



January 2024 Newsletter

Happy 2024! I hope you had an opportunity to recharge and refresh during the recent holiday season.

Last week, I attended a retirement gathering for a good friend and my first mentor. Mark Conzemius is retiring as president of the [Catholic Community Foundation for Eastern South Dakota](#), and leaving an amazing legacy after nearly thirty years.

In 1996, Mark was crazy enough to hire a 26 year-old (ME!) from Minnesota with ZERO experience in development/fundraising to guide the diocesan-wide fundraising appeal. The most impactful (and lasting) piece I learned from Mark was everything we did was about building relationships. That may seem simple, but too many times relationships can be transactional – especially when it comes to meeting goals and budgets. I will never forget that basic, yet profound, pearl of wisdom.

The heart of our work at MINNDEPENDENT is about relationships – we strive for strong and time-tested relationships with members, donors, funders, collaborative partners, sponsors and volunteers. I hope this comes through in our interactions and communications with each of our partners and friends.

Nominations are being accepted for the [2024 Private and Independent Education Awards](#). Take this opportunity to nominate a rockstar volunteer, educator, leader or donor from your school community today. Want to learn about the 2023 recipients? Visit our [2023 Education Awards](#) showcase page.

Thank you for your commitment to private and independent education in Minnesota.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Benz".

Tim Benz, President

MINNDEPENDENT has negotiated a discounted rate for member schools interested in participating in the [#SocialSchool4E DU Membership Program](#).

[READ MORE](#)

MINNDEPENDENT Jobs Board

Member schools can post job listings for free.

[READ MORE](#)

Share your school's news!

Whether it's a noteworthy student achievement, a remarkable teacher initiative, or a collective success that deserves recognition, we want to share it! Drop us line below.

[EMAIL US](#)

thrivent

North Heights Christian Academy

Thrivent Action Teams to support beautification project

How would \$250 in seed money support your school?



North Heights Christian Academy used several Thrivent Action Teams in 2023 for their school beautification project.

Thrivent members receive \$250 of seed money for projects called Thrivent Action Teams twice a year to be used as:

- Service Activities
- Fundraisers
- Educational Events

Each ACTION TEAM KIT includes:

- A \$250 Community Impact Card. Think of it as seed money to jumpstart your project.
- Up to 25 T-shirts, and more.

Learn more [Thrivent Action Teams](#)



Sue Furry
Assistant Manager of Engagement
Sue.furry@thrivent.com



Bruce Plautz
Senior Engagement Leader

2024/2025 STEM Grant Program Letters of Interest Deadline is 6pm on Tuesday, January 16

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

Beth Murphy, Ph.D.
STEM Program Manager
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Lisa Vosbeek
Director of Development & Programs
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[Read more here](#)

Understanding the Impact: Social Media Marketing for Private Schools

Professional Development Webinar
Tuesday, January 30 ~ 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Get ready for an exciting hour where we'll unlock the secrets of using social media to bring your private school's spirit to life online! This webinar isn't just informative – it's a fun, emoji-filled ride through the world of digital storytelling. Discover how to jazz up your school's brand, supercharge enrollment numbers, and create a buzz in your community. Learn to showcase your school's unique charm, engage with future families in a way that has them eager to join the fun, and build an online community that's as vibrant and welcoming as your school campus. Grab your digital pompoms and let's make your school's social media presence sparkle!



Andrea Gribble
Founder #SocialSchool4EDU, National speaker, blogger, author, and podcaster

Andrea Gribble is an author, podcast host, and founder of #SocialSchool4EDU. Her mission is to help schools celebrate their students and staff, and connect to their communities through social media. She is the author of "Social Media for Schools: Proven Storytelling Strategies & Ideas for Celebrating Your Students & Staff – While Keeping Your Sanity" and hosts a weekly podcast, "Mastering Social Media for Schools."

Aubrey Bursch
Founder & CEO, Easy School Marketing

Aubrey Bursch is passionate about supporting small and independent schools to increase enrollment, retention, and revenue. As the daughter of lifelong educators and the mom of two independent school students, she combines her love for schools with her 20+ years of marketing and development experience to help schools identify and implement high ROI initiatives.

Aubrey co-hosts the [Mindful School Marketing podcast](#), leads free [Small School Leaders](#) monthly meet-ups, facilitates the [Small School Solutions](#) professional development program, hosts the [Small School Leaders Virtual Conference](#), and speaks nationwide.



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

REGISTER TODAY

STEM Scoop

SAVE THE DATE!

2024 STEM EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Wednesday, August 7 (8:30am - 3:30pm)

HOST MEMBER SCHOOL



**HERITAGE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
15655 BASS LAKE ROAD, MAPLE GROVE, MN 55311**

We encourage member school educators to consider submitting a proposal to present at the STEM conference. The request for proposal form will be sent out in the Feb. newsletter with a submittal deadline at the end of March.

Questions: Lisa Vosbeek, lvosbeek@minndependent.org

Minnesota STEM Teacher Center Website Update

Work has been completed to update information and expand professional development support materials for instruction coaches, curriculum leaders, and classroom teachers around math instruction.

[LEARN MORE AT THE STEM TEACHER CENTER](#)



Registration Open: Engineering Machine Design Contest

The EMDC is an opportunity for teams of 5th-12th grade 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.

[LEARN MORE](#)



K-12 RESOURCES

CURRICULUM & ACTIVITIES

Free or low-cost experiential-based programs and curricula explicitly designed with the needs of Minnesota K-16 educators and future workforce demands in focus.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities to bridge the gap between K-12 and college/university educational offerings, industry trends, and workforce needs.

ENGINEERING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiences that provide students with hands-on activities to gain a deeper understanding of complex concepts and develop crucial 21st-century skills.

[LEARN MORE](#)

MINNESOTA WORKS

EXPLORING TECH AND TRADES

What is Minnesota Works?

A day to explore high skill and high paying jobs critical to Minnesota's economic future. This event will feature snapshots of eight career sectors with faculty, leaders, and students.

When is Minnesota Works? When can I register?

Friday February 16, 2024 from 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. A registration link will be available in early December.

Where is Minnesota Works?

Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount, MN

Who should come to Minnesota Works?

- Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors
- Perkins Coordinators
- Ag, CTE, and STEM Teachers
- Parents
- Guidance Counselors
- Community Members

Why should you attend or bring your students to Minnesota Works?

Get informed and excited about the career and technical education Minnesota State, the Centers of Excellence and Dakota County Technical College has to offer.



MINNESOTA STATE
Centers of Excellence

[LEARN MORE AND RSVP](#)

Vocation and Burnout

Professional Development Webinar Wednesday, February 21 ~ 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

We begin by looking at what the word vocation means and how to grow in our vocation as non-public school educators. We will also discuss practical ways to grow in our vocation while avoiding burnout. As educators, we tend to be mission-driven, and it can be easy to give and give and give to the point of depletion. This presentation offers practical recommendations for growing in vocation (three tips offered) while avoiding burnout (five tips are offered here). This presentation lasts approximately 75 minutes with time for questions after.



Dr. Pamela Patnode
Director for Catholic School Leadership Graduate Programs, St. Paul Seminary at the University of St. Thomas.

Dr. Pamela Patnode serves as Director for the Catholic School Leadership graduate program at the Saint Paul Seminary at the University of St. Thomas. Patnode has worked in a variety of educational settings including Catholic schools, private schools, universities, and even homeschooling settings for close to 20 years. She is trained in multiple areas to support students with diverse learning needs, she has authored five books, and she serves as a consultant to the Subcommittee on the Catechism for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

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

REGISTER HERE



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](#)

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Nonpublic Schools: Have You Completed Your Second Direct Certification?

Nonpublic schools participating in the SNP are required to upload student enrollment data into The Cyber-Linked Interactive Child Nutrition System (CLiCS) at least three times per year to determine if any students can be directly certified. New direct certification information is available in CLiCS around the middle of each month. Nonpublic schools with a September – June academic calendar should plan to directly certify students at the beginning of the school year, in late November and in late February.

If you have not completed direct certification at least two times this school year, complete it now and add the remaining required dates to your calendar. Refer to the following resources on the [MDE Nutrition Program Services \(NPS\) webpage](#):

- [Direct Certification Overview Video](#)
- [Direct Certification Handbook](#)
- [How to Obtain Certification Data for a Nonpublic or New School](#)
- [School Enrollment File Upload](#)

Link at MDE:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/>

Member School News



St. Alphonsus Catholic School



St. Alphonsus Catholic School MN

January 4 at 10:27 AM · 🌐



Exciting day in fifth grade! We dissected earthworms! 🐛

Thank you [Minndependent](#) for giving our kids this opportunity!! 😊



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@minndependent.org

Important Dates to Remember

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

Tuesday, February 13:

Due date (6pm) for STEM Grant Final Applications

Wednesday, February 21:

Professional Development Webinar: Vocation and Burnout

Sunday, April 28:

2024 Minnesota Private & Independent Education Awards

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