



Director's Update

Jim Zacchini, Executive Director



Greetings,

Thank you to everyone who attended our Annual Report Virtual meeting on October 1st. The goal was to provide you with specific assistance and resources for creating your annual reports, which are due on November 1st. For our schools that are in a contract renewal year, please

review the Contract Renewal Corner for timely updates. Also, please note in the Google Classroom section below that we've outlined the legislative changes related to board training that went into effect as of August 1, 2024. Please review the board training sessions outlined in this newsletter as you design your training plans to meet the new legislative requirements. As a reminder, the deadline for your Board Training Plan submission is October 15, 2024. As always, we are here to support you and look forward to answering any questions you may have now and in the future.

I have a couple of shout-outs of the excellent news variety! First off congratulations to Lincoln International High School on securing a Full-Service Community School grant. Commissioner Willie Jett offered, "We are thrilled to announce the expansion of the full-service community school model to 13 new school communities... full-service community schools are vital to their communities for connecting students and families to the resources they need to thrive both in and out of the classroom." These grants will expand systemic supports, community building, and learning opportunities for students, families, and communities across Minnesota over the next two years.

Finally, we wanted to offer congratulations to Art & Science Academy (which is featured in this month's school spotlight) on being honored by the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools with a 10-Year Milestone Award. Furthermore, we would like to extend a warm welcome to ASA's new Executive Director, Cora Packard. Welcome, Cora, and best wishes for a successful school year.

Wishing you a cool and pleasant Autumn.

With gratitude, --Jim



This month the MN Guild is proud to spotlight Art & Science Academy.

VISION:

ASA provides high quality art and science integration opportunities in an innovative small school community.

Mission:

ASA provides outstanding artistic and scientific programs.

Foundational Statements:

The arts facilitate the development of critical thinking, communication and problem solving skills. These are essential 21st century workplace skills.

Science is a subject that should be learned through engagement and discovery. Hands on experiments and activities supporting the concepts being learned must be a regular practice and students should experience concepts rather than simply discussing them.

The Art and Science Academy will provide a healthy, safe and nurturing environment where students can learn and enjoy coming to school every day. The entire community will practice caring, supportive and mutually respectful communication and behavior.

Event planning, organizing, and brainstorming allows students to take responsibility in their school, for their work, and in their community.

Student interest in learning is as essential as student achievement. The arts are an essential component of a quality holistic education; they stimulate student interest and serve as a stage or platform for learning academics.

Art and Science integration is the idea of working the arts (music, art, and theatre) and the sciences (physical, biological, and chemical) into the entire curriculum. This means a student could be sitting in a social studies lesson that highlights an art component or a music class that highlights the science behind different notes. The possibilities for integration are endless. It is ASA's goal to integrate this across the entire K-8 curriculum so that every class includes these components throughout the day so that students can connect their interests in the arts and sciences to all the other areas of required study.

Thank you, Art & Science Academy, for all you do.





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



Contract Renewal Corner:

Required Reading for Renewal (and important for all schools to know!)

Updates: Standards & Indicators Framework was slightly adjusted based upon the Guild's AAP submission and is available here. [CLICK HERE](#)

Reminders: FY24 annual reports (including the WBWF summary report) are due to the Guild on **November 1st!** This is the last annual report before a renewal rating is determined, so a complete and comprehensive report is essential.

Why Contract Renewal is Important: Contract renewal determines whether your school's charter contract is renewed and the length of the renewal term. A school must receive a final rating of "Exceeded" or "Met" for a five-year renewal term or a rating of "Approaching" for a three-year renewal term. Schools receiving final ratings of "Emerging" or "Not Met" will not be eligible for contract renewal and the school will be slated to close at the end of its current contract term.



FY24 Annual Report TA Virtual Meeting Resources

Here is the link to the recorded meeting held on October 1, 2024, along with the documents you need to complete your annual reports:

[Annual Report Instructions](#)

[Annual Report Resource Folder](#)

[MN Department of Education - Report Card Link](#)



Charter School Board

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 as steps 1, 2, 3!

[Watch the introductory video below.](#)
[Click here for all the courses available.](#)

MACS Board Training

BOARD TRAINING COURSE 200: REGISTER NOW!

Our online Board Training Course 200: Charter School Finance - A Public Trust has been scheduled each month throughout the fall. If you or someone you know is interested in, or needs to complete this training, please view our [calendar](#) for the upcoming trainings. The next available training will begin on Friday, October 11th. [Click here](#) to register for the training. Contact [Genevieve](#) with questions.

MN Guild Bulletin Board - Important Dates

Board Training Plan submission which is due on October 15 via Google Classroom

FY24 annual reports (including the WBWF summary report) are due to the Guild on November 1st!

[Minnesota District and Charter Data Reporting Calendar](#)

Curriculum Directors: Save the Dates for School Year 2024–25

[Curriculum Director Leader Meetings](#), Academic Standards content specialists will be hosting Content Area Leader Meetings and Office Hours during the 2024–25 school year. These virtual meetings give district leaders an opportunity to learn about new resources in specific content areas and connect with other districts. Refer to the [Save the Dates for School Year 2024-25](#)

Quarterly Billing Dates FY25

These are the dates to watch your email for your quarterly invoice from the MN Guild for your quarterly authorizer fees.

Q2: November 15, 2024

Q3: February 15, 2025

Q4: May 15, 2025

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please be aware that we have discontinued accepting online payments via BillPay due to excessive fees that could be better used to support schools more directly. Henceforth, we kindly request that those who utilized BillPay in the past mail a paper check to our office or arrange for direct electronic transfer to the Guild. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.



Google Classroom

As part of this year's Google Classroom submission requirements, schools are asked to submit a board training plan for the upcoming year. As a result of legislative changes enacted on August 1, 2024, the requirements for board training were expanded in the following ways:

- Board member training requirements now apply to ex-officio members as well
- The list of required training topics has expanded:
 - 124E.07 Subd. 7 (b): Prior to beginning their term, a new board member must complete training on a charter school board's role and responsibilities, open meeting law, and data practices law. An ex-officio member, who is a charter school director or chief administrator, must complete this training within three months of starting employment at the school.
 - 124E.07 Subd. 7 (c): A new board member must complete training on employment policies and practices under chapter 181; public school funding and financial management; and the board's roles and responsibilities regarding student success, achievement, and performance within 12 months of being seated on the board or the individual is automatically ineligible to continue to serve as a board member. A board member who does not complete training within the 12-month period is ineligible to be elected or appointed to a charter school board for a period of 18 months.
- Boards must now conduct an annual assessment of the board's performance and report the results in the school's annual report (note: this does not apply to the FY24 report schools will complete this fall but will apply to the FY25 report).
- Annual training has more specific requirements, and a new annual assessment component:
 - 124E.07 Subd. 7 (d): Every charter school board member must complete annual training throughout the member's term based on an annual assessment of the training needs of individual members and the full board. Ongoing training includes but is not limited to budgeting, financial management, recruiting and hiring a charter school director or chief administrator, evaluating a charter school director or chief administrator, governance-management relationships, student support services, student discipline, state standards, cultural diversity, succession planning, strategic

planning, program oversight and evaluation, compensation systems, human resources policies, effective parent and community relationships, authorizer contract and relationships, charter school law, legal liability, board recruitment and elections, board meetings and operations, policy development and review, and school health and safety.

- The organization providing the training must certify the individual's completion of the training

These new requirements are also reflected in the instructions for the Board Training Plan submission which is due on **October 15 via Google Classroom**. If you have any questions about this requirement, or if your school needs this deadline extended in order to implement these changes, please feel free to message me (Buddy) via Google Classroom or at buddy.ferrari@guildschools.org.



ACRONYM OF THE MONTH: SOD Statutory Operating Debt

What is Statutory Operating Debt (SOD)?

Under Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 123B.81, subdivision 2, a school district or charter school is in statutory operating debt (SOD) when it reports a year-end net negative unreserved general fund balance exceeding more than negative 2.5% of its unreserved/undesignated operating expenditures.

For example, in FY 2023, if school districts and/or charter schools have a \$150,000 negative unreserved general fund balance and \$2,000,000 unreserved/undesignated operating expenditures the result would be and SOD calculation of -7.5%, which is shown as the following $(-150,000/2,000,000 = -7.5\%)$. A trend school districts and charter schools may want to avoid: In FY 2023, we saw a significant increase in the number of school districts and charter schools that are in SOD.

School districts and charters schools are required to comply with Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 123B.83 – Expenditure Limitations, which requires that a district must limit its expenditures so that the calculated net unreserved general fund balance¹ or “operating debt” as of June 30 does not constitute Statutory Operating Debt (SOD).

According to Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 123B.81, Subdivision 2, SOD exists if the school's operating debt is more than 2 ½ percent of the most recent Fiscal Year's (FY) expenditure amount. As you are aware, your school is in SOD as of June 30, 2023.

By January 31 of the following fiscal year of SOD, the school and the school board of education are required to create and implement a Special Operating Plan which is formally approved through a board resolution and submitted to the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for approval.

The Special Operating Plan consists of the following sections: 1. Introduction and Explanation of Current SOD Position (Narrative) 2. Budget Development and Financial Management Process (Narrative) 3. Ongoing Financial Monitoring Processes and Procedures (Narrative) 4. Action Plan to remove SOD Status (Narrative) 5. Special Financial Operating Plan (Excel Spreadsheet Model) 6. Board Resolution Instructions for completing each section are found below.

What happens when school districts or charter schools are in SOD?

- A notification letter is sent to the superintendent and business official discussing SOD's statutory language and requesting a board approved SOD plan by January 31.
- Included with the notification letter is the following information to guide a school district or charter school to develop a viable plan:
- UFARS Compliance Report, the school district or charter school reported financial data; Special Operating Plan Instructions; and SOD Plan Template (excel spreadsheet) with the following tabs: Instructions, Revenue Assumptions, Student Enrollment Assumptions, FY 2023 Base Year Detail, FY 2024 Budget Detail, Revenue Changes, Expenditure Changes and Summary.
- The Financial Management team provides training sessions to school districts or charter schools that are new to SOD.
- The Financial Management team contacts each school district or charter school to ensure the SOD plan is being prepared and answer any questions.
- By January 31st, a board approved SOD plan is submitted to MDE. The Financial Management team reviews each SOD plan to determine if the plan appears accurate and viable, before it is sent to the commissioner for approval.
- Some SOD plans are approved on a conditional basis, requiring regular follow up with the school district or charter school to determine if the SOD plan is progressing as planned.

Who is responsible for preparing a viable board approved SOD plan?

School districts and charter schools are ultimately responsible for the financial management of their entity. The financial leaders and boards are responsible for preparing the viable board approved SOD plan. Financial Management staff will provide guidance and answer questions, while a school district or charter school is analyzing information and preparing the SOD plan. What should a school district or charter school look for to avoid SOD? The school board and administration should be analyzing financial data on a regular basis and adjust the budget and spending plans if there are significant reductions in revenue or increases in expenditures. Being proactive to financial changes will help ensure the school district or charter school have financial strength and stability to avoid SOD.

A few questions a school district or charter school may want to ask:

- Has there been a significant reduction in students enrolled at the school district or charter school?
 - Will there be a significant reduction in revenue (i.e., loss of federal relief funds)?
- Minnesota Department of Education 1



(Pictured Valley New School)

2024 Day of Hope ~~ Highlights

Special thank you to Dr. Steven Rippe and Liz Shatek of Talent Enthusiasts & The Hope Survey for hosting and sharing all their wonderful guests, information, music, art, stories and overall sense of hope during the 2024 Day of Hope held Friday, October 1st.

There were so many wonderful people at the event and the stories that were shared captivating, personal and inspirational. One highlight of the day was the story of two people Cora Rose and her partner Jose Luis Vilchez. Cora Rose is a singer-songwriter and producer from the USA and José Luis Vilchez is a fine art painter, photographer, and musician from Nicaragua and the USA. They live on a refurbished school bus that is not only their home but also their studios. They are on a very interesting journey and here is how they describe themselves. "We are a pair of artists with a passion for understanding the world through the lens of our art. Through photography, film, audio recordings, painting, and public art, we aim to document and share the diverse sights and sounds of our world. It is our mission to create art that highlights the diversity, challenges, and shared humanity of peoples across the globe."

They have started a project, and it is called, [Art We There Yet](#), which is a project to create art and music inspired by the Americas, celebrating our shared humanity and giving back to communities along the way. Aboard a school bus converted into an art and recording studio, we are traveling 30,000 miles across 23 countries of North, Central, and South America.



[Here is their story](#)... please take a minute to read about their journey and how they are spreading beauty and hope all over the world.

Other Presenter Resources:

- Connect Strength: <https://connectstrength.com/>
- PLP Resources from Valley New School
 - Personal Agreement, Life Goals, Dreams Big & Small, PLP Portfolio: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-eCfl91P3gmbEi7842pF3OsuASvs8er>
 - mypip.net (Transformational Personal Learning Plans book & e-book)
- Cora Rose, Art We There Yet: <https://artwethereyet.com/blog/>
- Circle Forward book: <https://livingjusticepress.org/product/circle-forward/>
- Studio Shaka: <https://www.studioshaka.com/>
- 4 Learning: <https://www.4learning.com/>



MN Guild Partners & Resources

Leading the way to excellence

MDE Announces \$14.75 Million in Reignited Full-Service Community School Grants

MINNEAPOLIS – Today the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) announces the awarding of Full-Service Community School Grants, totaling 14.75 million, to 25 schools across Minnesota. These are the first grants of this kind since 2015. Gov. Tim Walz, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and the Minnesota legislature reignited this grant opportunity during the 2023 legislative session to help schools better serve student and family needs by starting or expanding the full-service community school model.

[Full-service community schools](#) transform a school into a place where educators, community members, families and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development. These schools often bring together social, medical, out-of-school time care, academic supports and enrichment activities at the school. Schools and communities work together to serve students and families through building strong relationships, partnerships and webs of support.

Full-service community schools increase accesses to services such as primary health and dental care, mental health, childcare, career counseling, community connected learning opportunities, and high quality after school programming.

“Full-service community schools are vital to their communities for connecting students and families to the resources they need to thrive both in and out of the classroom,” said Commissioner Willie Jett. “We are thrilled to announce the expansion of the full-service community school model to 13 new school communities, while further strengthening 12 existing community schools.”

The grants will expand systemic supports, community building, and learning opportunities for students, families and communities across Minnesota over the next two years. The Minnesota Department of Education is partnering with the National Center for Community Schools to support grantees in implementing the Essentials for Community Schools framework, by providing technical assistance, consulting, coaching and a community of practice.

Prior to the current grants, 13 schools received Full-Service Community School grants funded through the Minnesota legislature in 2015. In 2022, Minnesota invested \$5 million in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency (ESSER) funds to two previously funded schools and 12 new sites. Additionally, 51 districts invested local ESSER funds in the full-service community school framework.

With today's announced grants, 38 total schools across Minnesota have received full-service community school grant awards through the Minnesota Department of Education.

Submission of Unaudited Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards Financial Data (UFARS) Reminder

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.77, subdivision 2, requires that “Each district must submit to the commissioner by **September 15 of each year** unaudited financial data for the preceding fiscal year. This financial data must be submitted in the format prescribed by the commissioner.” Please submit this data as soon as possible. In submitting this unaudited data, edits can be run to provide the district with information that can be used to expedite auditing the district’s FY 2024 financial records. Submit by Monday, September 16, 2024.

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.77, subdivision 3, requires audited financial data is to be submitted by November 30, 2024.

If you have any questions or need help in submitting the data, please contact [Deb Meier](#) or mde.ufars-accounting@state.mn.us.

Reminders: Requirements for OFPs

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Beginning July 1, 2024, each district and charter school must provide teachers and instructional support staff with responsibility for teaching reading with training on evidence-based reading instruction that is approved by the Department of Education. Please review the summary below for timelines and a list of educators required to complete one of the approved professional development programs. Registration process:

1. District or charter school submits contact information for staff responsible for coordinating professional development for literacy educators and support staff. Please email the [Professional Development team](#) with contact information.
2. After MDE updates the contact information, the district or charter school contact will receive an email to complete registration.
3. Once registration is complete, district or charter school contact will be contacted by the requested professional development vendor to schedule training dates.

Approved Minnesota READ Act-Funded Professional Development Programs:

CAREIALL: Advancing Language and Literacy – Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI University of Minnesota)

OL&LA: Online Language and Literacy Academy – Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education (CORE)

LETRS: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (Lexia)
LETRS, LETRS for Administrators, and **LETRS** for Early Childhood Educators

The Minnesota READ Act Legislative Professional Development Requirement Professional Development for Phase 1 educators* (completed by July 1, 2026):

- Participate in one of the MDE approved programs
- Submit certificate of completion with a passing score of 80% to district or charter school

Professional development requirements for Phase 2 educators** (completed by July 1, 2027):
Registration for Phase 2 educators will occur February–October, 2025.

- For grades 6–12 additional professional development options have not yet been approved. Details coming this fall.

Professional Development Timeline*Phase 1: Required staff to be completed by July 1, 2026
Districts and charters are required to provide access to professional development for Phase 1 educators by July 1, 2024, and can register for Professional Development February–October 2024.

- PreK Classroom Educators – PreK educators include Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten/School Readiness Plus, Early Childhood Special Education (Part B/619) responsible for early literacy/reading instruction and School Readiness
- K–3 Classroom Educator (including ESL instructors who are responsible for reading instruction)
- Grades K–12 Reading Intervention Educators
- Grades K–12 Special Education Educators responsible for reading instruction
- Grades PreK–5 Curriculum Directors
- Grades PreK–5 Instructional support staff who provide reading support. (Additional guidance and information on training options will be available soon. Districts should delay registration of Instructional Support Staff until a new training option is available.)
- Employees who select literacy instructional materials for grades PreK–5
- 4th and 5th grade (6th grade depending on the structure of your elementary school) classroom educators may be included in Phase 1, as literacy data indicates the need for foundational reading skill instruction in these grades

**Phase 2: Required staff (all other educators responsible for reading instruction) to be completed by July 1, 2027. Registration for Phase 2 staff Professional Development will be February–October 2025.

- Grades 4–12 Classroom Educators responsible for reading instruction/ teaching the MN ELA Standards
- Grades 4–12 Educators who work with English learners (Licensed ELL teachers)
- Grades K– Age 21 Educators who work with students who qualify for the graduation incentives program under section 124D.68
- Grades 6–12 Instructional support staff who provide reading support
- Grades 6–12 Curriculum Directors
- Employees who select literacy instructional materials for Grades 6–12

Educators who have previously taken 3rd Edition LETRS or CORE training, before READ Act training was offered, do not need a waiver or to retake training.



Each section contains updates relevant to those nutrition programs. You can jump to the section you're interested in by clicking the link.

- [All Nutrition Programs](#)
- [School Nutrition Programs \(SNP\)](#)

[All Nutrition Programs](#)

Revised Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)

The [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs \(FBG\)](#) has been revised to reflect the final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. This important resource assists CNP operators, food manufacturers and other stakeholders with purchasing the correct amounts of foods for CNP and determining the contribution that each food makes toward meal pattern requirements. The FBG is available as a Web Tool, Mobile App and downloadable PDF.

[School Nutrition Programs \(SNP\)](#)

Leadership Training for New and Aspiring SNP Directors

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), in collaboration with Lakes Country Service Cooperative and the Cooperative Purchasing Connection, invites all new and aspiring foodservice directors in Minnesota to join them for an "Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership" training. Retired Minnesota school food service director and award-winning school nutrition leader, Annette Hendrickx Derouin, will lead the training. [Register for the November 12–14 School Nutrition Leadership training.](#)

Training Series: Successful Menu Planning for School Meals

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Team Nutrition initiative has a training series, [The Road to Successful Menu Planning for School Meals](#), to help schools plan and implement menus that support [updates to the school nutrition standards](#). This training series includes quarterly one-hour live (and recorded) webinars co-hosted with the ICN as well as short on-demand trainings. [The Road to Successful Menu Planning for School Meals webpage](#) currently includes a recorded one-hour webinar from September ([Creating Your Road Map to School Menu Planning Success!](#)) and four on-demand trainings (about 15 minutes each):

- [Defining Added Sugars and How to Find Them on a Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- [Choosing Yogurt That is Lower in Added Sugars for School Meals](#)
- [Choosing Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars for School Meals](#)
- [Choosing Flavored Milk That Is Lower in Added Sugars for School Meals](#)

Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP)

USDA's Whole Grain Resource for the NSLPs and SBPs was revised to reflect the Final Rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020–25 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. This resource provides information on how to identify and offer foods that meet the whole grain-rich criteria for the NSLPs and SBPs and to assist in implementation of the meal pattern requirements for grains. The English version was previously shared in September, and the Spanish version is now available. Access the [English version](#) and the [Spanish version](#).

Civil Rights for USDA Programs

All U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs sponsoring agencies shall comply with civil rights laws and regulations, such as the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability), Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (disability). Forms for complying with civil rights data collection of racial/ethnic data are located at the bottom of this page.

The "And Justice for All" poster includes the complete nondiscrimination statement and must be posted in a prominent place in offices, schools and other sites that administer USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For School Nutrition Programs (breakfast, lunch, afterschool snack), the poster must be visible to all students during at least one of their meals, printed on 11" x 17" paper. If your school participates in the Afterschool Snack Program and the program serves the same students who attend school during the regular school day and have seen the poster in a centralized location, you are not required to have the poster hung in each area where the snack is served. [Order posters](#) from the Minnesota Department of Education. Translated versions of "And Justice For All" poster are available for download from the [USDA website](#).

Required Nondiscrimination Statement

The [nondiscrimination statement \(Spanish\)](#) shall be posted and included, in full, on all sponsoring agency materials that are produced for public information, public education or public distribution. [View translations of the nondiscrimination statement for Child Nutrition Programs \(Poster AD-475A\)](#).

[Civil Rights Complaint Procedure](#) - Template for Child Nutrition Program Sponsors to develop their required written Civil Rights Complaint procedure.

[Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement-Nutrition Programs and Activities \(FNS Instruction 113-1\)](#) - Guidance on ensuring nondiscrimination in USDA meal programs, including responsibilities, limited English proficiency, equal opportunity for religious organizations, public notification, civil rights training, data collection, and complaints.

School Year (SY) 2024–25 Verification Key Dates

Verification time of year is here! Please take time to review the verification process resources available on MDE's [Verification webpage](#) and the [Verification Training module](#) available on the [Training and Professional Standards webpage](#). Here is a summary of the key dates and tasks in the verification process:

September 30 – Ensure all direct certification files have been processed. Note: Directly certified students are not included in the verification pool.

October 1 – Determine the verification sample from the active approved applications.

October 31 – Determine the number of free and reduced-price eligible students through direct certification and applications.

November 15 – All verification activities must be completed.

December 2 – Verification Report deadline. All SFAs must submit a report in The Cyber-Linked Interactive Child Nutrition System (CLiCS).



**Office of Governor Tim Walz &
Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan**



Governor Walz announced over \$6 million in new grants to expand access to childcare for working families throughout Minnesota. The new grants follow record funding announced in May and are expected to create thousands of new childcare slots.

"Having access to affordable and reliable childcare is what allows new parents to get to work. Investments like this help not only that parent, but their employer, their community, and our economy as a whole," said Governor Walz. "These new grants will create thousands of new childcare slots and expand support for middle-class families across Minnesota."

"Through historic childcare investments, we're nurturing our children, combating long-standing workforce inequities, maintaining a competitive economy, and building a strong state. With this work we're taking major strides toward our goal of making Minnesota the best state in the nation for children," said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. "When we invest in the needs of children and families, we're building a strong foundation for generations to come."





2024-25 COMPENSATION SURVEY

The 2024-25 Compensation Survey was emailed to all charter school directors across the state on Thursday, August 29th. The Survey is conducted every two years, and the information your school provides is collated into the most requested report the Association publishes. The value of the Compensation Report is the result of having most charter schools in Minnesota participating in the survey, and it has been nearly four years since a comprehensive Compensation Report has been generated, so we ask you to please take the time to complete the survey.

Every school, whether a member of the Association or not, that completes the Compensation Survey will receive a copy of the Compensation Report, and the information you share will not include your school's name in the final Report.

The deadline to complete the Compensation Survey is Friday, November 29th, but please do not wait to get started. If you need a link to the survey or have any questions, concerns, or issues completing the survey, please contact [Michael](#).

BOARD TRAINING COURSE 200: REGISTER NOW!

Our online Board Training Course 200: Charter School Finance - A Public Trust has been scheduled each month throughout the fall. If you or someone you know is interested in, or needs to complete this training, please view our [calendar](#) for the upcoming trainings. The next available training will begin on Friday, October 11th. [Click here](#) to register for the training.

Contact [Genevieve](#) with questions.

CHARTER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SUPPORT CALLS

A new link and calendar invitation have been shared for our September and October Charter School Administrator Support Calls. The next call will take place on September 24th at 9:30am on Zoom, followed by MACS Office Hours from 10:30am-11:30am. If you need the meeting link or have any questions, please contact [Genevieve](#).

OTHER UPDATES

BODY SAFETY & ABUSE PREVENTION OPPORTUNITY

Jacob Wetterling Resource Center (JWRC), a program of Zero Abuse Project and a school-based prevention leader since 1990, is looking to partner with schools interested in receiving

free materials and training on body safety and abuse prevention. JWRC are partnering with schools across Minnesota to test the real-world impact of their curriculum through delivery in classrooms, followed by student evaluations. Each curriculum will require a sample size of 400 students and will be divided into a test group and a control group. Schools selected will be given a stipend of \$2,500, and individual staff who receive the training to facilitate will also receive a separate stipend. [Click here](#) to learn more.

SCHOOL CLOSURE INVENTORY LIST NOW AVAILABLE

SAGE Academy's [closure inventory list](#) is live for all charter schools to view. Interested charter schools can email [SAGE Academy](#) if they have questions or would like to reserve an item. SAGE Academy can create invoices, or interested charter schools can pay directly with cash, card, or check - SAGE Academy is willing to negotiate. There are other things that schools can have upon request, such as doc cams and webcams, classroom supplies, etc.

Reach out directly to [SAGE Academy](#) with all inquiries.

SAGE Academy will be present at the school for pickups on the following dates:

- Friday (9/19) - 11am-3pm
- Monday (9/23) - 12pm-4pm
- Tuesday (9/24) - 9am-2pm
- Saturday (9/28) - 8am-2pm

GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon program honors schools that save energy and reduce operating costs, create environmentally friendly learning spaces, promote student health, and incorporate environmental sustainability into the curriculum. An informational webinar will take place on Thursday, October 24th. [Click here](#) to learn more about this program and [click here](#) to register for the webinar.

MDE PSEO TOPIC SESSIONS

MDE is offering multiple post-secondary enrollment options (PSEO) Topic Sessions to cover various topics, new updates, and frequently asked questions about the PSEO program. [Click here](#) to view new language regarding PSEO, which has not yet been added to the [statute](#). [Click here](#) to view and sign up to attend the PSEO Topic Sessions.

CALENDAR

Friday, October 11th – [Board Training Course 200](#)

Friday, November 15th – Open Meeting & Data Practices Law Training

Friday, November 15th – [Board Training Course 200](#)

Click on an event or [visit our website](#) for details, registration, and other events.



NEW PAPER: A Beacon, a Barometer, and a Bridge Imagining More Equitable, Student-Centered State Standards and Assessments in Minnesota

As the adage goes, “What gets measured gets done.” Assessments set the goal posts, intertwining with learning and influencing decisions by educators, administrators, and families.

[This paper](#) asks: how can statewide assessments and academic standards—both influential and required by federal law—best support education to be more equitable and student-centered?

Over 70 students, educators, parents, and assessment experts informed nine concrete recommendations in three key areas (summarized below).

[Download the full paper](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS AREA 1

State academic standards as a BEACON, a more focused model of learning progress

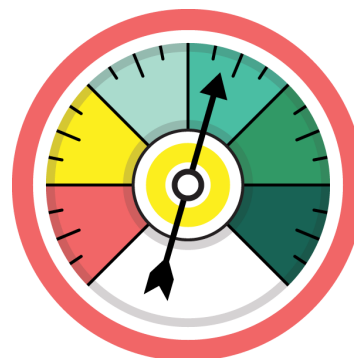
Standards should be written to model learning progressions, increase rigor but reduce quantity, and better center applied skills like collaboration, creativity, and resilience.



RECOMMENDATIONS AREA 2

Grade 3-8 assessments as a BAROMETER, a more equitable, growth-focused system check

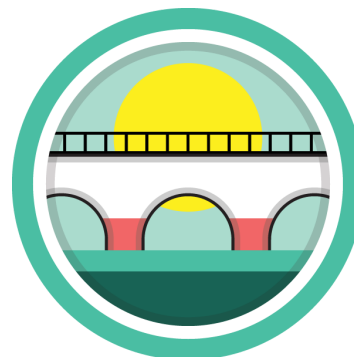
Assessments should prioritize growth as a means to proficiency and be more inclusive of student voices and perspectives—with results available earlier for schools and families.



RECOMMENDATIONS AREA 3

High school assessments as a BRIDGE, with badges as causes for celebration (and credit and jobs)

Minnesota should launch a “badging” system to credential the learning of both state standards and applied skills—and give students a leg up to what’s next.



[Read our full recommendations](#)

Education Evolving defines educational equity as each student having what they need to reach their full potential.

Our organization's vision is that all students have opportunities for student-centered learning, which we characterize as learning designed to honor each student's unique gifts and needs. When fully implemented, student-centered is thus, by definition, equitable learning.

In presenting this definition of equity, we recognize and acknowledge that significant disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes exist among students based on socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, special needs, English language proficiency, sexual orientation, and geography, which result from a history of systemic, economic, and political inequities.

We also recognize, as individuals and as an organization, that an important step in the quest for equity is to better understand systems of inequity—and in particular, to understand ourselves, and our own identities, cultures, and roles in these systems.

Practically speaking, our organization's focus on advancing equity is on two levels:

- The What of Equity. We created our [Principles of Student-Centered Learning](#), which underlie and guide all of our work, with a lens of equity. In other words, when crafting these principles we asked: what principles of a student learning experience, if present, would have the greatest positive impact on meeting the needs of all students, especially groups that have been historically underserved? For example, our two principles around the importance of positive relationships and the development of a positive identity were informed by listening to groups of students from underserved communities.
- The Where of Equity. We fundamentally believe in working with communities and not upon communities. We seek to add value as a partner with communities, through our organization's influence in state policy and access to broader networks. In deciding where we invest energy (namely, the schools, organizations, and communities with which we partner) we will consider the extent to which they serve students who are currently not well served, in particular those groups who have historically experienced inequity.



sharemy lesson



[Proof Positive: Autism Wellbeing Alliance](#), By [Patricia Wright](#), Executive Director

As we gear up for the new school year, the emphasis on joy in the classroom is more important than ever. Joy isn't just a fleeting emotion—it can be a powerful tool to enhance learning, build resilience and create a positive environment for all students, including those with autism and disabilities. At Proof Positive, we believe everyone can learn to cultivate more happiness, and we've teamed up with AFT's Share My Lesson to help you infuse joy into your classroom from Day 1. Here are five ways to do just that.

1. Incorporate Jolts of Joy Brain Breaks

Jolts of Joy are small, intentional actions that inject positive emotions (like love, gratitude and awe) into our day and help us take control of our well-being in the moment. In fact, research shows that cultivating positive emotions can [broaden and build](#) our brain's mindset and resources as well as ultimately create an [upward spiral](#) of positive emotions, which promotes learning, engagement, skill acquisition and creativity.

So, why not use Jolts of Joy as brain breaks? A quick brain break can work wonders for re-energizing your classroom. Whether it's a short dance party, a stretch session, or a quick mindfulness exercise, these brief pauses help students reset and recharge. Regular brain breaks reduce stress and boost creativity and focus, leading to a more joyful and productive learning environment.

2. Identify Emotions with a Sorting Activity

This [Positive/Negative Emotions Sorting Deck](#) is a great way to introduce the concept of positive emotions and start to distinguish between positive and negative emotions.

Here's how the activity works:

Print the deck and cut out the pictures. Then, introduce the concept of positive emotions by having students identify what makes them feel positive emotions (like joy, gratitude, love and awe) versus negative emotions (like stress, anxiety and anger). Have students sort pictures of events, places and experiences into two categories: positive emotions and negative emotions.

When sorting, use behavior-specific praise to acknowledge that “YES! ____ makes you feel love/joy/gratitude/awe/inspiration/etc.”

You can incorporate this activity into morning or end-of-day meetings, use it as a brain break to help with transitions, integrate it into small groups, or make it a part of an individual coaching session. Families can use these at home, too!

3. Create a Jolts of Joy Bulletin Board

Start the year with a classroom ritual that puts joy front and center. The [Jolts of Joy bulletin board](#) is an interactive way for students to identify and share what brings them joy, including expressions of autistic joy (a concept that highlights the excitement neurodiverse students experience when engaging in their unique interests or sensory experiences).

Here's how it works:

- Have your students brainstorm activities or moments that bring them instant joy, such as looking at a photo of a favorite place or activity, engaging in a special interest, or sharing a funny joke.
- Students can design their own Jolts of Joy activities and add them to the class poster.
- As a class, build out your Jolts of Joy bulletin board with all the suggestions. Hang it up so everyone can see and reference it throughout the year.

This activity encourages students to be mindful of what makes them happy and empowers them to create a positive classroom culture. Plus, the bulletin board is a constant reminder that joy is always within reach and that everyone's unique expressions of joy are valued.

4. Create a Joy Jar

Work with students to create a jar full of notes representing Jolts of Joy (simple activities that bring a quick moment of positivity). Some examples: Watch your favorite video, color a picture, do a TikTok dance, do a two-minute meditation, take a quick walk, read a chapter in your book, play a card game, do 20 jumping jacks, etc.! Encourage students to grab a Jolt of Joy card when they're down or just need a boost. Families can use this at home, too.

Mental Health: My Life is Worth Living - Depression (Amie's Story All Episodes)

[My Life is Worth Living](#), Grade Level Grades 6-12

Subject: [Health and Wellness](#) — [Mental, Emotional and Social Health](#) • [Social Emotional Learning](#) — [Develops Positive Behaviors](#), [Manages Behavior](#)



[Click here to watch all 4 Episodes](#)

About This Lesson

[My Life is Worth Living](#) is a mental wellness and suicide prevention series produced by the [Cook Center for Human Connection](#) in collaboration with [Wonder Media](#). Each episode models positive coping skills and positive mental wellness techniques.

Character Synopsis: Jam-packed days and meticulous planning help 16-year-old Amie stay organized and pursue her goals. With the help of her therapist, her family, and her boyfriend, Amie is learning that there's no shame in continuing to struggle, that relying on the support of loved ones doesn't make her a burden, and that a sense of hope and purpose can help her cope with negative thoughts.

Episodes Synopses: Homework and extracurriculars fill 16-year-old Amie's hours, and every new task helps her stay positive. When she accidentally damages her new day planner, however, the negative thoughts that she wished were gone come spiraling back. But, she's learning that the relationships she's been avoiding are really the connections she needs to heal.

In each My Life is Worth Living lesson plan, you will find partner and class discussion prompts, writing prompts, a group activity, and a family resource. This lesson is appropriate for grades 6-12.

Coming Up in October

- [Teaching the U.S. Constitution and Civic Ideals: Why Voting Matters in Every Election, Part 2](#) with National Constitution Center
Grades 6-12
Oct. 20, 5 p.m.-6 p.m. EDT
Explore how to effectively teach students the importance of voting by connecting it to the Constitution and the principles that underpin our civic education. Learn about the most influential strategies for educating students about voting, civic responsibility, and how to navigate the complexities of the electoral process as the election approaches.
- [AFT Book Club: A Conversation with Heather Cox Richardson](#)
Grades 9-12, Higher Education
Oct. 20, 6 p.m.-7 p.m. EDT
Join our October AFT Book Club session discussing New York Times best-selling

book, *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America*. Dive into a compelling conversation on the intricate history and ongoing struggles of American democracy.

We hope you'll find these sessions filled with new ideas and fresh perspectives to help you address civic education this fall and beyond.



The MN Guild is looking for volunteers to join our board. The only requirements are to have interest in supporting the charter school community, share your time and talents and support our vision and mission. We hold a board meeting on a monthly basis (with exceptions for holidays) in person and virtually. We are looking for individuals with a passion for education and support the philosophy that all children and teachers deserve a positive educational environment and opportunity.

If you are interested, please email Jim Zacchini at jim.zacchini@guildschools.org



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:

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Buddy Ferrari,

MN Guild Project Tech

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



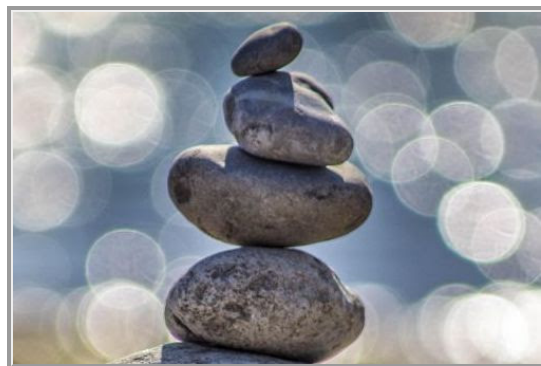
Our Vision:

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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