



**MN Guild March
2025 Newsletter ~
Featuring Rochester
Beacon Academy**

Single-purpose authorizer of
Public Charter Schools in
Minnesota

Senior Spotlight



Director's Update

Jim Zacchini, Executive Director





Greetings school leaders,

As our mercurial winter jumps straight through to summer and back again, I wanted to follow up on my previous message to remind you about an incredible resource available for those implementing the Science of Reading (SOR) frameworks. Groves' Learning Organization is offering fully funded Tier 2 literacy intervention opportunities in alignment with Minnesota's READ Act. This opportunity assists schools in building a sustainable and effective Tier 2 system with expert support. Please note that the deadline for application registration is March 31st, see below for a registration link and additional information.

As our school spotlight shifts south to Rochester, please check out the wonderful work going on day in and day out at Rochester Beacon Academy. Beacon is a perfect description of the light and guidance they bring to their unique school community.

With appreciation always, -- Jim



NO COST INTERVENTION OPPORTUNITIES

For over 50 years, Groves Learning Organization has helped struggling readers succeed by partnering with schools across Minnesota to implement structured literacy and data-driven intervention. Today, we're reaching out with a fully funded opportunity that may be a great fit for schools in your network.

Fully Funded Tier 2 Intervention Opportunity

We're Christina Ritter and Matthew Brandt from Groves' Partnership Development team, working to ensure that schools across Minnesota have the tools they need to support all their readers. Thanks to generous funding from the Hawn Family Foundation, we're offering selected schools the chance to strengthen their Tier 2 literacy interventions—at no cost to them.

We reached out to all charter school leaders in Minnesota and invited them to complete a form to express their interest. However, we have not yet received responses. We understand this may be due to missed emails, time constraints, or uncertainty about whether this is a legitimate offer.

Why the focus on Tier 2 intervention?

Tier 2 literacy support provides targeted, small-group instruction for students who need extra support beyond core classroom instruction. Many schools struggle to implement an effective Tier 2 system due to staffing constraints, inconsistent materials, or lack of data-driven decision-making. This opportunity helps schools build a sustainable and effective Tier 2 system with expert support.

What this opportunity includes:

- Strategic planning & consulting to design an effective Tier 2 intervention system.
- Expert coaching & training to strengthen implementation and sustainability.
- A structured, evidence-based curriculum for students in grades 3 and beyond.
- Professional development and ongoing support for selected schools (valued at \$10,000).

Your Help in Getting Request for Proposal (RFP) to Schools

The RFP opens on February 18, and we'd love your help in getting this in front of your schools.

How can we partner to share this opportunity with your schools? We're happy to support you in whatever way makes sense for you. Here are a few options:

- Meet and further discuss this opportunity. [Click here to schedule a time.](#)
- Co-write an email invitation to your team or network.
- Simply share the RFP with your schools when it's released.
- Join any standing meetings you have with your schools—we'd need no more than 5 minutes to share the details.

Applications are due March 31, and space is limited. Let us know how we can best support you in spreading the word—we appreciate your partnership!



[Spotlight on Rochester Beacon Academy](#)

RBA's Vision, as the premiere educator in southeast Minnesota for all students, utilizes highly structured techniques to assist students who have difficulties with organization, socialization and sensory differences while supporting students to make a successful transition into young adulthood, to live independently and maintain engagement in the community.

RBA Mission, The Mission of Rochester Beacon Academy, with the cooperation of parents, is to provide a safe learning community in a secondary (6-12) setting; respecting the individual and differentiated needs of learners, empowering them to reach their full potential and join their community with success.

Executive Director Message - Beth Burns

"Reflecting on the past three years, I am thrilled and honored to step into the role of Executive Director. Our journey has been extraordinary, marked by the remarkable growth and development of our students.

Our unique educational approach and the dedication of our teachers and staff have created a nurturing environment where students flourish. Beyond academics, we emphasize character building and social-emotional learning, equipping students with vital life skills.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our families, teachers, and staff. Together, we are shaping the future, one student at a time."

Areas of focus:

SOAR Special Education Program: Provides individualized education, services, work experience, social skills, home living, community participation, and support for students ages 18-22.

Special Education at RBA:

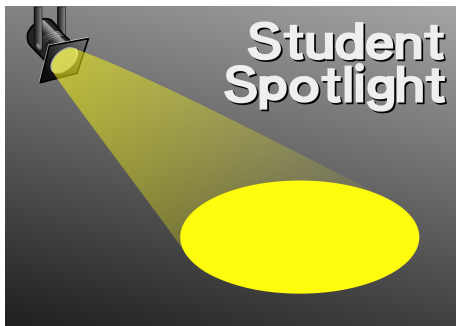
- For students in grades 6-12.
- Focuses on individualized education, services, and support.
- Committed to providing a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
- Offers special education elective courses: Life Skills, Social Emotional Learning, Practical Academic & Community Education.

Mental Health Resources:

- Committed to students' health and well-being.
- Provides mental health resources for peace, laughter, coping strategies, relaxation, and fun.

[This page serves](#) as a resource to find some peace through laughter, information, coping strategies, relaxation, and fun.

Thank you, Rochester Beacon Academy, for all you do.





 GO SHARKS!



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



Charter School Board Training

Welcome to Minnesota Charter Board Training and Development!

Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.07, subdivision 7, states: "Every charter school board member shall attend annual training throughout the member's term. All new charter board members shall attend initial training on the board's role and responsibilities, employment policies and practices, and financial management. A new board member who does not begin the required initial training within six months after being seated and complete the training within 12 months after being seated is automatically ineligible to continue to serve as a board member."

Minnesota Statutes do not dictate how many hours or minicourses a board member must complete, but a board member is responsible for knowing all of the statutes reviewed in the minicourses in the three required areas: board role and responsibilities, financial management, and employment policies and practices. Ready to begin training? It's as easy! [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#) [CALENDAR OF BOARD TRAINING SESSIONS](#)

"The beautiful thing about learning, is nobody can take it away from you." - B. B. King

MN Guild Partners & Resources

Leading the way to excellence



Educator Edition

Updates from MDE:

Please see: CSP Grant Competition page for more information. [Visit MDE Grants webpage](#)

Curriculum Director Meetings

MDE will host three virtual Curriculum Directors Meetings in 2024–25; there are two time slots for each session. The second upcoming 2024–25 Curriculum Director Meeting will take place in May. Please register to attend the meetings:

- [Curriculum Leaders Webinar Link May 13, 7:30–8:30 a.m.](#)
- [Curriculum Leaders Webinar Link May 13, 4–5 p.m.](#)

Alternate Assessment March Chat and Connect

What: MTAS/Alternate MCA test administrators and special education staff are invited to meet with MDE alternate assessment specialists to give feedback, ask questions and connect with other special education staff from across the state.

Why: Learn about common MTAS/Alt MCA administration questions and guidelines for data entry, share your feedback and have your questions answered.

When: Series will continue monthly, meeting the third Tuesday of each month. The Alternate Assessment Chat and Connect dates that are upcoming for this year are April 15 and May 20 at 4 p.m. Register once for the entire series of monthly meetings.

Where: Via Zoom.

How: [Register for the Alt Assessment Chat and Connect](#)

Contact: Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us

Upcoming Opportunities

[MDE Boot Camp Schedule and Registration Link](#)

- Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 18, 2025, 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m.



New MSBA webpage provides guidance on federal legislation and executive orders

To provide general guidance to our members, the MSBA staff recently created a “2025 Federal Executive Orders and Legislation” webpage. This page includes updates on federal funding, federal laws, and immigration and deportation issues. Refer to this resource on a frequent basis for timely information.

To access this webpage, members must log in to the MSBA website and then click on “Information on Federal/State Legislation and Executive Orders” from under the Resource Library drop-down. From there, click on “2025 Federal Executive Orders and Legislation.”

Please direct general questions to the MSBA staff via <https://mnmsba.org/contact-us>.

Recent federal actions and policy changes could have significant implications for K-12 education in Minnesota. MSBA is actively monitoring these developments and providing timely guidance to help school leaders navigate potential conflicts between federal and state laws. Topics include Title IX policy updates, federal funding freezes, and recent communications from the U.S. Department of Education.

One Voice: Be a Unifying Voice for Public Education

About One Voice

“One Voice” from the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is helping our communities better understand and trust in the value, power and potential of our public education systems. By improving trust in public education, One Voice will enhance public engagement and cooperation around public schools for the benefit of all students.

“One Voice is more than an event theme,” said MSBA Executive Director Kirk Schneidawind. “It’s a long-term movement that will improve and promote public education.”

Stand up for public education with a unifying voice to support all students. MSBA will be launching an initiative to gather success stories from across the state and to hear from schools about the importance of public schools.

[Video click here to watch](#)

Resources:

[MSBA Leader March Newsletter click here](#)

[WORKSHOPS & EVENTS click here](#)



MACS Legislative Priorities 2025

Join the MACS Advocacy Team each Friday at 9:00am to learn more about what happened at the Capitol that week. Sessions will sometimes include legislators from the Education Committees. The Zoom link to join can be found on our website: [Calendar](#)

For the 2025 legislative session, we urge the legislature to address significant gaps in funding for chartered public-school students, establish a rational policy for charter school facilities, and continue to work proactively with the charter sector on policy issues that enhance accountability while protecting school autonomy.

Fair and Equitable Funding for Charter School Students:

- Increase General Revenue Formula Beyond Inflation
- Provide Equalized School Safety Revenue Aid Funding
- Provide Equalized Local Optional Revenue Aid Funding
- Provide Adequate Funding to Meet Transportation Costs
- Equalize Extended Time Revenue
- Provide Equitable Funding when State Shifts Program Financing from State Revenue to Local Property Taxes

A Rational Policy for Charter School Facilities:

- Allow Direct Ownership of School Facilities for Qualifying Schools
- Repeal Ban of Public Funds for Purchase of School Facilities
- Increase Lease Aid and Tie to General Formula
- Equalize Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue

Balancing Accountability vs. Autonomy:

- Establish Working Group to Find Legislative Solutions that Enhance Authorizer Accountability while Protecting School Autonomy
- Establish Multiple-Measure Alternative Accountability Framework Differentiated to Match School Mission/Populations for Charter Contracts
- Establish a Centralized Trustee System to Strengthen School Closure Process

- Require MDE Establish Centralized Digital Backpack System for Public Student Records

MN SUPREME COURT RULING

This week the MN Supreme Court ruled that Minnesota public schools and local units of government can be held liable for their hiring practices for outcomes that impact student well-being and safety. Context: A lawsuit had been filed against a Minnesota charter school by a student who was sexually assaulted by a staff member, alleging negligent hiring practices. Initially, both the district and appellate courts ruled in favor of the school. The school's legal team argued that hiring decisions were "policy-level decisions," which would exempt them from tort liability under state law. However, this week, the Minnesota Supreme Court overturned these rulings, citing that not every hiring decision is a policy decision, and schools could be liable in certain circumstances. The case has now been sent back to the lower courts for reconsideration.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

FEDERAL END-DEI PORTAL

This week the U.S. Department of Education introduced [EndDEI.Ed.Gov](#), a portal for reporting discrimination based on race or sex in publicly funded K-12 schools. This initiative aligns with President Trump's executive order to eliminate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs within federal agencies. The portal enables parents, students, and teachers to report instances of discrimination, guiding the Department's investigative efforts.

DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER

This week, Commissioner Willie Jett of the Minnesota Department of Education issued further guidance regarding last week's Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) sent to K-12 school leaders. The DCL communicated a shift in the agency's interpretation of federal anti-discrimination laws in K-12 schools. The Department clarified that the letter is not a civil rights enforcement action and explicitly states in its footnotes that it does not have the force and effect of law, nor does it bind the public or create new legal standards. Additionally, the Department emphasized:

- "Federal civil rights enforcement is governed by [federal regulations](#) that require ED to take specific steps before freezing or stopping funding."
- "Minnesota state law, including the [Minnesota Human Rights Act](#), prohibits discrimination or preferential treatment in public education on the basis of race, religion, disability, national origin, gender identity and other identities."
- MDE will continue to seek clarity and work with schools on any changes in guidance on this issue.

Calendar

[Upcoming Events and Registration Link:](#)



3 Ways to Fix the U.S. Learning Crisis

The latest NAEP scores reveal a stark and troubling reality: students remain far behind. NACSA President and CEO, M. Karega Rausch, Ph.D., outlines three ways—based on successes seen from authorizing high-quality charter schools—that all leaders can address widening learning gaps and recover lost ground. [Read more.](#)

Centering People in the New School Application Process

When searching for a new candidate to join your team, the resume and cover letter only go so far. What you learn during the interview process is critical. David Greenberg writes about the importance of the people part of the new school application process. [Read and share on LinkedIn.](#)

Rachel Hannah, Deputy Assistant Director at the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, discusses her journey to improve their new school application process. She was determined to make the process more about the people—their engagement and capacity—not just the paperwork. How did she do it? [Listen here.](#)

Read Rachel Hannah's personal blog post about her work to improve their new school application process while navigating Arizona's unique approaches to authorizing [here.](#)

Save the Date: NACSACon 2025

NACSACon is headed back to Houston, Texas for some more sunshine and new conference content and events! Join us October 20-23 for inspiring sessions, actionable insights, and networking opportunities that will equip you with tools and connections to do your best work. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details. We can't wait to see you there!



Board Chat Series Sessions

Legal Issues Impacting Minnesota Charter Schools - March 26th, 12:00-1:00 PM

Join us for a Board Chat with Minnesota attorney, Jim Martin of Martin Law, PLLC. We will be discussing core issues regarding immigration and how to manage ICE. Understand the parameters on how to manage the Star & Tribune standing data request. We will also review the status of Title IX obligations. Join us to learn more about these critical issues facing the charter community in Minnesota.

What Board Members Should Know About State Standards - May 7, 2025, 12:00-1:00 PM

In addition to overseeing the legal and financial aspects of schools, board members should understand state academic standards across all instructional areas. Supporting leadership in developing and aligning with these

standards and benchmarks is a critical responsibility of the board, which has ultimate accountability for student outcomes. Discover more about key focus areas and how the board can effectively assist leadership in maintaining compliance.



Summer Programs

- [Summer Immersion Program \(SIP\)](#): Two-week virtual sessions where 9th-12th grade girls and non-binary students can design and build their own computer games, make new friends, and connect with mentors and industry professionals.
- Pathways: Flexible, self-paced learning options exploring AI, cybersecurity, and data science through video tutorials and real-world projects, along with access to an exclusive Discord community.

Girls Who Code Clubs

- Benefits: Free resources, community activities, and coding skills for all 3rd-12th graders.
- Support: Personalized live support, webinar training, and facilitation guides to help launch and grow your club.
- Swag: T-shirts, notebooks, and stickers for club members.

Two Free Summer Programs

- The Summer Immersion Program, a two-week experience to learn game design in live virtual classrooms while making friends and gaining practical college and career advice from industry leaders.
- Pathways, a six-week opportunity to explore some of the biggest topics in tech independently

[CLICK HERE to APPLY](#)

Summer Programs Info

- SIP Round 1 Dates: July 7-July 18
- SIP Round 2 Dates: July 28-August 8
- Pathways Dates: June 30-August 8
- Open to high school girls and non-binary students, including Summer Programs alums!
- No application or program fees!

Questions? [Explore Our Webinars](#) | [Review Helpful FAQs](#) | [Email Us](#) | [See Official Giveaway Rules](#)



"Uplifting the expertise of all educational partners in community schools through shared leadership"

BLOG POST

The executive order on K-12 "indoctrination": What's at stake for MN schools?



A recent executive order tells schools: stop indoctrinating students or lose funding. The order targets schools practicing "gender ideology and discriminatory equity ideology."

[This post](#) takes a look at the federal dollars schools count on, the limited authority the president actually has over them, and how lawmakers and—more importantly—schools are feeling about it all.

[Read the blog post](#)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2025 TEACHER-POWERED SCHOOLS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

TOBERFEST Harvesting Shared Power for School Transformation October 23-25. Ypsilanti, MI

We've extended the conference breakout session proposal deadline to March 31.

This year's session strands are:

- Cultivating Joyful Innovation
- Sharing Power Inside and Out
- Sustaining Teacher-Powered Schools

We can't wait to see your session ideas and see you all in Michigan.

[Submit a session](#)

MONDAY, MAY 12 @ MYSTIC LAKE CENTER & ONLINE Tickets available

Student-Centered Learning for Equity 2025: The Stories We Carry & the Future We Create



You're invited to join hundreds of educators, students, and community leaders to connect and share lessons for more equitable, student-centered learning.

- That means learning that honors the stories students carry with them, in order to make a future where they want to go.

What to expect at SCL4E 2025



[A special keynote](#) from author, speaker, and educator Christopher Emdin.

Live performances by Hmong student dance group Golden Mist and poets from TruArtSpeaks.

[Dynamic, student-centered](#) breakout sessions that equip attendees with vital tools.

[Virtual tickets](#)

[In-person tickets](#)

Register extra early and save \$Extra early registration also closes March 31.

[Register today.](#)

2025 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference

May 28-30 | Minneapolis, MN

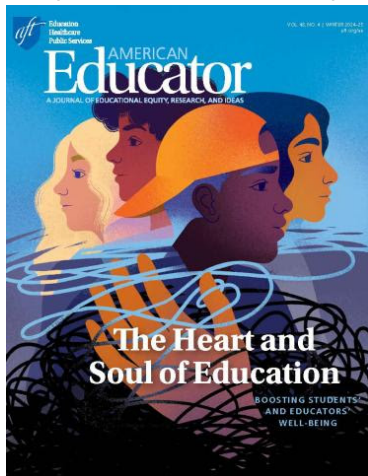
The Institute for Educational Leadership is proud to host the 2025 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference—which catalyzes collaboration, action, and a renewed commitment to transforming our practices, partnerships, and systems.

[Learn more »](#)



 AFT | Share My Lesson

Mission - AFT is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.



[American Educator, Winter 2024-2025](#) - ***Click here to read the many wonderful articles published by various authors***

Informative Reading Material



[Rights of Immigrant Students and Schools](#)

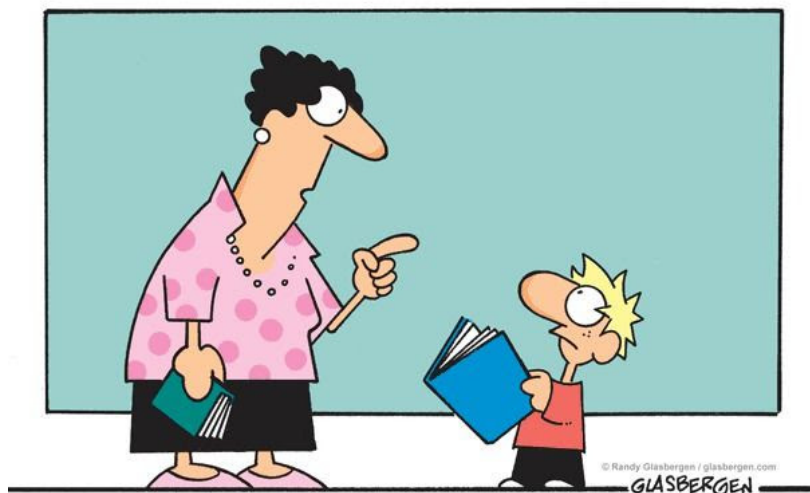
[For Kids and Communities](#)

[Teacher Shortage Task Force](#)



**Embrace
the grind.**

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



**"It's called 'reading'. It's how people
install new software into their brains"**

9GAG.COM/GAG/5716380

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>

Want to change how you receive these emails?

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