



August 2025 Newsletter

Dear friends of private and independent education,

It's hard to believe schools have started the 2025-26 school year. We wish a safe, meaningful and successful year to all!

Membership renewal invoices were sent on July 1. If you have not received your invoice, or misplaced it, [please let us know](#). Our goal is 100% member renewal.

The Trump Administration and USDE have released all Title Funds for the SY26 year. If you have not received communication from you local district, make sure to reach out and confirm your equitable share and funds available. If you need a helping hand with this, [please feel free to reach out to me](#).

Registration for [the 2025 School Leadership Conference](#) is open. Don't miss out on the premier (and most enjoyable) gathering of private and independent school leaders. The conference has the best topics, networking opportunities and connections to companies and organizations that strengthen your skills. This conference is perfectly summed up, "Thank you for the opportunity to step out of my own building for a few days to work on being a better leader. Having the opportunity to network, workshop, and problem solve with other leaders while also getting top-notch professional development is why I'll be coming back. Thank you for the opportunity to get better." We hope to see you in September.

Thank you for your support and investment in private and independent education.

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

Tim Benz President

ASK THE PRESIDENT

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

[Ask Tim](#)

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 nonprofit committed to 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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Kickstart the School Year with Financial Clarity: Empowering Educators for a Prosperous Future

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

Mon, Sept 22 - Wed Sept 24, 2025
Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort
Deerwood, MN

Registration for the 2025 [School Leadership Conference](#) is OPEN!

This conference is the premier gathering of private and independent school leaders across Minnesota. Whether you are a new school leader eager to expand your network or a seasoned veteran looking for fresh new ideas, this is the place for you. Looking to recharge after the first month of school? This conference is the place for you.

Visit the [School Leadership Conference](#) page to view session topics, presenter details, and the tentative agenda. **Early bird pricing is available through August 24, with special pricing for first-time attendees.** We look forward to seeing you in September.

FEATURED SESSION

Advocacy and the Road Ahead for Non-Public Schools

The 2025 legislative session had a dire outlook for essential services to nonpublic students and families. Fortunately, the outcome was successful, but the future remains uncertain. This session will summarize actions and learnings gained from this year's legislative efforts and highlight opportunities for school communities in the future.

What You'll Learn in This Workshop

- **How school leaders can engage in local advocacy**
 - **How to activate and motivate your school communities for action**
 - **Provide specific ways to build relationships with elected officials in your school community**
-



Presented by John Elizandro, Senior Principal and Jill Sims, Principal Park Street Public

Park Street Public collaborates with organizations to shift public sentiment, sway policymakers, strengthen reputations, and ignite communities to achieve their objectives.

COST REGISTER EARLY AND SAVE!

Member Schools (through August 24th)

1 Night: \$325 2 Nights: \$425

(Regular registration after August 24: \$350/\$460)

Conference Day Only: \$125 (includes meal, resort fees and materials)

Special pricing for first-time attendees 1 OR 2 Nights: \$350 (two

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

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School Nutrition Programs (SNP)

Direct Certification Requirements for Non-Public Schools

Non-public schools participating in the School Nutrition Programs 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 for free or reduced-price benefits. New direct certification information is available in CLiCS around the middle of each month. Non-public schools should plan to conduct direct certification before the first day of school and at about 3 months (December) and 6 months (March) into the school year. Add these dates to your calendar now so you don't forget to complete these important tasks!

The [Direct Certification Handbook – Non-Public Schools](#) is now available! This handbook provides detailed guidance on direct certification, including how to obtain direct certification data using CLiCS, specifically for non-public schools.

For more information, the following additional resources are available on the [Direct Certification \(mn.gov\) webpage](#).

STEM SCOOP

[STEM Day at the Minnesota State Fair](#)

... is Minnesota's biggest celebration of all things science, engineering, technology, and mathematics at the Fair. SciMathMN will bring STEM education providers and corporate leaders together in Dan Patch Park on the Fairgrounds in front of the Grandstand. This year's celebration is Thursday, August 21, and you are invited!



Date: Thursday, August 21, 2025

Location: Dan Patch Park, Minnesota State Fairgrounds

Experience AI | Raspberry Pi Foundation & Google DeepMind

[Experience AI is a free educational program](#) offering lesson plans, videos, and hands-on activities to teach students ages 11–14 about artificial intelligence and machine learning. The resources educators to build AI literacy and critical thinking, helping young people explore real-world applications and create their own AI projects.



Experience the importance of STEM through the sport of racing!

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! [LEARN MORE](#)



FREE EDUCATOR RESOURCES



Our Beautiful Planet is 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 climate change phenomena and design solutions to problems. [LEARN MORE](#)

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When embarking on a construction project, trust is not a luxury, it's essential. Whether you're working with a design builder or construction manager, the success of your project depends on a team that understands your goals, communicates clearly and delivers with precision. At Opus, our unique strength lies in seamlessly integrating both construction and design teams to build trust and accelerate project success by saving you time, money and stress.

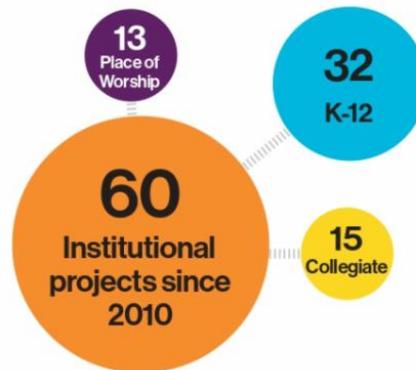
It's no coincidence that a significant portion of our work comes from repeat clients. We build these relationships over time, project by project, ensuring they're grounded in mutual respect and shared success.

WHY CLIENTS TRUST US →

Let's talk about how we can partner together on your next project and beyond.



Scott Shifflett
952.656.4471
scott.shifflett@opus-group.com



One of the most impressive things about the Opus team, besides their obvious skill and expertise, was their flexibility and their ability to work with the team here at Marquette on the details. Not only could they design and build a phenomenal building, but they were also very interested and deeply concerned about our needs down to the lowest level.

Dr. Robert H. Bishop, Dean of Engineering
Marquette University

Continuous Improvement with Ted Neitzke

MNSAA PRESENTS



Continuous Improvement & Strategic Planning Process

with

Ted Neitzke

*Join us for a powerful in-person 4-part series designed to **ignite momentum, build shared purpose, and embed your strategic plan into the heart of your school culture.** Ted Neitzke will lead us in creating a shared language and introducing practical, mission-driven strategies that turn your strategic goals into meaningful, everyday actions within your school.*

Four dynamic, in-person sessions:

- September 11, 2025 - 8:00 - 2:00
 - November 7, 2025 - **7:30 - 3:00 and held in conjunction with the MNSAA Annual Conference**
 - December 11, 2025 - 8:00 - 2:00
 - February 27, 2026 - 8:00 - 2:00
-

Location:

St. Stephen's Catholic Church and School

Anoka, MN

Who Should Attend?

School leaders and leadership teams committed to shaping a vibrant future for their school.

What is Included?

- Each session will include a continental breakfast, lunch, and CEUs.
 - November 7 will be held in conjunction with the MNSAA Annual Conference and will include a continental breakfast, lunch, Expo with sponsors, and the Keynote Speaker, Matt Eicheldinger.
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Total Cost:

Member* Rate: \$600

Non-Member Rate: \$850

MNSAA **and MINNDEPENDENT members are eligible for for the Member Rate.*

- ✓ Schools may use **Title dollars**
 - ✓ **CEUs** will be available
 - ✓ Open to both **MNSAA members and non-members**
-
-

*Let's move from vision to action—**together.***



WHO IS TED NEITZKE?



2024 Annual MNSAA
Conference Keynote
Speaker

Lifetime Educator and CEO
of CESA6



Creator and Host of the
Smart Thinking Podcast

**CLICK HERE TO
REGISTER**

**MINNDEPENDENT
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Barb Williamson

General Manager

612-201-8245

bwilliamson@donaldsuniform.com

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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minndependent.org | info@minndependent.org

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