



MINNDEPENDENT

A Trusted Partner For Private & Independent Schools

**MINNDEPENDENT 101
2025**



MINNDEPENDENT

WHAT

We connect and strengthen Minnesota's private and independent schools through programming, partnerships and public policy so members can be student-centered and mission-driven.

WHY

A vibrant educational ecosystem that promotes success for all Minnesota students.

HOW

We create meaningful professional development opportunities and resources for educators, educational leaders and school communities to build exceptional schools and deliver high-quality education for all students.

We foster authentic relationships with funders, businesses and community organizations on behalf of member schools, resulting in grants, in-kind services and professional resources.

We advocate with a focused and united voice for the interests of private and independent schools, ensuring that local and state policy makers will understand and support policies and practices that strengthen Minnesota's private and independent schools.

Alphabet soup

ACSI – [Association of Christian Schools International](#)

CAPE – [Council for American Private Education](#)

CSCOE – [Catholic Schools Center of Excellence](#)

CSI – [Christian Schools International](#)

ELS – [Evangelical Lutheran Synod](#)

ISACS – [Independent Schools Association of the Central States](#)

LCMS – [Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod, MN South District; MN North District](#)

MACS – [Minnesota Association of Christian Schools](#)

MAIS – [MN Association of Independent Schools](#)

MCC – [Minnesota Catholic Conference](#)

MDE – [Minnesota Department of Education](#)

MNSAA – [Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association](#)

MPCC – [Minnesota Private College Council](#)

NCEA – [National Catholic Education Association](#)

OAK – [Opportunity for All Kids](#)

SCOPE – [Statewide Census of Private Education](#)

SDA – [MN Conference of Seventh Day Adventists](#)

WELS – [Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod](#)

Organizational structure

Staff

- **Tim Benz, President**
- **Michele Skare, Administrative Assistant**
- **Lisa Vosbeek, Director of Development and Programs**

Contractors/consultants

- **Beth Murphy - STEM program manager**
- **Chas Anderson - Lobbyist, Park Street Public**
- **All In One Accounting - Accounting firm**
- **Science from Scientists (SfS)**
- **We Share Solar (WSS)**

Membership

- **School – 501(c)3 status**

- Full member - accredited
- Affiliate member – unaccredited
- Annual dues
 - \$5.25/student (enrollment 56 or more students)
 - \$290 (enrollment of 55 or less)

- **Associate**

- Individuals affiliated with private and/or independent (nonpublic) school associations.
- \$290 annual dues

- **Retention and engagement**

- **Surveys and ratings**

How we help members

- **Connect and convene**
- **Aids to Nonpublic Students**
 - Textbooks, health services, counseling
- **Transportation/busing**
- **“Equal treatment”**
- **Universal school meals**
- **Shared Time**
- **Title programs ([ESEA/ESSA](#))**
 - Title I – Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged
 - Title II – Preparing, training and recruiting high-quality teachers, principals or other school leaders
 - Title III – Language instruction for English learners and immigrant students
 - Title IV – 21st century schools
 - Equitable services
- **IDEA aka Special Education Services**

MINNDEPENDENT School Leader Engagement Journey

Leadership

"I'll take a leadership role in making the mission happen"

Ownership

"I'll take responsibility to get work done, You can count on me"

Committed

"I'm committed to MINNDEPENDENT every year"

Member

"I'll join MINNDEPENDENT this year"

Attention

"I care enough about your work to let you communicate directly with me"

Awareness

"I am aware that you exist and know what your cause is"

Development

- **Honor Fund aka annual fund**

- Unrestricted funds from individual donors, i.e. board members, donor advised funds, organizations, businesses

- **Grants**

- Grants from foundations and organizations
 - Xcel, 3M, Schulze, Schott, Athwin, etc.

- **Helen Harrington Trust**

- Perpetual trust to benefit the organization

- **Sponsorship**

- Event based fundraising from corporations, organizations and individuals
- STEM Conference, School Leadership Conference, Education Awards, seminars, webinars, newsletters

Advocacy

We advocate with a focused and united voice for the interests of private and independent schools

Advocate for...

- Inclusion/participation of private/independent school students and staff

Protect...

- Programs and services that support private/independent school students and staff

Defend against...

- Legislation that overreaches or infringes on unique missions

The Pie Chart

Membership dues - \$220,610 (32.1%)

Grants - \$205,000 (29.8%)

- Unrestricted - \$80,000
- Restricted - \$125,000

Sponsorship - \$87,000 (12.6%)

- Education Awards - \$35,000
- School Leadership Conference - \$40,000
- STEM Conference - \$4000
- Misc. - \$6000

Honor Fund - \$80,000 (11.6%)

- 40-45 donors – 50% + from 3 donors

Helen Harrington Trust - \$42,750 (6.2%)

Program Revenue - \$38,350 (5.5%)

- Registration fees

Other - \$12,250 (1.7 %)

- interest

Challenges and solutions

- We have no “built in” constituencies
- Top heavy funding structure – historical context
- “Hybrid” board structure
- Fish off someone’s dock vs. fishing next to them
- How did you come to MINNDEPENDENT/MISF?
- What tools are needed to support you?