



Director's Update

Jim Zacchini, Executive Director



Dear Guild Community,

With heartfelt thanks to all who attended our 4th Annual Summer Convening, I begin this month's

update with deep appreciation. The turnout was incredible, and our board and staff are truly grateful for your presence and engagement.

As a reminder, I recently sent a follow-up email that included several key resources:

 Action Requested

Please complete the [linked survey here](#) to help the Guild improve.

School leaders: kindly forward this email and survey link to all attendees. Your feedback is invaluable as we plan for next year's convening.

 Resources Included

- [Charter Source PowerPoint Slide Deck](#)
- [Board Roles & Responsibilities Handout](#)
- [Open Meeting Law Resource](#)

Note: This document does not reflect 2025 legislative changes.

We encourage you to review these materials and especially the survey. Your insights will guide us in making next year's convening even more impactful.

 School Spotlight

This month, we're thrilled to welcome FIT Academy to the Guild community! Please take a moment to learn more about this inspiring new addition in the spotlight section below.

As summer winds down and the school year begins, we embrace this season of change—and with change comes growth. Wishing you a year filled with meaningful progress, connection, and success.

With gratitude,

Jim

 **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  Authorizer  Charter School

"An approved authorizer working in collaboration
with the Minnesota Department of Education"

**FY26 Summer Convening
Captured Moments & Highlights
"Charter School Boards: Leading with Purpose,
Driving Success"**



Thank You for Joining Us!

To everyone who attended our 4th Annual Summer Convening—thank you. Your energy, insights, and presence made this gathering truly special. We loved hosting you and hope the experience was as inspiring and enjoyable for you as it was for us. **Here's to continued collaboration and impact. See you next year!**







MN GUILD SCHOOL BOARD CORNER

To better support, you and your school board, we've introduced a new newsletter section focused on MDE and MN State statute requirements. Each month, we'll provide updates, resources, and guidance, including webinars and training opportunities, to help you stay informed and aligned with evolving regulations. This section will also cover contractual obligations, ensuring compliance with authorizer agreements and maintaining accountability.

Professional Development & Governance Training

MACS Charter School Board Training

Welcome to Minnesota Charter Board Training and Development!

Board members are responsible for understanding key statutes in three areas:

- Board roles and responsibilities
- Financial management
- Employment policies and practices

Reminder:

Per MN Statutes §124E.07, subd. 7:

- New board members must begin training within 6 months of being seated
- Training must be completed within 12 months
- Failure to comply results in automatic ineligibility to serve

 [Register for Training](#)

CHARTER SOURCE Board Orientation – September 18, 2025



Complimentary for current clients!

Join us for an interactive session covering the Minnesota charter school sector, governance roles, and public entity responsibilities.

Board Basics Series

Includes updates from the 2024 legislative session and fulfills state-mandated training requirements.

 [Register Here](#)



Educator Edition

BOSA-Approved CEU Credit Courses

Board members and school leaders can earn CEU credits through approved governance programming.

- View the full BOSA course schedule
- Access the 2025 Educational Leadership Consumer Guides
- Review CEU FAQs for guidance on credit tracking and eligibility

 [Visit the BOSA Website](#)



FIT ACADEMY
• CHARTER SCHOOL •



☀️ School Spotlight: FIT Academy

At FIT Academy, the mission is clear: prepare the whole student for life. Founded on the belief that academic excellence is rooted in physical and emotional well-being, FIT Academy integrates Fitness, Intellect, and Teamwork into every aspect of the student experience.

💬💪💡 What Makes FIT Academy Unique?

- Purposeful integration of mental, physical, and emotional development
- Daily physical education, brain breaks, and extended PE field trips
- Monthly character traits to build emotional intelligence
- Strong academic focus rooted in core knowledge and rigor
- Deep engagement with families and the broader community

FIT Academy opened in 2017 with 180 students and now serves over 400 students in grades K–12. As a charter school with its own independent board, FIT Academy is nearing enrollment capacity and seeking to expand its facilities to better serve high school students.

🏠 Why This Approach Matters

Research shows that students involved in regular exercise and sports:

- Perform better academically
- Are more confident and resilient
- Are less prone to depression and risky behaviors
- Are more likely to pursue higher education

Parent Voices

“They focus on opportunities. The teachers and staff communicate with me on everything, and we work together to find solutions.” — A.K., Parent

“We love FIT Academy! The smaller school size makes it easy for the staff to get to know you and your child. FIT Academy definitely lives up to their mission.” — Deb, Parent

 [Watch the FIT Academy Video](#)

Thank you, FIT Academy, for your commitment to whole-child development and for modeling what it means to live your mission every day.









*"Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true education."
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

MN Guild Partners & Resources
Leading the way to excellence



Educator Edition

Upcoming Opportunities

Minnesota READs: Unite for Literacy Partnership

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has partnered with Unite for Literacy to launch Minnesota READs, a free online library designed for multilingual learners, families, and educators.

- No account required, no ads
- Narrated in 60+ languages, including ASL
- Printed books available at low cost

 [Explore Minnesota READs](#)

MDE Boot Camp & Charter Resources

Stay up to date with MDE's latest training and resources:

- [Boot Camp Schedule & Registration](#)
- [Charter School Resource Hub](#)
- [Explore New Website](#)

ELA Leaders Network Meetings

Join the Minnesota ELA Leaders Network for bi-monthly virtual sessions supporting the 2020 ELA Standards and Reading MCA-IV transition.

Who: K–12 ELA leaders

Where: Zoom

Focus Areas, Dates, Time & Registration Links:

- [Sept. 11: ELA Standards & MCA-IV Overview](#)
- [Nov. 13: Reading Strand](#)
- [Jan. 22: Writing Strand](#)
- [Mar. 12: LSVEI Strand](#)

- [May 21: MCA-IV Reflection & Planning](#)
- [Sign up for the ELA Leaders Network](#)

New OHE Website Suite

The Office of Higher Education (OHE) has launched redesigned websites to better serve students and educators.

- Mobile-friendly, easy navigation
 - Updated URLs—please refresh your bookmarks
- Explore updated sites:
- [OHE Main Site](#)
 - [Get Ready Minnesota](#)
 - [Minnesota Goes to College](#)
 - [SELF Loan](#)



We're Back—Happy New School Year

The Weekly Brief is back after our summer pause, ready to bring you the latest news and developments impacting the charter school sector. We also want to wish a happy new school year to students, educators, and families across the country!



Charter Schools Program Update: Applications Double; Senate Supports Up to \$500M Investment

Last month, the U.S. Department of Education announced that applications to the Charter Schools Program have doubled compared to the last cycle, showing strong demand for high-quality public school options. Additionally, the Senate Appropriations Committee advanced a bill providing up to \$500 million for the program—along with key flexibilities to improve access to

high-quality public charter schools nationwide.

Educators stand ready to serve more families, and with strong, continued support from lawmakers, even more students can thrive. [Read more.](#)



US National Charter School Spotlight

With nearly 4 million students enrolled in public charter schools nationwide, demand is at an all-time high. A recent Forbes article by Jeanne Allen and Katie Nelligan of the Center for Education Reform explores why families are increasingly choosing charters—and how policy is helping meet that demand.

Charters as Engines of Innovation

Charter schools are described as “engines of talent development, economic mobility, and innovation,” especially in communities where skilled workers are needed most. From aerospace to healthcare, charters are preparing students for the jobs our economy demands.

Policy Momentum

Federal and state leaders are stepping up to support charter growth:

- Equitable Access to School Facilities Act: Would improve access to facilities funding—charters’ biggest barrier to expansion
- Senate Hearings: Charter leaders shared how public schools are driving student and community success
- State Highlights:
 - Indiana: Districts must share property tax revenue with charters
 - North Dakota: Became the 47th state to authorize charters
 - Georgia: Incentivizing districts to approve high-quality charters to reduce waitlists

Advocacy in Action

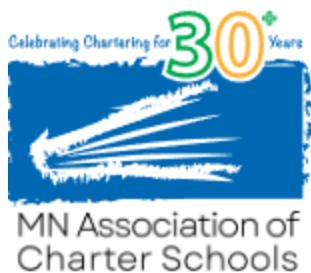
Starlee Coleman, CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, emphasized:

“We thank the Senate for its leadership in protecting funding for the Charter Schools Program (CSP).”

Charter schools are free, public, and open to all students. With greater flexibility comes greater accountability—and research shows charters help students succeed in school, college, and

career.

 [Learn more from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools](#)



State Legislative Updates: Charter-Specific Provisions

New legislation is reshaping charter school governance, transparency, and operations. Here are key highlights to keep your board informed and compliant:

Authorizer Requirements

Authorizers must now:

- Include MAPES reviews in annual reports
- Attend MDE-approved trainings annually
- Post key accountability and financial data on their websites
- Livestream non-renewal and termination hearings

Charter Transparency & Accountability

Charter schools must:

- Link accountability info on their websites and share it with families upon request
- Include all proposed grades/sites in supply and demand studies

Charter Board Changes

Boards must now:

- Include a Finance Committee
- Host monthly meetings with authorizers if under financial corrective action
- Ensure board members take an oath of office
- Comply with new conflict of interest rules for Affiliated Building Company boards
- Follow a ban on dual board membership and accepting gifts

Procurement Process Updates

- For contracts between \$25K–\$175K: use sealed bids or direct negotiations
- For contracts over \$175K: sealed bids are required
(MACS will release a New Law Primer if passed)

Other Key Education Policy Provisions

Attendance Policy Changes

- Principals now track excused/unexcused absences
- Must report unenrolled students within 15 days of school start
- Students are considered present if receiving services

READ Act Updates

- Evidence-based intervention requirement delayed to 2026–27
- Clarifies provisions for dual immersion programs
- Expands approved training providers

Substitution Pilot Program

- Makes permanent the short-call substitute license for support staff
- Adjusts pay and assignment duration rules

School Lunch Reimbursement

- State funding reduced from 12.5¢ to 6.25¢ per meal (starting 2028)
- Students may purchase a second reimbursable meal

Health & Safety

- Schools must have cardiac response plans
- Students may administer opioid antagonists to peers
- Updates to language access plans for special education

“Unleashing Education from Convention” is more than the MACS motto, it is a reminder of our purpose, our goals, and it serves as a clarion Call To Action.



At Charter Source, we believe impactful school leadership is shared leadership. Our mission is to provide scaffolded support in governance, leadership, and operations to strengthen and transform the charter school landscape—creating more high-quality options for children.

Whether you're starting, leading, or overseeing a charter school, our custom-built technology platforms and training programs are designed to meet your needs:

Board Training Options

- On-site Custom Training: Tailored sessions for your board's unique context
- Group Training: Collaborative learning with peers across the sector
- Online Training: Convenient, state-mandated coursework available year-round

Board Webinar Series

Hosted by industry leaders and special guests, these sessions cover essential topics like Open Meeting Law, board roles, employment policies, and financial management.

- ✓ BOSA-approved for CEU credits
- ✓ Includes one hour of governance coaching
- ✓ Available in Spanish for key courses

Peer Learning & Orientation

- Board Orientation: Complimentary for current clients, this interactive session introduces new and returning board members to the Minnesota charter sector
- Peer Learning Community: Dive into case studies, crisis communication, and best practices with fellow board members

✳ *Reminder: New board members must begin training before their term starts. Full details on required coursework are available in our Board Basics Series.*

👉 [Click here for more information](#) or reach out to join a session that fits your board's needs.



An Evolving Workforce

It is estimated that as many as 85% of today's grade-schoolers will hold a job that does not yet exist. Developing competencies like critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, and collaboration is more critical than ever for future success in a changing global economy.

Student Voice Spotlight: Young People as Cultural Architects

This month, we invite you to reflect on a powerful op-ed from World Savvy: Young People as Cultural Architects by Hamse Warfa. It reminds us that students aren't just preparing to lead someday—they're already shaping our culture, politics, and digital spaces today.

From remixing viral sounds to organizing civic campaigns, young people are demonstrating leadership, innovation, and media literacy at levels that challenge traditional assumptions. As educators and school leaders, we have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to recognize their influence and invite them into co-creating the systems that shape their learning.

 **Read the full piece [here](#) and consider:**

- How are we elevating student voice in our schools?
- What structures might we redesign to reflect their lived experiences and leadership?
- Are we ready to follow where they're already leading?

Let's move beyond asking if students are ready—and start asking if we are.



Mark your calendar for two student-centered events

2025 NdCAD Summer Training Institute August 18-19 in Minneapolis



Broaden how you think about education, reading instruction, and strategies to ensure all children succeed in school and life. The institute is for parents, teachers, early childhood providers, school administrators, and more.

[Register today](#)

Hosted by the Network for the Development of Children of African Descent (NdCAD)



2025 Teacher-Powered Schools National Conference:
October 23-25 | Ypsilanti, MI

Join us at TEACH-TOBERFEST: Harvesting Shared Power for School Transformation this fall—to imagine how Teacher-Powered Schools shift our education system to center students, trust and empower teachers, and reimagine educator roles.

[Register your team now](#)

Hosted by Teacher-Powered Schools, a project of Education Evolving

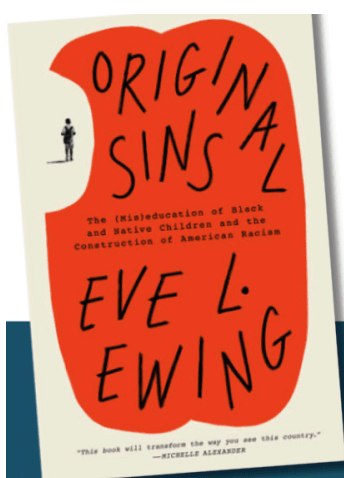


rethinking schools

You Represent Hope in Hard Times

The election results are deeply troubling, yet history reminds us of that progress often emerges despite hostile leadership. From abolitionists resisting slavery to civil rights activists challenging segregation, movements for justice have persisted and flourished. Today, educators, organizers, and activists continue that legacy, offering hope in hard times. Though the fight ahead will be difficult, resilience and solidarity remain our greatest tools.

EVENTS



Original Sins: The (Mis)education of Black and Native Children and the Construction of American Racism

September 22 / 4 PM PT / 7 PM ET



Eve L. Ewing in conversation with
Jesse Hagopian and Cierra Kaler-Jones

Teach the Black Freedom Struggle online class

zinnedproject.org/teach-freedom



Education
Healthcare
Public Services

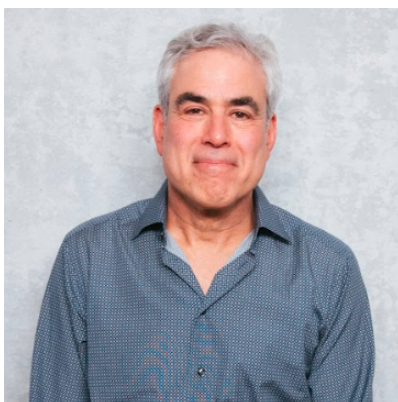


Classroom Management Strategies That Work

Start the school year strong with effective strategies to support student engagement, build relationships and foster a positive learning environment. This collection includes proven techniques for preventing disruptions, supporting social-emotional learning and creating a space where all students can thrive.

[Manage with Confidence](#)

■ Professional Learning Spotlight: AFT Book Club



With Randi Weingarten & Jonathan Haidt

Join AFT President Randi Weingarten and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt for a timely conversation on the mental health crisis facing today's youth. Based on Haidt's new book *The Anxious Generation*, this free, for-credit webinar will explore how childhood has changed—and what educators and families can do to support students.

💬 What You'll Learn

- The “great rewiring” of childhood and its impact
- Evidence on screen time, social media, and mental health
- School strategies: phone-free norms, recess, sleep hygiene
- How to partner with families and set healthy boundaries
- Policy ideas and practical resources for your community

 When: Sunday, August 24, 2025

 Time: 6:00–7:00 PM EDT (available on demand afterward)

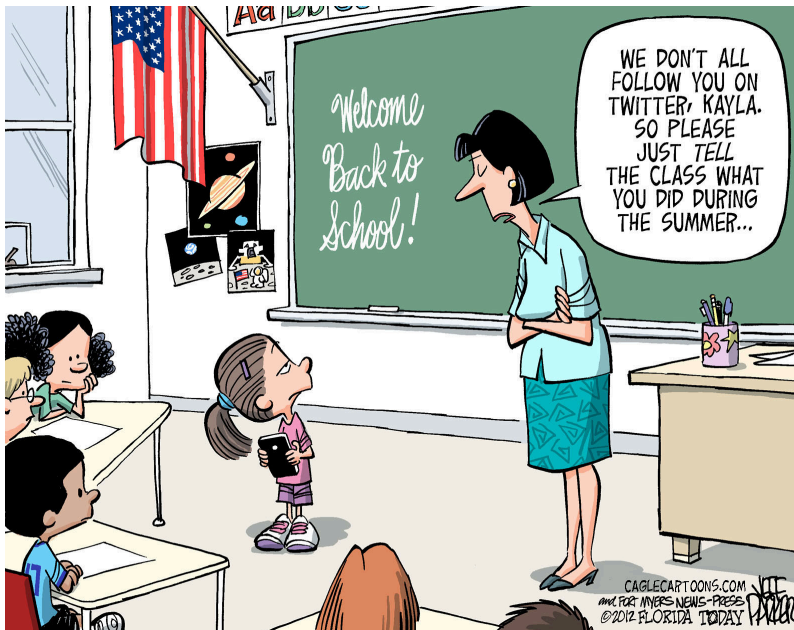
 CEU Credit Available

 [Save My Spot](#)

This session is ideal for educators, caregivers, and school leaders looking to take actionable steps toward healthier, more connected learning environments.



Welcome to the light side... this section has been added to bring a little light and levity to your day. Enjoy!



We Want to Hear from You

As your authorizer we want you to know we are here to support you. If you would like to bounce ideas off someone, or need a sounding board, we are happy to be that person. Please feel free to email us whenever you need additional support, we are here to listen.

Please send an email to one of the addresses listed below:

Jim Zacchini,

MN Guild Executive Director

jim.zacchini@guildschools.org

Debbie Weckman,

MN Guild Administrative Assistant

debbie.weckman@guildschools.org

Buddy Ferrari,

MN Guild Project Tech

buddy.ferrari@guildschools.org

Thank you and as always, we appreciate all you do.



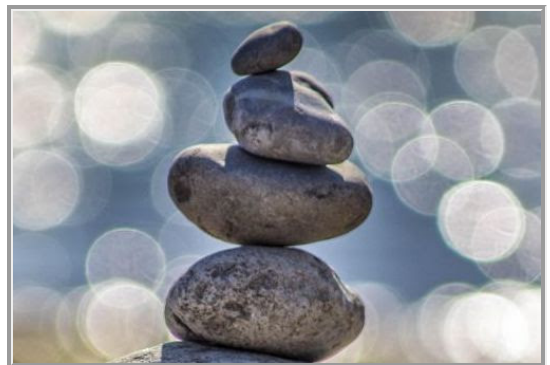
Our Vision:

The Minnesota Guild of Public Charter Schools advances positive educational outcomes for students that lead to success in life.

Our Mission:

The Guild advocates for teacher leadership, professional autonomy, and the creation of innovative schools for student engagement and the ownership of learning. The Guild strives to support students, families, and communities most affected by the achievement gap and low graduation rates.

“If you want
to go fast
go alone.
If you want
to go far
go together.”
-African Proverb





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Visit our website:

<https://www.guildschools.org>

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You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).