure participation is **voluntary** for nonpublic schools. To receive updates on this program, MDE recommends subscribing to its [\*\*bulletin\*\*](#) and bookmark the [\*\*webpage\*\*](#) as the information will be posted there when available. A proposed webinar is likely to be held next week. MINNDEPENDENT will provide necessary updates and pertinent information regarding this program as warranted. Specific questions should be directed to [\*\*mde.fns@state.mn.us\*\*](mailto:mde.fns@state.mn.us).

As you plan your 2023-24 calendars, make sure to include the [\*\*STEM Education Conference\*\*](#) and [\*\*School Leadership Conference\*\*](#) onto your personal and professional development calendars. These remain two impactful gatherings to benefit your school communities.

Interested in joining MINNDEPENDENT for 2023-24? [\*\*I'm happy to discuss\*\*](#) how our organization supports and serves 168 member schools through programming, partnerships and public policy.

Thank you for your commitment to our students and our

MINNDEPENDENT has negotiated a discounted rate for member schools interested in participating in the [\*\*#SocialSchool4EDU Membership Program\*\*](#).

[\*\*READ MORE\*\*](#)

MINNDEPENDENT Member Network

[\*\*READ MORE\*\*](#)

**MINNDEPENDENT Jobs Board**

Member schools can post job listings for free.

[\*\*READ MORE\*\*](#)

[\*\*Hats & Mittens\*\*](#) is a 26-year-old all volunteer Minnesota non-profit. Their curriculum, focused on volunteering and philanthropy for students of all ages, is being offered free of charge to schools, churches, and youth organizations. To learn more and find out [\*\*how you can use this in your school, Click here.\*\*](#)

schools.



Tim Benz, President

#### SHARE THE LINK!

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.

**[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE](#)**

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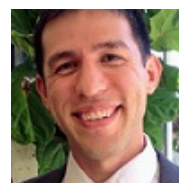


### **Boost Your Private School's Enrollment: Simple Website Strategies to Generate More Inquiries**

[Access our recorded webinar](#) to help you utilize simple website strategies to generate more inquiries.

Steve Lockwood | Sales Executive  
M: 949-682-7019  
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## 2023 Private & Independent Education Awards Recipients



**Behind the Scenes Award**

**John Fischer**

*St. John Paul II Catholic School*

**Community Champion Award**

**Don Mulligan**

*Aim Higher Foundation*



**Concordia**  
ACADEMY

**Program Award**

**Concordia Cohorts &  
Cohort  
Conversations**

*Concordia Academy*

**Honor Teacher Award**

**Jessi Weakley**

*St. John Paul II Catholic School*



**Honor Teacher Award**

**Anita Haas**

*Franklin Academy*

**Leadership Award**

**Bridget Kramer**

*Community of Saints  
Regional Catholic School*



**Leadership Award**

**Jake Mulvihill**

*Legacy Christian Academy*





## 2023 STEM Grant Recipients

### INNOVATION GRANTS

- Annunciation Catholic School
- Carondelet Catholic School
- Cretin-Derham Hall
- Cristo Rey Jesuit High School - Twin Cities
- Heilicher Minneapolis Jewish Day School
- Hill-Murray School
- Holy Trinity Catholic School (Pierz)
- Saint John's Preparatory School
- St. Pascal Regional Catholic School
- West Lutheran High School

### STARTER GRANTS

- Our Lady of Grace Catholic School
- St. Jerome School
- St. John Paul II Catholic School

### SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS

- Hand in Hand Christian Montessori (Roseville)
- Sacred Heart School (East Grand Forks)

## Join us for the Private & Independent Education Awards



**Sunday, April 30, 2023**  
**4:00 pm - 7:00 pm**  
**Mendakota Country Club, Mendota Heights**

MINNDEPENDENT is honored to host this annual celebration of private and independent education. Come celebrate with us, and other advocates and supporters of private and independent schools.

**REGISTER HERE**

# 2023 Awards Sponsors

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Every lead your school obtains is precious and converting them to a successful application for your school is **key**. Enquiry Tracker sees the lifetime value of every enquiry and captures every single lead. Enquiry Tracker presents a brilliant solution for schools to easily manage future families.

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Find out more about Enquiry Tracker through our animated video [here](#).

[Book A Free Demo tailored to your school today and go in the drawing to win tickets to Australia!](#)

## Save the Date 2023 STEM Education Conference Tuesday, August 1, 2023

**Host School:**  
**Heritage Christian Academy**

[15655 Bass Lake Road](#)  
[Maple Grove, MN 55311](#)



### CALL FOR PRESENTERS

**MINNDEPENDENT** would like to invite individual teachers and groups of teachers, leaders, and students from **member schools** to submit proposals for breakout sessions for the **2023 STEM Education Conference**. This conference provides an opportunity for educators to share effective resources, expertise, lessons, and strategies to advance teaching and learning. We know from conference evaluations that attendees value presentations that include innovative and practical ideas and resources they can implement in their classrooms. **We also love featuring**



programs and projects that have received MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant funding.

We welcome breakout session proposals that focus on one or more of the STEM disciplines or link them with other subject areas such as language arts, creative arts, social studies, and more. In addition, we are interested in sessions that connect STEM with topics such as innovation, social entrepreneurship, social-emotional learning, social justice, and preparing students for college and careers. We are also eager for session proposals that incorporate Minnesota's new science standards in direct and meaningful ways. **Breakout sessions are one hour in length with participation limited to 25 attendees.**

**All interested presenters must complete the SESSION PROPOSAL FORM before April 17, 2023,** (deadline now extended) so we can provide a complete conference program when registration opens on May 8, 2023.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2023STEMConference>

## STEM Scoop



### K-12 STEM Demos: Engineering Student Projects

- **Do you need a STEM DEMO for your classroom? The University of St. Thomas needs your project!**

Freshmen undergraduate engineering students take Intro to Engineering Design. In small teams, students complete a hands-on project in which they follow the engineering design cycle with a goal of building a STEM demo for a K-12 classroom.

### BENEFITS FOR TEACHERS:

- Delivery of final designs and prototypes at the end of the semester with **no cost to you!**
- Opportunity for design, prototyping and testing of a STEM demo or equipment for your classroom.
- Fabrication and laboratory resources: 3D printing, laser cutting, machine and wood shops.
- Submit project ideas by May 1<sup>st</sup> for Fall semester inclusion.

LEARN MORE - <https://minndependent.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/STEM-Demo-Project-Request-2023.pdf>

## Free Resources From



## Elevate STEM Learning with Exciting Racing-Themed Resources

Experience the importance of STEM through the sport of racing! Immerse K-8 students in real-life applications of STEM—and teach key science concepts at the same time—with lessons about a sport that many students enjoy. Check out these fun and engaging NASCAR-themed lessons and resources, free of charge to educators nationwide! Elementary and Middle School Lessons available. [LEARN MORE](#)

## Health DataWell

To understand the varied roles of citizens and health scientists in protecting and promoting the health and wellness of their communities

This curriculum is designed for teachers to use with high-school level science students and can be freely accessed and implemented by teachers anywhere in the world. The program content is aligned with common educational standards of learning (SOLs) in the US but is not specific to any State. At present the curriculum will only be offered in English, but future iterations may include translation into other languages. [LEARN MORE](#)

## Our Beautiful Planet: Increase Student Understanding of How the World Works

A series of compelling 5–7-minute science films highlighting the cutting-edge research that climate scientists are doing to solve some of the world’s most pressing issues. NSTA, The Climate Initiative, and Kikim Media have partnered to launch these films and this collection of classroom-ready lesson plans that highlight the science and engineering practices scientists use to explain the phenomenon of climate change. [LEARN MORE](#)

## Freebies for Science and STEM Teachers

### **STEM Teaching Tool: Using Crosscutting Concepts to Enhance Science Instruction: Grade K-12**

The crosscutting concepts (CCC) are key to three-dimensional instruction, but often K–12 educators struggle to incorporate them into their lessons. Developed as part of the University of Washington Institute for Science and Math Education’s STEM Teaching Tool initiative, the brief “Why and how should I use CCC to enhance my science instruction?” helps educators make learning about the CCC more explicit, expansive, and inclusive. The document defines CCC, addresses key Things to Consider, provides guidance on Attending to Equity, and recommends Actions to Take. In addition, the brief’s Reflection Questions can jumpstart teachers’ and other educational leaders’ journeys to using CCC to enhance science instruction in the classroom. [LEARN MORE](#)

### **Meadowscaping Guides: Elementary to Middle School**

Meadowscaping is the art of transforming lawns, playgrounds, empty lots, patios, and other unused paved spaces into havens for plants and animals. K–8 teachers and students can find inspiration and tips to transform the unused spaces in their schoolyards into magnificent meadow habitats with two new publications from KidsGardening and American Meadows: Meadowscaping With Kids and Meadowscaping Makes It Better. Meadowscaping With Kids, a four-page pdf document, offers background information and a rationale for creating a meadowscape environment with students. Meadowscaping Makes It Better, a 16-page publication, presents tips and information for creating meadows plantings in any location. The guide includes meadow-themed projects to inspire young gardeners, such as Plant Smiles in Your Neighborhood, Pollinator Scavenger Hunt, Observing Nature Through Journaling, Save Our Soil, and Seed Balls to Share. [LEARN MORE](#)

### **One Health Lesson Series: High School**

Developed by educators from the University of Rochester Medical Center’s Life Sciences Learning Center, this series of lessons for grades 9–12 introduce students to the concept of One Health, the connections among human health, the health of animals, and the health of the environment. The lessons include teacher guides and student handouts for each topic addressed. Three lessons have been adapted as virtual field trip (VFT) experiences. The VFT lessons are designed to be presented asynchronously over a period of five or six 30-minute sessions. Lesson titles include An Outbreak of Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria (also available as a VFT); Disappearing

## Safe Route to School "Boost Grant" Funding Available

Safe Routes to School Boost grants are intended to help boost Safe Routes to School (SRTS) efforts! Through these grant awards, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will support communities with existing SRTS plans, or other comprehensive SRTS approaches, in advancing non-infrastructure strategies for schools. The strategies should support making it safe, easy and fun for students to walk and bicycle to school.

More detailed information on eligibility, funding restrictions/requirements, and the grant application materials are available on the [MnDOT SRTS Boost webpage](#). View past [Boost awards](#) to get project ideas and cost.

An [SRTS Boost Grant informational webinar](#) is available Wednesday, April 12 at 11 a.m.

Grant application requests may range between \$5,000-\$50,000 and do not require a match. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17 and must be submitted online. Awardees will be announced in June, with funding beginning in September 2023 and ending in June 2025.

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Mention MINNDEPENDENT when registering

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[View Thrivent's Money Canvas introduction video here.](#)

## Important Dates

Sunday, April 30, 2023:

*Private and Independent Education Awards  
Mendakota Country Club*

**Tuesday, August 1, 2023**  
*STEM Education Conference  
Heritage Christian Academy, Maple Grove*

**September 25-27, 2023:**  
*School Leadership Conference, Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge*

## **A TRUSTED PARTNER** For Private & Independent Schools



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