



MINNDEPENDENT

December 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends of Private and Independent Education,

As an organization comprised of 178 schools (our all time high!), we enjoy celebrating the successes of our member schools. Congratulations to Bruce Richards and staff at St. Joseph's Catholic STEM School in Victoria for their National Certificate for STEM Excellence (NCSE) - Campus Certification from the National Institute for STEM Education (NISE). Full details are below, but kudos to Bruce and his team for their commitment to an innovative curriculum. Having visited the school a handful of times, it's remarkable to see the growth and evolution of its programming.

MINNDEPENDENT is finalizing several great webinars in early 2024, so keep your eyes out for full details and registration information. Since we are talking about 2024...mark your calendars today for the 2024 School Leadership Conference slated for September 30-October 2, 2024.

A special note of thanks to everyone who reached out following last month's letter about my dad's passing. Every note was much appreciated and affirming. I am thankful to be part of this amazing network.

We wish you all a joyful and peaceful holiday season and a prosperous new year. Thank you for your support of Minnesota's private and independent schools.

Tim Benz, President

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

[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](#)

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[Read more here](#)

2024/2025 STEM Grant Program

FOUR types of STEM Grants are available this year

MINNDEPENDENT is excited to offer member schools the opportunity to apply for the **2024/2025 STEM Grant Program**. Four types of STEM Grants are available to fit your school's needs.

NEW THIS YEAR - Community Partnership Grants (We Share Solar)

Innovation Grants - up to \$5000

Starter Grants - up to \$1500

Sustainability Grants - up to 20% of the original grant, not to exceed \$1000

Community Partnership Grants (We Share Solar)

STEM Grant Resource Page

The STEM Grant Resource Page includes:

STEM Grant Program Calendar

STEM Grant Guidelines

Academic Standards and Other STEM Resources

Resources for Inclusive STEM Learning

Letters of Interest (must submit an LOI to be eligible to submit a grant application)

- PDF- Reference Form
- Link to complete and submit Letter of Interest in Survey Monkey
- **Deadline - By 6:00 pm on Tuesday, January 16, 2024**

Grant Application

- PDF- Reference Form
- Link to complete and submit Letter of Interest in Survey Monkey
- **Deadline - By 6:00 pm on Tuesday, February 13, 2024**

We Share Solar Program Overview

Project Descriptions of STEM Grants Awarded in the Last Six Years

MINNDEPENDENT'S STEM Program: How to Write a Winning STEM Grant Proposal & Intro to Community Partnerships

In this session, new and experienced grant writers will gain tips for writing stronger MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant applications and learn about what our STEM Advisory Committee looks for when they review grant proposals and make funding recommendations.



Beth Murphy, Ph.D.
STEM Program Manager

**RECORDED
WEBINAR**

For questions or more information

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612-720-2857

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What's New in Employment Law in MN Earned Safe and Sick Time (ESST)

Professional Development Webinar
Thursday, December 14, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

MINNDEPENDENT is pleased to host a webinar that will focus on the implementation of the Earned Safe and Sick Time (ESST) program and what it means for schools and employers. Questions can be submitted on the registration form, and we will leave time for questions from attendees



**Phyllis Karasov, Shareholder, MSBA Certified
Employment Specialist, Larkin Hoffman**

Phyllis Karasov advises businesses on labor and employment matters. Her clients come from a variety of sectors, including construction, manufacturing, higher education, K-12 private education, nonprofit and healthcare. She provides counsel in all areas of human resources, including hiring, handbooks, regulatory compliance, discrimination, sexual harassment, discipline and termination, Americans with Disabilities Act, OSHA rules and the Family and Medical Leave Act. As a former National Labor Relations Board attorney, Phyllis is often called upon to represent clients in labor union matters including arbitrations, collective bargaining agreements and

union contracts. In higher education, Phyllis is an experienced and trained investigator of Title IX complaints.

- **MINNDEPENDENT Members attend FREE of charge**
- **Nonmembers: \$100 (check with your LEA about using Title Funds for fees)**

REGISTER TODAY

STEM Scoop



Freebies for Science and STEM Teachers: Grades K–12

[Bee Cause Education Resources](#)

Explore lesson plans, teacher guides, grant resources, and more to engage K–12 audiences in learning about pollinators and their importance. Take elementary and middle level students on a trip inside a hive with the Bee Cause Project Digital Hive and Educator Guide. High school students can engage with the topic as they explore bee anatomy and scientific illustration with activities from the Bee Cause Insect Unit Plan. The project website also includes information for teachers interested in starting a bee program at their school.

Freebies for Science and STEM Teachers: Elementary and Middle Level

[Forward to the Moon With Artemis](#)

Engage K–8 students in a study of space science using *Forward to the Moon With Artemis*, a 48-page printable activity booklet highlighting NASA missions and spacecraft from the past and future. Through a series of mazes, word searches, sudoku puzzles with pictures, and other activities, students will learn about the Apollo mission that first put people on the Moon, as well as the Artemis mission, which will land the first American woman and the next American man on the Moon. The booklet also showcases NASA's Space Launch System rocket and the Orion spacecraft, which will take humans to the Moon and to Mars.

Freebies for Science and STEM Teachers: Middle Level and High School

[World Wildlife Fund's The Living Planet Report 2022, Youth Edition](#)

WWF's *Living Planet Report 2022* is a comprehensive study of trends in global biodiversity and the health of the planet. WWF has created a youth edition of the report that uses infographics and visuals to highlight the state of our planet and explain the causes of decline, what this means for us, and what we can all do to help reverse nature loss. You can use the report and accompanying classroom presentation with your students. WWF also offers the following classroom activities you can use with the report.

- *Science*. Sharks—Overfished and Under Pressure: Sustainable Solutions. Teach students about sustainability while evaluating solutions to determine what methods will stop the overfishing of sharks while protecting the health of humans and ocean ecosystems.
- *Math*. Proportional Perspectives: Recognizing Significant Values and Measurements. Use these activities to teach students how to interpret graphs, percentages, and ratios to understand biodiversity data in the report.
- *Language Arts*. Tips and Tricks to Understanding Science Text. Use these techniques to improve students' comprehension and interpretation of scientific texts and visuals.
- *Language Arts*. Short answer assessment questions you can use with

the *Living Planet Report Youth Edition 2022* to help shape supplementary discussions and activities.

Opportunities for Grades K–12

[EARTHDAY.ORG's Your Art, Our Earth Poster Competition](#)

Students in two categories—ages 5–17 and 18+—are invited to create posters for this year's theme, "Planet vs. Plastics." Students will design an iconic poster that expresses why we need to say no to plastics. The competition has three categories:

- Human Health and Plastics
- Oceans and Plastics
- Fast Fashion and Plastics

A panel of judges, consisting of EARTHDAY.ORG Board members, will choose two posters to champion the cause of Planet vs. Plastics. Six finalists may have their artwork posted on the EARTHDAY.ORG website and social media accounts. (Deadline **January 22, 2024**)

Upcoming Code Savvy Events



December 21st - 4:00pm - Rochester, MN - CREATE with AI - Introduction to AI and creative coding for students of all ages (8+) - families are encouraged to attend together! - www.bit.ly/RochesterAI



January 6th - 1:30pm - Virtual and Minneapolis College, DT Minneapolis - Code Explorers - Pixel Art Workshop - Hands-on session with industry mentors - learn how to create your own art using pixels and RGB color coding. (students of all ages 8+) - families are encouraged to attend together! - www.codesavvy.org/code-explorers

Inclusive Computer Science Education
programs to provide equitable access to computational and design thinking for students and educators across Minnesota.

ALDI Cares Community Grants

Nonprofits and schools where ALDI stores are located can apply for these grants to support children through education, arts, athletics, or addressing food insecurity locally. Grant requests can range from \$250 to \$5,000. Applications are due by **December 15**.

[Learn more here.](#)

Opportunity for Elementary and Middle School Students

[World Wildlife Fund Conservation in the Classroom Livestream Event—Seaweed: Growing Underwater Forests to “Kelp” Our Planet](#)

Thousands of species of plant-like seaweed grow in the world's oceans. One type of seaweed, kelp, is excellent at creating habitat, cleaning our coasts, and serving as a healthy food. It's also one of the fastest-growing organisms on Earth. Bailey Moritz, WWF seaweed expert, will discuss the biology of seaweed and the solutions kelp farms can bring to the ocean. The livestream event for grades 4–8 will take place on November 29 at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

A supplemental material pack to be released soon will contain pre- and post-

materials such as warm-up questions, assessment questions, and links to relevant teaching materials (within Wild Classroom, Kahoot, WWF pages, etc.) The topic could be a great tie-in with lessons about climate change, sustainability, or ecosystems.



TWIST Program - Teachers Working in Science and Technology

Spend 6 weeks working with a 3M research and development team and return to the school year with real-world experience to share with your students!

Program dates: June 17-July 26, 2024

- **Minnesota applications due: January 15, 2024**
- Applications accepted from Science, Math, and Technology teachers for grades K-12 with preference given to middle and high school teachers.
- **Receive stipend of \$6000**
- [Direct link to the Teacher Application](#)

Any Questions? Reach out to TWIST@mmm.com

FREE ESTEP (Earth Science Teachers Education Project) Spring and Summer 2024 Online Courses are filling up FAST!

6th grade Teachers! Dive in and improve your content and pedagogy knowledge in these key earth and space science areas! Our courses are designed for TEACHERS and will be invaluable as you develop your course, and begin working on transitioning to a student sense-making approach!

High School Teachers! GET READY! New legislation states that all students must complete one credit of Earth and Space Science in high school to graduate. These courses will help deepen your understanding of the key content areas and 3-dimensional pedagogy. Along with our summer boot camps, these courses will help those of you working toward passing the required content MTLE exam to add additional licensure in 9-12 Earth and Space Science.

Spring 2024 Offerings (Courses run January 8 - May 8, 2024)

GEOS 599: MN Rocks/Natural Resources for ESTEP Teachers

GEOS 599: Earth Science Essentials I

GEOS 599: Teaching and Learning Earth Science in 3D for ESTEP Teachers

Summer 2024 Course Offerings (Courses run May 15 - July 10, 2024)

GEOS 599: Earth Systems Science for ESTEP Teachers

These courses are offered through the Continuing Studies Department at Minnesota State University Moorhead. Each 3-credit graduate-level course is facilitated by expert instructors who are leaders in their fields and based in Minnesota at NO COST to you!

*Please note that these are 3 credit, graduate-level courses, and while mostly asynchronous, each requires approximately 4-6 hours of work per week, including a required final Pedagogy assignment in all content courses.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Register Today for Virtual ESI!

Catapult Learning invites you to join us for [Virtual ESI for Building Leaders](#), our three-day virtual workshop series designed specifically for building-level administrators. Led by Michelle Doyle, a leader in educational consulting and equitable services, these three sessions will cover the essentials of understanding equitable services through federal education programs for students attending private schools.

Topics to be covered include ESEA and IDEA funding and how to best access services using non-public schools' equitable share of funding. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Workshop #1: Title IIA and ESSA Consultation

January 16, 2024
2:00 - 3:30 pm ET

Learn the new requirements for Title IIA professional development program design, followed by an overview of the process for timely and meaningful consultation that applies to Title I, Title IIA, Title III for English Learners, and Title IVA for student support and academic enrichment. [REGISTER FOR WORKSHOP #1](#)

Workshop #2: Title I

January 17, 2024
2:00 - 3:30 pm ET

The primary topic for this session is Title I with a specific focus on low-income count to generate equitable share of funding, an overview on how to determine student needs, and services that can be provided through the Title I funding. [REGISTER FOR WORKSHOP #2](#)

Workshop #3: IDEA

January 18, 2024
2:00 - 3:30 pm ET

IDEA provides special education and related services for qualified students. This session will cover the child find process and the provision of services. [REGISTER FOR WORKSHOP #3](#)

ESEA Nonpublic Equitable Services



Training on Nonpublic Equitable Services in ESEA Title Programs

This training for nonpublic school leaders participating in ESEA Title programs is being presented by members of the MDE Student Access and Opportunity Division. There is no need to register for this session.

Date: Tuesday, December 19
Time: 3:00 - 4:00 PM

Member School News

St. Joseph Catholic School (Waconia) Earns NCSE Certification



[St. Joseph Catholic STEM School in Waconia](#) is the most recent school in to earn the National Certificate for STEM Excellence (NCSE) - Campus Certification from the National Institute for STEM Education (NISE). The NCSE recognizes individual school campuses for their commitment to and systematic support of teachers' understanding and use of high-impact, evidence-based STEM instructional strategies.

Headquartered in Houston, Texas, NISE was conceived by seasoned, practicing educators and is based on thousands of hours of research, professional development, curriculum design, and educational leadership. Using an online platform and supported by a dedicated NISE STEM leadership coach, educators and instructional leaders work together to refine school operations and instruction to further strengthen STEM practices and the campus' overall STEM culture.

As part of earning the NCSE - Campus Certification, five educators also earned the National Certificate for STEM Teaching (NCST), further contributing to the school's collective STEM expertise. Congratulations to Bruce Richards, principal, and the staff at St. Joseph's on this accomplishment!

Share your school's news and accomplishments

Let's celebrate and amplify the spirit of excellence that defines private and independent schools in Minnesota. Whether it's a noteworthy student achievement, a remarkable teacher initiative, or a collective success that deserves recognition, we want to share it! Please send your submissions to office@mindependent.org

Important Dates to Remember

Thursday, December 14:

Professional Development Webinar: Earned Safe and Sick Time

Tuesday, January 16:

Due date (6pm) for STEM Grant Letters of Interest (LOIs)

Tuesday, January 30:

Professional Development Webinar: Understanding the Impact: Social Media Marketing for Private Schools (details coming soon)

Tuesday, February 13:

Due date (6pm) for STEM Grant Final Applications

Sunday, April 28:

2024 Minnesota Private & Independent Education Awards

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