



# MINNDEPENDENT

## September 2025 Newsletter

Dear friends of private and independent education,

### **A warm welcome back to 2025-26 school year.**

We remain steadfast in our support for the Annunciation Church and School community as they walk along their healing journey. The events of August 27 have shaken everyone, and brought a renewed call to ensure safety and security for all students. MINNDEPENDENT has received numerous inquiries to comment on a potential special session or proposed legislation. Below is our official statement:

*"No child should fear for his or her safety at school. The heartbreaking shooting at Annunciation is a stark reminder that safety and security resources are needed for all Minnesota schools, public and non-public alike. For several years, non-public schools have advocated for and requested state funding to improve security. We are actively engaging legislators and are hopeful the upcoming special session delivers funding to make every Minnesota school safer for our students, educators and staff."*

We will update you on any progress or ways to engage your school communities.

When chatting with a handful of school leaders recently, it was brought up that if the proposal to eliminate all nonpublic pupil aids and transportation services had passed there would have been no busses, nurses or counselors to begin the school year for nonpublic schools. Fortunately, everything remains in place and serves as a firm reminder how vital a strong and unified voice at the legislature is needed.

Registration for the [2025 School Leadership Conference](#) closes on Monday, September 15. Looking to expand your professional network while recharging your "back to school battery?" Need new strategies on hiring and retaining staff? All twisted up trying to figure out AI? This conference hits all the notes! [Register today](#) and join colleagues from private and independent schools across Minnesota.

### **ASK THE PRESIDENT**

Have a question about issues like school transportation, Title funds, current legislation, etc.? Want Tim's take on the Vikings season? Ask the President! Click the button below.

[Ask Tim](#)

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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](#)

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**Hats & Mittens** is a nonprofit committed to

[Opportunity for All Kids \(OAK\)](#) and Center of the American Experiment are hosting the "[7K for Kids Fun Run](#)" on Saturday, September 20 in Minnetonka. This family friendly event includes a raffle drawing for a \$7,000 scholarship toward the K-12 private school of your choice. It will also promote the ongoing [\\$7k for Kids campaign](#) for a Minnesota Education Savings Account (ESA). To register, volunteer and learn more [click here](#).

An updated **Directory of Programs and Policies Affecting Nonpublic Schools** is available in the member area of our website. This valuable resource is compiled annually by Dr. Barry Sullivan and is a "go to" summary of all things related to the interaction of certain programs and resources and nonpublic schools. Misplaced your login information? Contact [Michele Skare](#) and she will get you all set up.

Thank you for your support of private and independent education.



Tim Benz President

providing hats and mittens for local children in need. Learn more and get involved!

[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](#)

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## ***Back to School: Where did my money go this summer?***

**Did you know...**

- **70% of Americans have less than \$1000 saved.**
- **The avg. American overspends by almost \$7,500 per year.**
- **59% Don't have a budget.**
- **Studies say that people spend 80% more when using credit cards!**

**Increase personal financial clarity for you, your staff, and parents with Thrivent's FREE (really and no sales pressure) money coaching service called **Money Canvas**.**

### **Benefits of **Money Canvas** by Thrivent?**

- **See where your money goes each month**
- **Improve your spending habits**
- **Free up money to put toward your priority (saving, paying off debt, starting to invest)**
- **Feel more in control of your money!**

**[Introduction to Money Canvas \(3 min.\)](#)**

**Register for your first Money Canvas session below and include **Mindependent** as how you learned about Money Canvas in your registration.**

**[Learn more and register for Money Canvas](#)**



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## 2025 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**Monday, Sept. 22 - Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2025**  
**Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort**  
**Deerwood, MN**

We look forward to seeing you at the [2025 School Leadership Conference](#).

This premier event brings together leaders from private and independent schools across Minnesota for two days of learning, networking, and inspiration.

Whether you are:

- A **new school leader** eager to expand your network,
  - A **seasoned veteran** looking for fresh ideas, or
  - Simply ready to **recharge after the first month of school**
- ...this conference is designed for you.
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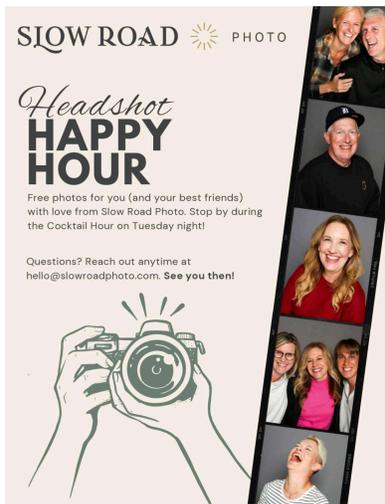
## FEATURED SESSION

### AI-Ready Schools Start with AI-Ready Leaders

Behind every AI-ready classroom is an AI-ready leader! This session will help school and district leaders navigate the opportunities and complexities of AI. You'll examine the current state of AI in education and collaborate to plan for training, policy, and responsible use. Leave with practical next steps to lead AI integration with confidence.



**Presented by Marcee Harris, VP of Academics, and Sarah Murphy, Evaluation & Professional Learning Specialist, Teaching Channel**



## Special Offer for Leadership Conference Attendees!

Free headshot photos for you (and your best friends) by Slow Road Photo!

Photos will be taken during the Tuesday evening Sponsor Reception from 5:30 - 6:30 PM

### COST

**Member Schools One night: \$350 Two Nights: \$460**

**Conference Day Only: \$125**

**Special pricing for first-time attendees: 1 OR 2 Nights: \$350** (two nights for the price of one!)

**Hurry! Registration ends on September 15th**

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## 2025 SPONSORS

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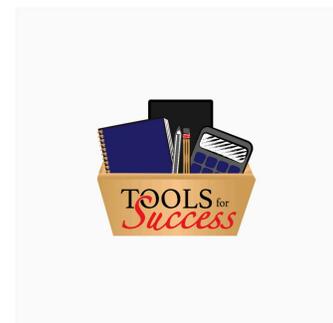
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# 4 STRATEGIES FOR A SMARTER COLLEGE SEARCH

**FREE WEBINAR for School Leaders, Guidance Counselors, and Parents**

*Please share with your school community*

The college search continues to become more complex, making it harder for families to identify right fit schools. Challenges include:

- Admission trends have changed around how colleges admit students
- Testing - some require it now and some don't - what path makes sense?
- The number of schools on the "more selective" list continues to grow and not just in the elite category
- Substantial changes to the FAFSA and financial aid may make college more expensive

Join us to learn how these changes may impact families, and new strategies to consider that give students the best opportunity to be admitted and maximize scholarships and financial aid.

**This is incredibly important info you will not want to miss. Register today!**



**Cozy Wittman - Education and Partnerships** - Cozy Wittman leads the education and partnerships for College Inside Track, an organization that helps families navigate the college process and ensure they get the best price at the schools they are considering. She is considered a national subject-matter expert on late-stage college planning and educates parents, school counselors and financial professionals around the country on strategies they can use. In addition to being a featured speaker at conferences and high schools, Cozy is a mom of 5 kids with very different goals for college, so she is no stranger to the college search

**Here are the details:**

**WHEN:** Tuesday, October 14, 6:00 PM

**WHERE:** Zoom Webinar

**REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!** [Use this link to register](#) in ADVANCE

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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## STEM SCOOP

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## Freebies for Science and STEM Teachers: Elementary and Middle Level *Bring Dinosaurs into your Classroom - For Free!*

BBC Studios and PBS have launched a free Walking With Dinosaurs virtual field trip for grades 3–6. Students can explore six dinosaur dig sites with immersive video clips, complete a printable Paleontologist Field Journal, and test their knowledge with quizzes. Extras include a Which Dinosaur Are You? quiz, Minecraft Education activities, and a teacher guide aligned to national science standards. These resources can save prep time while making science and STEM concepts come alive. Teachers can access the materials at the [BBC Learning Hub](#).



### Free Coding Curriculum for the MINNDEPENDENT Community with Girls Who Code!

Start a free [Girls Who Code Club](#) for your 3rd–12th grade students and get 100% free computer science resources with guided curriculums that include step-by-step instructions, training, and the facilitation resources you need to run your Club. Clubs meet just 1-2 hours per week and can run after school, during lunch, integrated into an existing CS course, or even online—whatever works for your schedule. Plus, eligible Clubs get free T-shirts, swag, and access to exclusive virtual events with industry professionals.

As a special bonus, [Club applications submitted](#) by September 16th, 2025 will be entered to win a **\$150 Target or Walmart gift card to kickstart your Club!** [See official rules.\\*](#)

**Ready to get started?** Complete the Clubs Application at [girlswhocode.com/clubsapply](https://girlswhocode.com/clubsapply) and affiliate to our MINNDEPENDENT Community Partnership on the application to qualify for added benefits and swag!

\*See [official rules](#) or the *Back-to-School Giveaway*. By submitting a GWC Clubs 2025-2026 Application during the Entry Period, you agree to the [Giveaway Terms](#).

## MINNESOTA STEM COMMUNITY RESOURCES

**Future Forward:**

An online tool created to connect Minnesota students and classrooms with local employers to positively impact future workforce and post-secondary decisions  
[LEARN MORE](#)

### **High Tech Kids**

HTK partners with *FIRST* to provide robotics programs to students in Minnesota. Their programs serve students in kindergarten through 12th-grade. Team-based robotic competitions build confidence, create transformative opportunities and prepare students to thrive. Each program encourages skill refinement to prepare students for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs. [LEARN MORE](#)

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# BUILDING FOR YOU

We know you're driven by mission and purpose, and at Opus, so are we.

We empower your mission through the buildings we deliver. Our purpose is to create meaningful spaces where people and communities can achieve their goals and truly thrive. In that spirit, we're pleased to introduce our team of industry-leading real estate design and construction professionals, with experience in the educational and institutional sectors.

We'd love the opportunity to learn about your organization's goals, share more about what we do and how we do it, and discuss how we can deliver value for you.

We look forward to meeting you at the MinnIndependent 2025 School Leadership Conference.

## Let's Connect!



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## MINNDEPENDENT Preferred Partnership Spotlight



**Cognia**

*We know schools because we are in schools*

<https://www.cognia.org/>

**Melissa Kaczmarek**

**Director Midwest Region**

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### Preferred Partnership Program

This exclusive program recognizes the top 30% of our partners who have demonstrated a strong commitment to our mission and member schools. By partnering with Preferred Partners, schools can access a comprehensive ecosystem of trusted resources to provide the best possible products and services to their communities.





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## Important Dates to Remember

**Monday, September 22-Wednesday September 24, 2025**  
*School Leadership Conference Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort*

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