More than 100 academic programs, challenges, competitions, events and enrichment opportunities endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council for Minnesota K-12 students.
Dear Colleagues,

Reach for the Stars is your guide to academic enrichment programs and activities that will supplement classroom learning and broaden or increase student performance. This catalogue features information on six types of statewide programs to complement classroom teaching and learning: challenges and competitions, awards and recognitions, conferences and institutes, classroom enrichment, leadership development, and out of school enrichment. These programs cover a wide range of subject areas and grade levels from kindergarten through adult. Whether offered outside the school day or embedded within classroom curricula, these programs will help students discover and develop their interests, passions and talents. They will help schools and communities support and integrate programs for students to stretch their abilities, learn new skills and reach new heights in learning.

With more than 100 active programs included in Reach for the Stars, we believe you will find one or more programs to help students, parents and schools meet personal expectations and local, state or national academic goals and standards.

Reach for the Stars is available on the Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) website www.synergyexchange.org in a PDF format for your reference, along with newly endorsed programs and updated information. Please refer to the program and activity providers’ websites listed in Reach for the Stars for event schedules and program updates. An application is posted on the Synergy website for any statewide program, competition or recognition that desires endorsement by the Minnesota Academic League Council (the state academic counterpart to the Minnesota State High School League) for inclusion in Reach for the Stars.

The Reach for the Stars catalogue is compiled by Synergy staff, working in conjunction with volunteer members of the Minnesota Academic League Council. Printing and distribution of Reach for the Stars to our partnering organizations is made possible through a generous contribution from Lifetouch. Distribution is facilitated through an expanded partnership network including several statewide and regional education organizations and associations as referenced in this catalogue. Preparation and updates of the catalogue are supported in part by the affiliate members of the Minnesota Academic League. Finally, our thanks go to the hundreds of volunteers, organizations and program providers whose combined efforts result in tens of thousands of Minnesota students enjoying challenging, stimulating and entertaining academic enrichment opportunities!

Best wishes for a great academic year,

Wanda Sommers Wall, Executive Director
Synergy & Leadership Exchange

Paul Brinkman, Board Chair
Minnesota Academic League Council
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• Destination ImagiNation
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• MSHSL One Act Play
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• U.S. Academic Triathlon
• U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad
• WordMasters Challenge
• WordWright Challenge
• World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT
- Academic Decathlon®
- Academic Pentathlon
- BestPrep eMentors
- Calendar in the Classroom
- Classroom Plus
- Close Up Washington D.C.
- Dream It. Do It. Minnesota
- Financial Matters
- Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
- Junior Achievement K-12 Classroom Programs
- Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
- LifeSmarts
- Math Masters
- MathCEP – Saturday Math Enrichment Programs
- Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools (MOEMS®)
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC)
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
- Minnesota Youth Institute Program
- Mock Trial Program
- National History Day in Minnesota
- Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS)
- Perennial Math Online Math Competition
- Project SUCCESS
- The Stock Market Game™
- Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
- University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program
- Walker Art Center Art Today Tours
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
- Youth Energy Summit (YES!)

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
- American Legion Boys State
- BestPrep’s Minnesota Business Venture
- HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar
- Jostens Renaissance Education
- Minnesota FCCLA
- Minnesota FFA
- Project SUCCESS
- Scholars of Distinction Award Program
- SkillsUSA Minnesota
- United States Senate Youth Program
- YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session
- YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations
- Youth Energy Summit (YES!)

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME ENRICHMENT
- Concordia Language Villages
- Crazy 8s Math Club
- Math Masters
- Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools (MOEMS®)
- Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- Youth Energy Summit (YES!)

CONFERENCES & INSTITUTES
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- American Legion Boys State
- Civil War Teacher Institute
- HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar
- Minnesota FCCLA
- Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College
- SkillsUSA Minnesota
- YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session
- YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations
EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS
Reach for the Stars offers a concise listing of all programs that have met the criteria for endorsement by the Minnesota Academic League Council, with a cross-reference to skill sets and curricular areas addressed by each program. Use the Reach for the Stars listing of Minnesota Academic League programs to:

- Provide interesting curriculum to help students meet state standards
- Advance your students’ interests and learning
- Find activities for the classroom or after-school programs
- Recognize and reward students for their academic achievement
- Integrate applications of learning into your classroom
- Make contacts with sponsoring organizations
- Rally community support for academic activities

All programs and activities are listed alphabetically by program name and include a brief description, appropriate grade or age level, skill sets used, contact information, fees and activity calendar. If you have difficulty finding an activity, check the index under Minnesota, MN, or National, because several programs are statewide or national in scope, which is reflected in the formal program name. A few programs have made slight changes to their name, which may affect their placement in the catalogue.

To participate in an activity, contact the sponsoring organization directly. The sponsor will provide the additional information and support you may need to enroll or participate, as well as any special requirements or deadlines.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND LEARNING
We all recognize the value of feeling good about the work we do. Public recognition of our accomplishments often motivates us to set higher goals, and often encourages others to do the same. For the partnering organizations behind the Reach for the Stars catalogue, recognizing outstanding teaching and learning is just as important as promoting academic excellence at all levels. At Synergy & Leadership Exchange, it is our pleasure to work with sponsors and partner with schools and districts to help bring public recognition to deserving students and educators.

LIFETOUCH PHOTOGRAPHY
For 80 years, Lifetouch Photography has been trusted to provide a photographic record of the growth and maturing of children and families across North America. Lifetouch is represented in cities and towns by more than 19,000 employee owners and is a proud partner of national education associations, including the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, National PTA and National School Boards Association.

**MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE AFFILIATES**

- Academic Decathlon®
- Academic Pentathlon
- American Mathematics Competitions – 8
- American Mathematics Competitions – 10 & 12
- Concordia Language Villages
- Continental Math League
- Crazy 8s Math Club
- Current Events Challenge
- Dream It. Do It. Minnesota
- Economics Challenge
- FIRST LEGO® League Junior
- Gathering of Champions
- Global Food Challenge
- HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar
- Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
- LifeSmarts
- Math Masters
- Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools (MOEMS®)
- Minnesota Academy of Science Junior Science & Humanities Symposium (JSHS)
- Minnesota Academy of Science Middle School and High School Science Bowl
- Minnesota Academy of Science State Science & Engineering Fair
- Minnesota Business Professionals of America, Secondary Division
- Minnesota DECA
- Minnesota FCCLA
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
- Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
- Minnesota Regional Future City Competition
- Minnesota State High School Mathematics League
- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Essay Contest
- MSHSL/FIRST® Robotics
- MTEEA Super Mileage Competition
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- National History Day in Minnesota
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- Scholars of Distinction Award Program
- School Chess Association
- SkillsUSA Minnesota
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- WordMasters Challenge
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
- YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session
- YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations
- Youth Energy Summit (YES!)
★ACADEMIC DECATHLON®

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

A national scholastic competition designed to stimulate intellectual growth and encourage greater respect for knowledge. The format includes students with A, B and C grade-point averages competing in 10 curricular areas. Competitions range from local scrimmages to national contests. This year’s theme is World War II.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, factual recall, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning

Program provider: South Central Service Cooperative
Fees and Deadlines: Participation fee $350 per team of nine students. New teams receive free materials from USAD and participation fee is waived for the first year with a two-year participation agreement. Team registration deadline: Oct. 21, 2016. AcaDec Online Meets: TBD. The state competition will be held Feb. 26–27, 2017 in Chaska; National competition will be held April 20–22, 2017 in Madison, WI.

Website: www.mnscsc.org
Email: jswenson@mnscsc.org
Phone: (507) 389-5107 or (612) 578-3377
Mailing Address: Joyce Swenson
South Central Service Cooperative
2075 Lookout Drive
North Mankato, MN 56003

2016 Minnesota Academic Decathlon® State Champions, St. Peter High School

★ACADEMIC PENTATHLON

Grades 6–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

Academic Pentathlon, the newest program of United States Academic Decathlon® and the premier national scholastic competition for middle school students, was created to provide opportunities for students to experience the challenges of rigorous team and individual competition. The USAD® curriculum addresses a number of national education content and curriculum standards. Each student competes in five events: Fine Arts (art and music), Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science. The curricular theme for 2016-2017 is “World War II,” which runs parallel to the high school Academic Decathlon® theme.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, factual recall, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning

Program provider: South Central Service Cooperative
Fees and Deadlines: School registration and payment deadline: Nov. 10, 2016. School registration and curriculum site license: $250. See the website for competition dates. National competition: May 19–20, 2017, Minneapolis, MN.

Website: www.mnscsc.org
Email: jswenson@mnscsc.org
Phone: (507) 389-5107 or (612) 578-3377
Mailing Address: Joyce Swenson
South Central Service Cooperative
2075 Lookout Drive
North Mankato, MN 56003
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING
Grade 11
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions

The Achievement Awards in Writing is a school-based writing program established in 1957 to encourage high school students in their writing and to publicly recognize some of the best student writers in the nation. The National Council of Teachers of English will give achievement awards in writing to students nominated and cited as excellent writers by judges. Only students who are JUNIORS in the academic year 2016–17 may be nominated for 2017 awards; they must be candidates for high school graduation in 2018.

Academic skills: Writing, creativity and critical thinking
Program provider: Achievement Awards in Writing
Fees and Deadlines: Nominations due in February. Winners are announced in May.
Website: www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa
Email: cstewart@ncte.org
Phone: (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283
Mailing Address: Carrie Stewart
National Council of Teachers of English
1111 W. Kenyon Road
Urbana, IL 61801

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY GIRLS STATE
Grade 11
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

The program is a practical application of Americanism and good citizenship. The purpose is to provide citizenship training for young women, to afford an opportunity to live together as self-governing citizens and to inform themselves about the duties, privileges, rights and responsibilities of American citizenship.

Academic skills: Cooperation, problem solving and critical thinking
Program provider: American Legion Auxiliary
Fees and Deadlines: Fees paid by American Legion Auxiliary Units (local chapters). Visit website for details.
Website: www.mnala.org
Email: deptoffice@mnala.org
Phone: (651) 224-7634
Mailing Address: MN American Legion Auxiliary
State Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th St., Room 314
St. Paul, MN 55155

AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE
Grade 11
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

American Legion Boys State is a practical training program in local and state government in which selected boys participate in authentic learning experiences. We attempt to illustrate to the boys the principles of representative form of government, and arouse an enduring interest in governmental affairs.

Academic skills: Critical thinking and creativity
Program provider: American Legion Boys State
Fees and Deadlines: Fees paid by sponsoring American Legion Post. Applications accepted on first-come, first-served basis if qualified.
Website: www.mnboysstate.org
Email: jkelley@mnlegion.org
Phone: (651) 291-1800, toll free (866) 259-9163
Mailing Address: Jennifer Kelley
The American Legion
20 W. 12th St., Room 300A
St. Paul, MN 55155
The American Mathematics Competitions (AMC) seeks to increase interest in mathematics and develop problem-solving skills through friendly and fun competition. The AMC 8 is a 25-question, 40-minute, multiple choice test with no penalty for guessing. A student’s score is the number of problems correctly solved. Problems draw on material from the middle school mathematics curriculum. Created by university and college mathematicians, the AMC problems map easily to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics. No problem requires the use of algebra or a calculator. Students compete for individual recognition rather than as part of a team.

**Academic skills:** Problem solving  
**Program provider:** Mathematical Association of America  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Please see website for details.  
**Website:** www.maa.org/math-competitions  
**Email:** amcinfo@maa.org  
**Phone:** (800) 527-3690  
**Mailing Address:** AMC Staff  
Mathematical Association of America  
ATTN: AMC 8 Registration  
P.O. Box 471  
Annapolis Junction, MD 20701

The American Mathematics Competitions (AMC) seeks to increase interest in mathematics and develop problem-solving skills through friendly and fun competition. Both AMC 10 and AMC 12 are 25-question, 75-minute, multiple choice tests administered by your school. The AMC 10 covers subject matter normally associated with grades 9 and 10. The AMC 12 covers the high school mathematics curriculum, excluding calculus. The problems range from fairly easy to extremely difficult. Created by university and college mathematicians, the AMC problems map easily to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics. Students compete for individual recognition rather than as part of a team.

**Academic skills:** Problem solving  
**Program provider:** Mathematical Association of America  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Please see website for details.  
**Website:** www.maa.org/math-competitions  
**Email:** amcinfo@maa.org  
**Phone:** (800) 527-3690  
**Mailing Address:** AMC Staff  
Mathematical Association of America  
ATTN: AMC 10/12 Registration  
P.O. Box 471  
Annapolis Junction, MD 20701
BESTPREP EMENTORS
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

High school classrooms of students and mentors exchange one email message per week for 6–10 weeks on a series of guiding question prompts. Email mentoring offers students the chance to develop a relationship with an adult other than their parents and teachers, who encourage career exploration, creating a career vision and encourage youth. eMentors can help students increase academic motivation, improve their reading and writing skills, provide pathways to career awareness, gain experience using technology, and promote self-confidence.

Academic skills: Creativity, interdisciplinary and leadership development
Program provider: BestPrep
Fees and Deadlines: Free, provided volunteer mentors are available. Schools provide their own bus transportation to the Meet & Greet held at the mentors’ worksite.
Website: www.bestprep.org
Email: ementors@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6326
Mailing Address: Samantha Funk
BestPrep
7100 Northland Circle N., Suite 120
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

BESTPREP’S MINNESOTA BUSINESS VENTURE
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development

Minnesota Business Venture (MBV) is ideal for students dreaming of starting their own business, searching for career direction, heading off for college or just eager to get into the workforce. Students spend a week during the summer at St. John’s University or St. Cloud State University developing leadership, teamwork and communication skills as well as important business experience from numerous business professionals. MBV helps students develop a career focus and plan, build a reference pool and hone in on life skills.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, teamwork and time/budget management
Program provider: BestPrep
Fees and Deadlines: Minnesota Business Venture is offered twice in July: Tentative dates July 9–14, 2017 at St. Cloud State University; July 23-28, 2017 at St. John’s University. Students pay $200 for the week. Save $50 with early bird discount.
Website: www.bestprep.org
Email: mbv@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6325
Mailing Address: Minnesota Business Venture - Program Manager
BestPrep
7100 Northland Circle N., Suite 120
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

CALENDAR IN THE CLASSROOM
Grades K–5
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Calendar in the Classroom provides a series of standards-based K–5 grade level lessons utilizing information and principles contained in the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar. With the help of an informative video, these lessons are presented in such a way that the generalist teacher can teach real science with confidence and ease. Jeffers Foundation offers a complimentary workshop to coordinate the lessons developed for use with the calendar. Teachers who complete the workshop and use the lessons and calendar in the classroom are provided a complimentary copy of the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar by Freshwater Society each year that they use the materials in their classroom.

Academic skills: Math, science, language arts and visual art
Program provider: Jeffers Foundation
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Program is ongoing.
Website: www.jeffersfoundation.org
Email: edorsil@earthlink.net
Phone: (651) 429-1228
Mailing Address: Sil Pembleton
Jeffers Foundation
P.O. Box 47479
Plymouth, MN 55447
**CIVIL WAR TEACHER INSTITUTE**

Grades 4–12  
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes

Teachers will learn exciting methods of teaching the Civil War through workshops, lectures and battlefield tours.

**Academic skills:** Teacher training program, research and global citizenship  
**Program provider:** Civil War Preservation Trust  
**Fees and Deadlines:** The event is free (with a $100 refundable deposit) and travel scholarships are available. See website for more details.  
**Website:** [www.civilwar.org/aboutus/events/teacher-institute](http://www.civilwar.org/aboutus/events/teacher-institute)  
**Email:** teacherinstitute@civilwar.org  
**Phone:** (202) 367-1861, ext. 7223  
**Mailing Address:** Civil War Preservation Trust  
1156 15th St. NW, Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20005

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**CLASSROOM PLUS**

Grades 4–12  
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Through BestPrep’s Classroom Plus program, teachers expand learning opportunities for students by bringing business and education together. The program staff coordinates volunteer speakers, tours, mock interviewers and career days to supplement classroom curricula. More than 400 volunteers from across Minnesota bring their business and career expertise into the classroom. They help connect students’ classroom learning with real world applications while serving as positive role models.

**Academic skills:** Critical thinking. Curriculum: business, personal finance, consumer economics, technology, communication, careers and career education  
**Program provider:** BestPrep  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Program is free. Please allow four weeks to schedule speakers.  
**Website:** [www.bestprep.org](http://www.bestprep.org)  
**Email:** cpinfo@bestprep.org  
**Phone:** (763) 398-0090  
**Mailing Address:** BestPrep  
c/o Classroom Plus Program Manager  
7100 Northland Circle N., Suite 402  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

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**CLOSE UP WASHINGTON D.C.**

Grades 6–12  
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Close Up offers transformative programs in Washington, D.C. for middle school and high school students. Teacher incentives and free participation with a minimum number of students. Many of Close Up’s curriculum components meet or exceed state and national history and social studies standards.

**Academic skills:** Critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, American history and governmental studies  
**Program provider:** Close Up Foundation  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Call for fees. Registration is rolling; programs run year round.  
**Website:** [www.closeup.org](http://www.closeup.org)  
**Email:** info@closeup.org  
**Phone:** (800) CLOSE UP  
**Mailing Address:** Close Up Foundation  
1330 Braddock Place, Suite 400  
Alexandria, VA 22314
CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES

Ages 6–18
Program Category: Out of School Time Enrichment

Since 1961, the Concordia Language Villages has been America’s premier language and culture immersion programs for youth. Students age 6-18 can learn one of 15 languages or improve language skills at ACA certified and accredited summer camp or “language villages” at various sites in northern Minnesota, including seven sites featuring culturally authentic sites located near Bemidji, MN. Languages offered include: Arabic, Chinese, Danish, English (ESL), Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish or Swedish. Programs include day camps, one- and two-week residential camps, and a four-week high school credit options. School groups can attend “Village Weekends” in Bemidji, MN during the academic year to experience language and cultural immersion in Spanish, French, German, Japanese or Chinese. Custom group options can also be arranged for other times and/or languages. Emphasis is on cultural awareness, global and peace issues, environmental stewardship, and language learning skills.

Academic skills: World language proficiency, global citizenship, environmental stewardship, recall, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, cooperation and leadership
Program provider: Concordia College, Moorhead
Fees and Deadlines: Check website for fees, scholarships and dates.
Website: www.concordialanguagevillages.org
Email: clv@cord.edu
Phone: (800) 222-4750
Mailing Address: Lisa Steffens
Concordia Language Villages
901 Eighth St. S.
Moorhead, MN 56562

CONTINENTAL MATH LEAGUE

Grades 2–9
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

This program is designed both to maximize student opportunities to participate and to improve students’ problem-solving skills. Students compete in their own schools with others at the same grade level across the United States. Activities can be held during regular class time. Math books also available. The meets and books should provide excellent support to the Common Core Standards program.

Academic skills: Critical thinking and problem solving
Program provider: Continental Mathematics League
Fees and Deadlines: Grades 2–3: $85 per team, Grades 4–9: $95 first team & $80 additional teams, Computer Science Grades 3–5: $75 first team & $60 additional teams; Registration October 2016; Meet dates: November 2016–March 2017.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Mailing Address: Joseph Quartararo
Continental Mathematics League
P.O. Box 2196
Saint James, NY 11780
**CRAZY 8S MATH CLUB**

Grades K–5  
Program Category: Out of School Time Enrichment

Crazy 8s is an over-the-top after-school club that is designed to get you fired up about math. You’ll learn the math behind your favorite activities. It’s math gone wild, nothing like your usual math club! You’ll build glow-in-the-dark structures, crack secret spy codes and play games like the Toilet Paper Olympics.

Academic skills: Factual recall, problem solving and teamwork  
Program provider: Bedtime Math Foundation  
Fees and Deadlines: Free  
Website: www.bedtimemath.org  
Email: liz@bedtimemath.org  
Phone: (908) 344-3290  
Mailing Address: Liz Ross  
Bedtime Math Foundation  
17-19 Union Place, Third Floor  
Summit, NJ 07901

**CURRENT EVENTS CHALLENGE**

Grades 5–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

For 32 weeks of the school year, teachers who subscribe go online and download the weekly edition that highlights the news, sports and entertainment from the week. Teachers also receive two comprehensive semester tests to be used to measure the effectiveness of the program and complete instructions on the recommended implementation.

Academic skills: Factual recall, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, teamwork and global citizenship  
Fees and Deadlines: $50/year for new subscribers; $100/year subsequent year. September–May.  
Website: www.currenteventschallenge.com  
Email: russ.jam.arm@gmail.com  
Phone: (320) 563-8423  
Mailing Address: Russell Armstrong  
1700 Third Ave. S.  
Wheaton, MN 56296

**CYBERPATRIOT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CYBER DEFENSE COMPETITION**

Grades 9–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

CyberPatriot is the premiere national high school cyber-defense competition created to inspire high school students toward careers in cyber-security or other science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines critical to our nation’s future.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking and computer skills  
Program provider: Air Force Association  
Website: www.uscyberpatriot.org  
Email: info@uscyberpatriot.org  
Phone: (877) 885-5716  
Mailing Address: Air Force Association  
CyberPatriot Program Office  
1501 Lee Highway  
Arlington, VA 22209-1198
DESTINATION IMAGINATION
Grades K–College
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Destination Imagination’s (DI) purpose is to inspire and equip students to become the next generation of innovators and leaders. Annually, DI offers seven new standards-based challenges in STEM, improv, visual arts, service learning and early learning. Students engage in the creative process from imagination to innovation by solving open-ended challenges. Teams present their solutions to trained appraisers at tournaments around the state and around the world. In working to solve challenges, teams learn 21st century skills to build on their unique strengths and have fun along the way. The new early learning product, Pathways, is designed to prepare 3-6 year olds with a jump start in literacy as well as STEM concepts, while promoting critical and creative thinking skills. These skills, combined with DI’s unique and proven style, aim to increase social, emotional and educational outcomes for participants.

Academic skills: STEM concepts, problem solving, critical thinking, time/budget management, creativity, cooperation, improvisation, research and teamwork
Program provider: Intermediate District 287
Fees and Deadlines: For more information, please visit our website at www.mndi.org.
Website: www.mndi.org; www.idodi.org
Email: pfschroeder@district287.org
Phone: (763) 550-7212
Mailing Address: Pamela Schroeder, Affiliate Director
Intermediate Dist. #287
1820 Xenium Lane N.
Plymouth, MN 55441

DEUTSCHFEST
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The Minnesota AATG chapter sponsors a Deutsches Sprachfest for high school students. More than 2,000 students from all parts of Minnesota gather to exhibit their talents in German language and culture related projects. Projects range from computer programs through photography, skits, posters and song. A large number of awards are given for excellent achievement at the daylong festival.

Academic skills: Knowledge of German culture and use of German language
Program provider: Minnesota Association of Teachers of German
Fees and Deadlines: To be announced
Website: www.mnaatg.blogspot.com/p/general-information.html
Email: mthamert@csbsju.edu
Phone: (320) 363-3520
Mailing Address: Mark Thamert
Minnesota Association of Teachers of German
2850 Abbey Plaza
P.O. Box 2000
Collegeville, MN 56321

CAN'T FIND A PROGRAM YOU ARE LOOKING FOR?

Check the listing on pages 3-4. If you have difficulty finding an activity, check the index under Minnesota, MN, or National, because several programs are statewide or national in scope, which is reflected in the formal program name. A few programs have made slight changes to their name, which may affect their placement in the catalogue.
DREAM IT. DO IT. MINNESOTA

Grades 6–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

Dream It. Do It. Minnesota helps develop the pipeline of manufacturing workforce, improves the industry image, and increases knowledge about manufacturing career paths.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork

Program provider: 360 Manufacturing Center of Excellence

Fees and Deadlines: Varies by resource/event. Tour of Manufacturing in October is free as well as the Teacher Guide, Build It Better! game app, and other resources that are available year-round.

Website: www.dreamitdoitmn.com
Email: sfjerstad@bemidjistate.edu
Phone: (218) 755-2948
Mailing Address: Shane Fjerstad
360 Manufacturing Center of Excellence
Bemidji State University
1500 Birchmont Drive NE, #34
Bemidji, MN 56601

ECONOMICS CHALLENGE

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Students compete individually and as a team answering multiple-choice questions on microeconomics, macroeconomics and international economics. After the third round of written tests (15 questions per topic), the top two teams compete head-to-head in a lightning “quiz bowl” round. The winning team advances to regional, state and national competitions. Teams compete in three divisions: small school, large school and advanced placement. Location in a division is determined by the length and nature of the economics class in which students are enrolled. Also available is Economics Challenge ONLINE! Visit www.mcee.umn.edu for more information.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, problem solving and teamwork

Program provider: Minnesota Council on Economic Education

Fees and Deadlines: No fee, but transportation to state competition is required. Transportation to national competition is paid. Contests are held each spring.

Website: www.mcee.umn.edu
Email: mcee@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-3727
Mailing Address: Jane Stockman
Minnesota Council on Economic Education
1994 Buford Ave.
116 Ruttan Hall
St. Paul, MN 55108
FEDERAL RESERVE ESSAY CONTEST
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The essay topic for this economic education contest provides an opportunity for teachers and students in the Ninth Federal Reserve District to study issues concerning economics, banking and the Federal Reserve.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, research and writing
Program provider: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis—Regional Outreach Department
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Essays and student entry forms due in late March. Winners announced in late April. Please check website for specific dates.
Website: www.minneapolisfed.org/community/student-resources/student-essay-contest
Email: Joseph.Mahon@mpls.frb.org
Phone: (612) 204-5254
Mailing Address: Joseph Mahon
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
Regional Outreach Department
P.O. Box 291
Minneapolis, MN 55480-0291

FINANCIAL MATTERS
Grades 6–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

BestPrep’s Financial Matters program equips students with the tools necessary to develop sound money management skills through industry professionals who help develop and deliver presentations focused on financial literacy. From credit to scholarships, budgeting to buying a car, the program provides real-life lessons in money management.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, problem solving and time/budget management
Program provider: BestPrep
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Speakers through Financial Matters can be requested anytime throughout the school year. Teachers should request at least four weeks in advance.
Website: www.bestprep.org
Email: fm@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6326
Mailing Address: Samantha Funk
BestPrep
7100 Northland Circle N., Suite 402
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

FIRST LEGO® LEAGUE
Grades 4–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

FIRST LEGO® League (FLL) is a worldwide program for 9–14 year-old students created through a partnership between FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) and the LEGO® Company. FLL helps kids discover the fun in science and technology using real-world context and hands-on experimentation.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork and cooperation
Program provider: High Tech Kids
Fees and Deadlines: Please visit www.hightechkids.org for detailed information.
Website: www.hightechkids.org
Email: vicki@hightechkids.org
Phone: (612) 781-2203
Mailing Address: Vicki Coaty
High Tech Kids
111 3rd Ave. S., Suite 120
Minneapolis, MN 55401
FIRST LEGO® LEAGUE JUNIOR
Grades K–3
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

FIRST LEGO® League Junior (FLL Jr) teams work together to discover how science and technology impact the world around them. Teams work with LEGO elements to build a motorized model and create a Show Me poster related to their research of a yearly theme.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork and time/budget management

Program provider: High Tech Kids
Fees and Deadlines: National registration fee $50, includes a step-by-step lesson plan. Fee to participate in a Minnesota Expo $50. Please visit www.hightechkids.org for detailed information.
Website: www.hightechkids.org
Email: vicki@hightechkids.org
Phone: (612) 781-2203
Mailing Address: Vicki Coaty
High Tech Kids
111 3rd Ave. S., Suite 120
Minneapolis, MN 55401

FIRST® TECH CHALLENGE
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

FIRST® Tech Challenge (FTC) is a hands on and rapid prototyping robotic experience for students in grades 7–12. Teams build and program robots, based on sound engineering principles, to compete in an alliance format. FTC helps kids develop strategic, problem solving and team building skills.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning

Program provider: High Tech Kids
Fees and Deadlines: Please visit www.hightechkids.org for detailed information.
Website: www.hightechkids.org
Email: vicki@hightechkids.org
Phone: (612) 781-2203
Mailing Address: Vicki Coaty
High Tech Kids
111 3rd Ave. S., Suite 120
Minneapolis, MN 55401
CALLING ALL STUDENTS . . .
DESIGN THE 2017 GATHERING OF CHAMPIONS LOGO!

Submit your original logo design ideas for the 2017 Gathering of Champions, which will appear on the certificates of achievement, magnets, T-shirts, banners and other materials. The winner receives a $100 prize and framed copy of the winning design. The contest is open to all Minnesota K–12 students. All entries must be designed by a currently enrolled student and be received by March 31, 2017. See complete rules for submission on the Synergy & Leadership Exchange website. Teachers make this a classroom activity! Celebrate the importance of academics and the arts with your students.

Congratulations to Cody Fox from Tri-City United High School, winner of the 2016 Logo Contest.
HOBY YOUTH LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

Grade 10
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

HOBY is a three-day transformative youth leadership training seminar. Areas of focus include communication for understanding, critical thinking, teamwork and individual leadership. Participants explore current issues facing our communities, develop tools for planning and action, and receive access to a world-wide network of HOBY Alumni.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership development, global citizenship and time/budget management
Program provider: Hugh O’Brien Youth Leadership – Minnesota, Inc.
Fees and Deadlines: Cost is $350 per student. Partial scholarships available for one student per school. Leadership Seminar occurs every June. See packet sent to school guidance counselor or website for more details.
Website: www.hoby.org
Email: info@hobyminnesota.org
Phone: (608) 658-8990
Mailing Address: Donna Herbel
Hugh O’Brien Youth Leadership – Minnesota, Inc.
318 E. River St.
Monticello, MN 55362

JOSTENS RENAISSANCE EDUCATION

Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Leadership Development

For more than 25 years, Jostens has partnered with educators to renew school climate and culture through Jostens Renaissance Education. Thousands of schools across North America are proud to call themselves “Jostens Renaissance Schools,” sharing a sense of pride that is reflected in the results seen in improved academic performance, behavior, student engagement and overall school spirit. Visit JostensRenaissance.com to find ways to develop student character, create meaningful connections and build a culture of celebration!

Academic skills: Critical thinking, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking and teamwork
Program provider: Jostens Renaissance Education
Fees and Deadlines: Please visit www.jostensrenaissance.com for information.
Website: www.jostensrenaissance.com
Email: renaissance@jostens.com
Phone: (800) 624-5534
Mailing Address: Jostens Renaissance Education
3601 Minnesota Drive, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55435

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CAPSTONE PROGRAMS

Grades 5–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Junior Achievement (JA) Capstone programs combine practical applications in real world situations with principles learned in the classroom. Students explore lessons of entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness, and put those skills to work in simulated communities and workplace settings. JA Capstone programs include: JA Finance Park, JA Titan, JA Company Program and JA Job Shadow.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, public speaking, teamwork, leadership development, global citizenship, environmental stewardship, time/budget management and personal development
Program provider: Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest
Fees and Deadlines: Fees vary by location, contact for details.
Website: www.jaum.org
Email: lachelle@jaum.org
Phone: (651) 255-0055
Mailing Address: LaChelle Williams
Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest
1800 White Bear Ave. N.
Maplewood, MN 55109
JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT K–12 CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

Grades K–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

With the concepts of financial literacy, workforce readiness and entrepreneurship, all Junior Achievement (JA) curriculum is correlated to state education standards for language arts, social studies and mathematics. Every lesson incorporates innovative, hands-on activities that make it fun and motivating for students to learn while business and community volunteers, recruited by JA, add real world experience to the classroom education.

Academic skills:
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Public speaking
- Teamwork
- Leadership development
- Global citizenship
- Environmental stewardship
- Time/budget management
- Personal development

Program provider: Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest
Fees and Deadlines: Fees vary by location, contact for further details.
Website: www.jaum.org
Email: lachelle@jaum.org
Phone: (651) 255-0055
Mailing Address: LaChelle Williams
Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest
1800 White Bear Ave. N.
Maplewood, MN 55109

JUNIOR DUCK STAMP CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Classroom Enrichment (Waterfowl conservation curriculum and art contest)

The Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program is a dynamic standards-based education program designed to spark youth interest in habitat conservation through science, art, math and technology. It stresses wildlife observation, nature journaling, photography, enjoying and exploring the outside world, and investigating the treasures of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Students in kindergarten through high school are encouraged to interpret the natural world through artistic expression. During the contest, youth are judged in four groups according to grade level: K–3, 4–6, 7–9 and 10–12. For each state, district, or territory, there are 100 awards: 12 first place, 12 second place, 12 third place and up to 64 honorable mentions. The Best of Show art is forwarded to the national contest.

Academic skills:
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Research
- Environmental stewardship
- Artistic expression

Program provider: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Fees and Deadlines: No fee. Entries for the Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest must be postmarked by midnight of March 15 annually. Please see website for details.
Website: www.fws.gov/juniorduck
Email: lynda_knutsen@fws.gov
Phone: (218) 449-4115, ext. 202
Mailing Address: Lynda Knutsen
Lake Agassiz NWR
22996 290th St. NE
Middle River, MN 56737
KIDS PHILOSOPHY SLAM
Grades K–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

A philosophical competition designed to make philosophy accessible and fun for kids of all ages and abilities, to promote a philosophical dialogue between kids and adults, and to promote a greater awareness of philosophy and education in everyday life. More than $3,000 in prizes are available to students and schools. Home school participation as well as international participation is encouraged.

Academic skills: Creativity and critical thinking
Fees and Deadlines: There is a $25 registration fee for schools to participate and a fee of $2 per home school. Topic and entry date to be announced.
Website: www.philosophyslam.org
Email: info@philosophyslam.org
Phone: (507) 467-0102
Mailing Address: John Davis
P.O. Box 406
Lanesboro, MN 55949

KNOWLEDGE BOWL COMPETITION — JR. HIGH
Grades 7–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Junior High Knowledge Bowl is an interdisciplinary academic contest for junior high school students. Teams of students answer questions in a variety of academic areas.

Academic skills: Recall, critical thinking, cooperation and problem solving
Program provider: Lakes Country Service Cooperative
Fees and Deadlines: Fees and dates vary by region.
Website: www.lcsc.org/Domain/47
Email: sward@lcsc.org
Phone: (218) 739-3273
Mailing Address: Susan Ward
Lakes Country Service Cooperative
1001 E. Mount Faith
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

KNOWLEDGE BOWL COMPETITION — SR. HIGH
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Senior High Knowledge Bowl is an interdisciplinary academic contest. Students work in teams of four to answer questions in a variety of academic areas. Students can compete for state championships.

Academic skills: Recall, critical thinking, cooperation and problem solving
Program provider: Lakes Country Service Cooperative
Fees and Deadlines: Fees and dates vary by region; State Knowledge Bowl meets spring 2017.
Website: www.lcsc.org/Domain/47
Email: sward@lcsc.org
Phone: (218) 739-3273
Mailing Address: Susan Ward
Lakes Country Service Cooperative
1001 E. Mount Faith
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
LIFESMARTS

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

LifeSmarts is a fun, game show style competition that rewards students in grades 9–12 for their consumer knowledge. This competition prepares students to enter the real world as smart adult consumers. Participants focus on five key topic areas: consumer rights and responsibilities, the environment, health and safety, personal finance, and technology. Materials are available free of charge that complements the curriculum already in place in middle- and high-schools and can be used as an activity for classes, groups, clubs, and community organizations. LifeSmarts also aligns with national education standards.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, environmental stewardship, factual recall, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, teamwork and time/budget management

Program provider: South Central Service Cooperative
Fees and Deadlines: Participation is free. Online competition generally takes place between September and January. Check the LifeSmarts website for dates. In-person state competitions take place in early February at Century College, White Bear Lake, MN. The national competition is held in April in a major U.S. city.

Website: www.lifesmarts.org
Email: kolson@mnsccc.org
Phone: (507) 327-6191
Mailing Address: Karen Olson
South Central Service Cooperative
2075 Lookout Drive
North Mankato, MN 56003

MATH MASTERS

Grades 5–6
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment

Math Masters challenges students to use critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities in mathematics, while recognizing academic effort and achievement. Students compete as individuals and in teams of five to complete written and timed math tests. There are eight rounds of competitions in all. Students are recognized with plaques, medallions and ribbons in the fact drill round, individual rounds and team competition.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning

Program provider: Math Masters
Fees and Deadlines: Competition dates: Sixth grade March 2–12, 2017; Fifth grade April 20–26, 2017 at more than 42 different sites. Check website for sites, dates and deadlines.

Website: www.mathmastersmn.org
Email: mathmasters@austin.k12.mn.us
Phone: (507) 460-1843
Mailing Address: Janel Horner
Math Masters
301 Third St. NW
Austin, MN 55912
MATHCEP — SATURDAY MATH ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS
Grades 5–7
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

The University of Minnesota’s School of Mathematics Center for Educational Programs (MathCEP) offers enrichment programs for students in grades 5–7 during the school year. The primary objective of these programs is to offer innovative activities focused on a variety of mathematics topics that go beyond the classroom.

Academic skills: Critical thinking and problem solving
Fees and Deadlines: For fees and calendar dates call MathCEP at (612) 625-2861 or visit the website.
Website: www.mathcep.umn.edu/satenrich
Email: mathcep@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-2861
Mailing Address: Enrichment – MathCEP
U of M, 4 Vincent Hall
206 Church St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIADS FOR ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS (MOEMS®)
Grades 4–6 (Division E), 6–8 (Division M)
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment

Math Olympiads is a series of five contests (November–March) in each division. Contests may be administered in the classroom, or in a before/after school program. More than 120,000 students (more than 5,100 teams) from around the world participate in Math Olympiads each year. Tournaments (a full-day event among different teams of students from your region) are exciting face-to-face competitions that may be offered by any school or professional organization in the spring. Facebook: www.facebook.com/moems.org Twitter: @TweetMOEMS

Academic skills: Critical thinking and problem solving
Program provider: MOEMS® - Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
Fees and Deadlines: The standard fee to enroll a team with a United States postal code is $109 using online delivery. Standard registration deadline Oct. 15, 2016 (additional fee for late registration).
Website: www.moems.org
Email: info@moms.org
Phone: (516) 781-2400
Mailing Address: Nicholas J. Restivo
Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
2154 Bellmore Ave.
Bellmore, NY 11710

MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL STEM COMMUNICATOR AWARD
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

The goal of this award is to identify and encourage high school students who show exceptional potential in performing scientific and mathematical research, in communicating their research through writing and in understanding the societal context of their research and results. Top papers are published in the Student Journal of the Minnesota Academy of Science. The top 10 papers will be recognized with a cash awards and medallions.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, interdisciplinary, problem solving, research and technical writing
Program provider: Minnesota Academy of Science
Fees and Deadlines: A $25 non-refundable fee is required with application to cover some of the cost of the program. See website for application, submission requirements and deadlines.
Website: www.mnmas.org/hs-stem-communicator-awards
Email: contact@mnmas.org
Phone: (952) 545-6789
Mailing Address: Karen Newell
Minnesota Academy of Science
970 Raymond Ave., Suite 103
St. Paul, MN 55114
MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE JUNIOR SCIENCE & HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM (JSHS)

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

North Central Regional JSHS is a scientific research paper competition for high school students in Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota. JSHS is designed to encourage students to explore original research topics in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Students present their original research at North Central Regional JSHS in Minneapolis and compete for scholarships, recognition and awards. JSHS aims to widen the pool of trained talent prepared to conduct vital research and development by inspiring Minnesota students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math. The North Central Regional JSHS publicly recognizes students for outstanding achievement with awards and scholarships. The top five papers advance and will participate in the National JSHS competition sponsored by the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force research arms of the services and hosted by the Academy of Applied Science.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking and creativity, critical thinking, technical writing, communication, public speaking, presentation and team building skills

Program provider: Minnesota Academy of Science
Fees and Deadlines: See website under JSHS program for registration information per region. Competition Dates: Mid-March 2017, back-to-back with State Science & Engineering Fair at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center
Website: www.mnmas.org
Email: lise@mnmas.org
Phone: (507) 215-5057
Mailing Address: North Central Regional JSHS Director Lise Weegman
Minnesota Academy of Science
970 Raymond Ave., Suite 103
St. Paul, MN 55114

MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE BOWL

Grades 6–8, 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Students compete in five-person teams solving technical problems and answering questions in all branches of science and math. The Minnesota Academy of Science holds two regional competitions for the state of Minnesota; one for middle school students (grades 6–8) and the other for high school students (grades 9–12). The competition is conducted in a fast-paced question and answer format. Teams go head-to-head and ring in to answer questions, just like the TV show Jeopardy. Each team plays multiple games in the round robin tournament with the chance to advance to a double-elimination championship. The winning team qualifies to represent Minnesota and compete at the National Science Bowl in Washington, D.C. in April. The trip is all expenses paid courtesy of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Academic skills: Factual recall, teamwork, problem solving, leadership development and critical thinking

Program provider: Minnesota Academy of Science
Fees and Deadlines: See website for competition dates. Registration fee: $150 per team of five students.
Website: www.mnmas.org
Email: bdonoho@mnmas.org
Phone: (763) 218-5865
Mailing Address: Barbara Donoho
Minnesota Academy of Science
970 Raymond Ave., Suite 103
St. Paul, MN 55114

Top five paper participants advancing to the national JSHS.

Edina High School Team 1, 2016 Minnesota State Regional Science Bowl for High School Students first place team
MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE STATE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR

Grades 6–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The Minnesota State Science & Engineering Fair (MSSEF) is an annual competition that showcases Minnesota’s best and brightest students in the field of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Since 1938, MSSEF has been the pinnacle of project-based STEM education in Minnesota. MSSEF is the culmination of Regional Science Fairs that occur throughout the state. From approximately 2,500 regional participants, 500 students in grades 6–12 are selected to advance and present their research at MSSEF. More than just a competition, the state science and engineering fair introduces students to new ideas, inspires them to research topics of personal interest, and encourages them to network with professional scientists and their peers. Students compete with their original research for scholarships, recognition and awards. The top four projects in grades 9–12 advance and will participate in an all-expense paid week long trip to the Intel International Science & Engineering Fair competing with more than 1,600 students in more than 70 countries around the world.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, technical writing, public speaking, communication, presentation, creativity and team building

Program provider: Minnesota Academy of Science

Fees and Deadlines: See website for registration information per region.

Competition date: Mid-March 2017 at the Marriott-City Center, Minneapolis.

Website: www.mnmas.org
Email: lise@mnmas.org
Phone: (507) 215-5057
Mailing Address: Director Lise Weegman
Minnesota Academy of Science
970 Raymond Ave., Suite 103
St. Paul, MN 55114

MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM (MAITC)

Grades K–16 and General Public
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

The Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC) program provides quality classroom resources and teacher professional development designed to educate people about agriculture’s role in their survival and create agriculturally literate individuals. An agriculturally literate person understands and can communicate the source and value of agriculture as it affects their quality of life. The materials and programs are closely aligned with state academic standards and the national Common Core standards. MAITC seeks to improve student achievement by applying authentic agricultural examples to teach core curriculum concepts in science, social studies, language arts, math and nutrition. FREE resources available to teachers and students.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, environmental stewardship and agricultural literacy

Program provider: MAITC

Fees and Deadlines: All MAITC resources are FREE except the Children’s Literature Book Bundle.

Website: www.mda.state.mn.us/en/kids.aspx
Email: alan.withers@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 201-6688
Mailing Address: Al Withers, MAITC Program Director
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55155
MINNESOTA BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS OF AMERICA, SECONDARY DIVISION

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The mission of Business Professionals of America (BPA) is to contribute to the preparation of a world-class work force through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic, and technological career skills for business and office students. It combines school-based and work-based learning.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning

Program provider: Minnesota Business Professionals of America
Fees and Deadlines:

Website: www.mnbpa.org
Email: jackie@tekstar.com
Phone: (218) 847-5355
Mailing Address: Jacklyn Schiller
MN Business Professionals of America
21576 NE Pickerel Lake Rd.
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

MINNESOTA DECA

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

DECA is a school-to-work student organization, which provides marketing related activities and leadership development. It combines school-based and work-based learning, focusing on careers in marketing, management and entrepreneurship. Competition is in occupational skills, leadership and management.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning

Program provider: Minnesota Secondary DECA
Fees and Deadlines:

Website: www.mnde.ca.org
Email: jackie@tekstar.com
Phone: (218) 847-5355
Mailing Address: Jackie Schiller
Minnesota Secondary DECA
21576 NE Pickerel Lake Rd.
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
MINNESOTA ENVIROTHON
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The Envirothon is an outdoor learning event for high school students. Teams of five students compete in five learning stations, including soils, aquatics/wetlands, wildlife, forestry and a current environmental topic, and answer 20 hands-on questions relating to the station’s topic. Teams travel to each station and answer an exam in about 30 minutes. They also give a brief oral presentation on a topic related to the environment. At the end of the day, the team with the highest score wins and advances to the next level. The event is held at the regional, state and national level.

Academic skills: Knowledge of natural resource issues and topics, public speaking, research, critical thinking, problem solving skills, interdisciplinary, creativity and teamwork
Program provider: Canon Envirothon (national competition), Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (state competition), Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Districts (regional competitions).
Fees and Deadlines: No fees for regional and state level. Regional events are in late April/early May; State event is the third Monday in May; National event is typically held in July or August.
Website: www.maswcd.org/envirothon.htm
Email: judy.johnston@stevensswcd.org
Phone: (320) 589-4886, ext. 114
Mailing Address: Judy Johnston
12 Highway 28 E., Suite 2
Morris, MN 56267

MINNESOTA FCCLA
Grades 6–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

Work individually, in teams and become an effective leader in your school, community and explore possible careers. Learn about important personal and societal issues with dynamic chapter work at your school, at regional or state conferences. Youth leaders in FCCLA gain confidence, skills in presenting, working on teams, practical knowledge, character development, and creative and critical thinking. FCCLA is a career and technical student organization.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary, research, public speaking, teamwork, leadership development, global citizenship, environmental stewardship, time/budget management and artistic expression
Program provider: MN FCCLA
Fees and Deadlines: Annual individual membership fee is $19. Middle level chapters pay a lump sum through their school. Membership is collected in early fall by chapter advisers. Competitive Events (STAR Events) are held in January–February for regions and in April for state competition. Check website for more information.
Website: www.mnfcca.org
Email: wendy.ambrose@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 330-2855
Mailing Address: Wendy Ambrose
MN FCCLA
3101 Old Highway 8, Suite 200
Roseville, MN 55113
Lifetouch has proudly delivered its SmileSafe photo ID cards and a national safety program to over 500 million parents, investing some $27 million since 2004. As a direct result, missing children in 24 states were returned to their families. As the trusted name in school photography, Lifetouch requires its photographers to pass background and other state-mandated testing to support a safer environment at school. For more information, visit safety.Lifetouch.com.

Lifetouch is the only school photography company to demonstrate its commitment to keeping school data safe by signing a voluntary, enforceable, school-service-provider, privacy pledge (learn more at studentprivacypledge.org). And each year, a third party auditor certifies that Lifetouch meets or exceeds the credit card industry's strict standards for use of financial information. Lifetouch supports local employee owners as they strive to deliver safe and secure relationships.

The safety of children and the security of student data and personal financial information are critical issues for schools.
safety & security

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MINNESOTA FFA
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success!

Academic skills: Communications, leadership and decision-making skills
Program provider: Minnesota FFA
Fees and Deadlines: Please visit www.mnffa.org for information.
Website: www.mnffa.org
Email: jim.ertl@state.mn.us
Phone: (612) 669-3855
Mailing Address: James Ertl
Minnesota FFA
P. O. Box 118
Rosemount, MN 55068

★ MINNESOTA FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM
Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

The Future Problem Solving Program provides students with necessary thinking and problem solving skills, which will serve them throughout their lives, helping them to create their own positive futures. Problem-solving skills, and critical and creative thinking skills, are taught both in the classroom and as an extracurricular activity. There are three competitions each year: region, state and international. There are five components: Team Global Issues Problem Solving Competition, which deals with real life issues; Individual Global Issues Problem Solving Competition, which also deals with real life issues; Scenario Writing, where a short story of 1,500 words based on one of the real-life topics has been chosen for the year; Community Problem Solving where students become real agents of change as they actually carry out the plan of action; and Action Based Problem Solving, which is non-competitive for grades K-9. Students also develop an oral Presentation of Action Plan, which is a four-minute skit, acting out their best solution idea using a list of approved props to create costumes and other supporting materials. The topics are student driven. 2016-17 topics: Educational disparities (PP #1), “It’s All in the Genes” (PP # 2), 3D printing (regional) and identity theft (state). The international topic will be announced in March 2017.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning
Program provider: Cheryl Whitesitt
Fees and Deadlines: Visit the website for fees and deadlines.
Website: www.mnfpsp.org
Email: Cheryl@mnfpsp.org
Phone: (507) 482-6867
Mailing Address: Cheryl Whitesitt
10299 County Road 18; P. O. Box 8
Brownsville, MN 55919

2016 International Conference Middle Division Community Problem Solving Champions, North Junior High School, St. Cloud
MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC LISTENING CONTEST

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

The Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest assists teachers in their efforts to expand the music experiences of students; primarily through the use of Western art music, commonly referred to as classical music. The contest materials cover classical music, global perspectives and a variety of musical influences. The objective of the contest is to inspire students to become lifelong participants in the musical experience. Students gain understanding and appreciation of other cultures through listening and learning about music from various areas and time periods. They also develop teamwork skills as they work in teams of three to compete in the regional and championship contests.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, factual recall, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, teamwork, time/budget management and verbal reasoning

Program provider: Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest


Website: www.musiclisteningcontest.com
Email: deb_nelson@musiclisteningcontest.com
Phone: (763) 862-7647
Mailing Address: Deb Nelson
Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
1816 136th Ave. NE
Ham Lake, MN 55304

MINNESOTA JUNIOR HIGH MATH LEAGUE

Grades 6–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The purpose of the Junior High Math League is to encourage students to participate in math contests, serve as a “farm club” for the Minnesota State High School Math League, enable students to meet mathletes from other schools and provide recognition for students excelling in mathematics.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, factual recall, problem solving and teamwork

Fees and Deadlines: First Team: $175, each additional team $75. Competitions run from October 2016–February 2017 (five meets). Fee due at time of registration.

Website: www.mnjhml.com
Email: mnjhml1@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 252-1766
Mailing Address: Luke Olson
P.O. Box 195
South St. Paul, MN 55075
MINNESOTA MATHCOUNTS
Grades 6–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment

MATHCOUNTS is a middle school math competition, coaching and enrichment program. Through three distinct programs, MATHCOUNTS empowers middle school students of all ability levels and backgrounds to reach their full potential in mathematics. Those who love math can participate in the competition series and compete against other schools for the chance to advance to the state and national competitions. Students seeking a social outlet who are less competitive can participate in the club program, which incorporates applying math in a fun and encouraging manner. Students seeking a creative outlet can work with their peers to create a video applying a math concept to real life and submit it to the Math Video Challenge for a chance to attend the national competition.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, factual recall, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork

Program provider: Minnesota MATHCOUNTS/MN Society of Professional Engineers
Fees and Deadlines: Early bird (November): $90 per team (four students) and $25 per individual. Regular rate (mid-December): $100 per team (four students) and $30 per individual. $20 late fee applies after December deadline. Specific deadlines will be announced for 2016–2017 school year. Learn more at www.mathcounts.org. Title I schools receive a 50% discount on Competition Series Registrations. The National Math Club and Math Video Challenge programs are free.

Website: www.mathcountsmn.org
Email: katie@mathcountsmn.org
Phone: (651) 457-2347
Mailing Address: Katie Jamieson
Minnesota MATHCOUNTS/MN Society of Professional Engineers
880 Blue Gentian Rd. #170
Eagan, MN 55121

MINNESOTA MATHEMATICS LEAGUE
Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The Math League has math contests for grades 4–8, Algebra 1 students and high school students. More than one million students from the United States and Canada participate in Math League contests each year. Every contest has questions from different areas of mathematics. The goal is to encourage student interest and confidence in mathematics through solving worthwhile problems. Many students first develop an interest in mathematics through problem-solving activities such as these contests. Schools compete in statewide or multi-state league competitions.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking and creativity
Fees and Deadlines: Please see website for contest dates, fees and deadlines.
Website: www.themathleague.com
Email: Dan@mathleague.com
Phone: (201) 568-6328
Mailing Address: Daniel Fleger
P.O. Box 17
Tenafly, NJ 07670
MINNESOTA REGIONAL FUTURE CITY COMPETITION

Grades 6–8
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

The Future City Competition is a national program designed to give middle school students an opportunity to engage in the engineering design process — identify problems, brainstorm ideas, design solutions, test and retest, build and share their results. Under the guidance of a teacher and a volunteer engineer mentor, students are challenged to think like engineers in order to design a futuristic city. This semester-long program runs from September 2016 to January 2017. Competing teams are judged by panels of volunteers from the engineering community on five program deliverables: project plan, virtual city design, city description, model and presentation. The first place Minnesota team wins a free trip to Washington, D.C. to compete in the National Future City Competition, Feb. 18-22, 2017.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork and time/budget management

Program provider: Success Beyond the Classroom

Website: www.futurecity.org/Minnesota
Email: colleen.feller@metroecsu.org
Phone: (612) 638-1511
Mailing Address: Colleen Feller
Success Beyond the Classroom
2 Pine Tree Drive, Suite 101
Arden Hills, MN 55112

MINNESOTA SCHOLASTIC ART AWARDS

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions

Minnesota high school students, grade 7–12, are invited to enter a juried art exhibition. Award winners are recognized and honored at an award ceremony and reception.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, creativity and problem solving

Program provider: Art Educators of Minnesota
Fees and Deadlines: See website for more information.
Website: www.aem-mn.org
Email: scullyd@colheights.k12.mn.us
Phone: (763) 528-4480
Mailing Address: Diane Scully
Art Educators of Minnesota
6500 Casey Parkway
Prior Lake, MN 55372
MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION A)
Grades 3–6
Program Category:  Challenges & Competitions

The Minnesota Science Olympiad is a program devoted to improving the quality of science education, increasing student interest in science and providing recognition for outstanding achievement. Team competition is patterned after track tournaments with challenging and motivational events ranging from earth science through physics. Events range from hands-on labs to student built machines, from outdoor events to paper and pencil tests. First, second and third place medals will be given for each event at both the regional and state competitions. In addition, championship trophies will be awarded to the teams compiling the most total points during the state competition. The winning team from each division at the state competition will be invited to the National Science Olympiad held in May at a different university each year.

Academic skills:  Problem solving, factual recall, critical thinking and teamwork
Program provider:  Minnesota Science Olympiad
Fees and Deadlines:  Registration fee of $50 per team (15 students per school) covers both the national and state fees. The fee registers your team with the National Science Olympiad allowing you to advance to the state and national tournaments, covers the cost of awards, rule books and helps cover costs for the Science Olympiad. Each additional team from a school: $50. Check website for registration link.
Website:  www.minnesotasaso.org
Email:  MnSciOly@gmail.com
Phone:  (651) 621-7177
Mailing Address:  Michael Huberty
Mounds View High School
1900 Lake Valentine Road
Arden Hills, MN 55112

MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION B)
Grades 6–9
Program Category:  Challenges & Competitions

Do your students like to solve problems? How can schools make science more relevant, interesting and fun for students? Science Olympiad is a nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of K–12 science education through tournaments at the regional, state and national level. Science Olympiad competitions are like academic track meets, consisting of a series of team events in each division (Division A is elementary school; Division B is middle school; Division C is high school). Each year, students study topics such as genetics, Earth science, chemistry, anatomy, physics, geology, mechanical engineering and technology. By combining events from all disciplines, Science Olympiad encourages a wide cross-section of students to get involved. Emphasis is placed on active, hands-on group participation. Through Science Olympiad, students, teachers, parents, and principals bond together and work toward a shared goal.

Academic skills:  Creativity, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, factual recall, interdisciplinary, problem solving, research and teamwork
Program provider:  Minnesota Science Olympiad
Fees and Deadlines:  Registration fee of $150 per team (15 students per school) covers both the national and state fees. The fee registers your team with the National Science Olympiad allowing you to advance to the state and national tournaments, covers the cost of awards, rule books, and helps cover costs for the Science Olympiad. Each additional team from a school: $100. Check website for registration link.
Website:  www.minnesotasaso.org
Email:  hans1355@isd194.org
Phone:  (952) 232-3999, ext. 6864
Mailing Address:  Brandi Hansmeyer
Minnesota Science Olympiad
Kenwood Trail Middle School
19455 Kenwood Trail
Lakeville, MN 55044
MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION C)
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The Minnesota Science Olympiad is a program devoted to improving the quality of science education, increasing student interest in science, creating a technologically-literate workforce and providing recognition for outstanding achievement by both students and teachers. These goals are achieved by participating in Science Olympiad tournaments and non-competitive events, incorporating Science Olympiad into classroom curriculum and attending teacher training institutes. Competition events like Scrambler, Tower Building, Helicopter, RoboCross, Crimebusters, Meteorology, Amphibians and Reptiles encourage students to solve problems and become proficient in these topic areas. Participants compete as a team. First, second and third place medals will be given for each event at both the regional and state competitions. In addition, championship trophies will be awarded to the teams compiling the most total points during the state competition. The winning team from each division at the State competition will be invited to the National Science Olympiad held in May at a different university each year.

Academic skills: Problem solving, factual recall, critical thinking and teamwork
Program provider: Minnesota Science Olympiad
Fees and Deadlines: Registration fee of $150 per team (15 students per school) covers both the national and state fees. The fee registers your team with the National Science Olympiad allowing you to advance to the state and national tournaments, covers the cost of awards, rule books and helps cover costs for the Science Olympiad. Each additional team from a school: $100. Check website for registration link.
Website: www.minnesotascio.org
Email: MnSciOly@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 621-7177
Mailing Address: Dr. Matt Neibergall
Minnesota Science Olympiad
Mounds View High School
1900 Lake Valentine Road
Arden Hills, MN 55112

MINNESOTA STATE GEOGRAPHERS’ FAIR
Grades K–8
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions

Every year K–8 students bring individual, small group or whole class projects to the fair. Student participants receive free exhibit hall passes to the Science Museum of Minnesota for the day (OMNI passes are not included), a school participation certificate and take part in special geography activities. The event concludes with door prize drawings for both teachers and students.

Academic skills: Geography, visual arts, cooperation and creativity
Program provider: Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education
Fees and Deadlines: No Fee. Visit website for details.
Website: http://lt.umn.edu/mage/minnesota-state-geographers-fair
Email: mage@macalester.edu
Phone: (651) 696-6731
Mailing Address: Minnesota State Geographers Fair
Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education
Macalester College
1600 Grand Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105-1899

NOMINATE YOUR ACADEMIC CHALLENGE COACH FOR A WEM OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD!

The WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program was created in support of teachers and their important role in helping all students achieve academically and seeks to bring recognition to the often "unsung heroes" who meet the challenges of teaching in a variety of settings. The Academic Challenge Coach Awards recognize exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council. All programs listed in Reach for the Stars have been endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council. Synergy & Leadership Exchange administers the award program on behalf of the WEM Foundation. To place a nomination, visit synergyexchange.org/wem.aspx.
MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS LEAGUE

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Schools send students to five meets in their geographic region with both individual and team competitions. Standings by geographic region, with both individual and team competitions. Top teams in geographic regions and top 50 scoring students participate in a state tournament. Top individuals in state are invited to join the All-Star Team that represents Minnesota in a national competition. Awards are given to individuals and teams.

Academic skills: Problem solving and teamwork
Program provider: Augsburg College
Fees and Deadlines: $600 per school, unlimited number of students from school may participate. Individual students may participate if school does not have a team, cost is $100. Letter of intent to participate due Sept. 15, 2016. Payment due Oct. 15, 2016. Meet dates November 2016–February 2017. State tournament is held on the second Monday in March. All State Math Team competes at American Regions Mathematics League (ARML) competition in Iowa the first weekend in June.

Website: www.mnmathleague.org
Email: mathleague@augsburg.edu
Phone: (612) 330-1788
Mailing Address: Dana Koletar
c/o Augsburg College
Campus Box 190 – 2211 Riverside Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55454

MINNESOTA SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

Grade 12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

This contest provides Minnesota high school seniors with an opportunity to compete for scholarships by analyzing and taking a position on a current topic relevant to Minnesota’s judicial system.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and research
Program provider: Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Program information is posted on website in mid-September. Online registration begins in mid-October. Online registration ends when 150 students have registered, but no later than a date selected in mid-December. The online essay submission deadline is mid-January of the following year.

Website: www.mncourthistory.org
Email: amhorningnygren@locklaw.com
Phone: (612) 596-4010
Mailing Address: Anna M. Horning Nygren
Lockridge Grindal Nauen, PLLP
100 Washington Ave. S., Suite 2200
Minneapolis, MN 55401
MINNESOTA YOUTH INSTITUTE PROGRAM
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

Become a leader in the global fight against hunger. The Minnesota Youth Institute and World Food Prize challenges Minnesota high school students to put their minds and leadership toward combating global hunger. How? You will research food security in a developing country, write your findings in an essay, and discuss your findings with experts from the University of Minnesota’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Sciences and local industry. Students discover their role in the fight against hunger. Participating students are eligible for selection to attend the Global Youth Institute in Des Moines, Iowa during the World Food Prize event. Students are also eligible for scholarships to the University of Minnesota and international internships.

Academic skills: Factual recall, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary, research, public speaking, leadership development, global citizenship and environmental stewardship

Program provider: University of Minnesota
Fees and Deadlines: No fee. Visit website for registration details.
Website: www.worldfoodprize.org/en/youth_programs/global_youth_institute/minnesota
Email: lrspears@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 624-9646
Mailing Address: LaJoy Spears
University of Minnesota
190 Coffey Hall
1420 Eckles Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108

MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

The High School Mock Trial program gives students an insider’s look at the American legal system while helping them develop strong critical thinking, communication and teamwork skills. A volunteer attorney works with each team of 812 students to prepare for the simulated trials held in actual courtrooms around the state. Trials are held in January and February, concluding with the state tournament in March. The state champion will compete at the national tournament in May.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, research, public speaking, teamwork, verbal reasoning and artistic expression

Program provider: Minnesota State Bar Association
Fees and Deadlines: $225 per team; registration deadline October 2016. Please see website for further details and application.
Website: www.mnbar.org/public/mock-trial
Email: kbasting@mnbar.org
Phone: (612) 278-6306
Mailing Address: Kim Basting
Minnesota State Bar Association
600 Nicollet Mall, Suite 380
Minneapolis, MN 55402

MOODY’S MEGA MATH (M³) CHALLENGE
Grades 11–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Through participation, students gain the experience of working in teams to tackle a real-world problem under time and resource constraints akin to those faced by industrial applied mathematicians. The M³ Challenge spotlights applied mathematics as a powerful problem-solving tool and as a viable and exciting profession. Teams that are judged to have submitted the best solution papers receive special recognition in the form of tuition scholarships for college education.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, research, teamwork, math modeling, computer programming and writing skills

Program provider: Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) and The Moody’s Foundation
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Registration opens November 2016. Visit website for deadlines.
Website: https://m3challenge.siam.org
Email: m3challenge@siam.org
Phone: (267) 350-6388
Mailing Address: Frank Kunkle
3600 Market St.
6th Floor, SIAM
Philadelphia, PA 19104
MSHSL DEBATE
Grades 10–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Program provider: MSHSL
Fees and Deadlines: Registration fee of $80. Deadline for registration is December.
Website: www.mshsl.org
Email: cfranson@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Mailing Address: Chris Franson
MSHSL
2100 Freeway Blvd.
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

MSHSL MUSIC
Grades 10–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Program provider: MSHSL
Fees and Deadlines: Registration fee of $80. Deadline for registration is December.
Website: www.mshsl.org
Email: cfranson@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Mailing Address: Chris Franson
MSHSL
2100 Freeway Blvd.
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

MSHSL ONE ACT PLAY
Grades 10–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Program provider: MSHSL
Fees and Deadlines: Registration fee of $80. Deadline for registration is December.
Website: www.mshsl.org
Email: cfranson@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Mailing Address: Chris Franson
MSHSL
2100 Freeway Blvd.
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

MSHSL SPEECH
Grades 10–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Program provider: MSHSL
Fees and Deadlines: Registration fee of $80. Deadline for registration is December.
Website: www.mshsl.org
Email: cfranson@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Mailing Address: Chris Franson
2100 Freeway Blvd.
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430
MSHSL VISUAL ARTS
Grades 10–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions


Program provider: MSHSL
Fees and Deadlines: Registration fee of $80. Deadline for registration is December.
Website: www.mshsl.org
Email: cfranson@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Mailing Address: Chris Franson
MSHSL
2100 Freeway Blvd.
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

★★ MSHSL/FIRST® ROBOTICS
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

MSHSL/FIRST® Robotics is an extra-curricular opportunity for students with an interest in engineering and robotics.

Academic skills: STEM and communications
Program provider: MSHSL/FIRST
Fees and Deadlines: Fees vary by school.
Program kick-off first Sat. in January; MSHSL Tournament in May.
Website: www.mnfirst.org
Email: kr71@aol.com
Phone: (952) 884-5169
Mailing Address: Ken Rosen
MSHSL/FIRST
2100 Freeway Blvd.
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

★★ MTEEA SUPER MILEAGE COMPETITION
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

This program joins classroom learning with imagination, ingenuity and teamwork to produce the most fuel-efficient vehicle. Ideas are tempered with calculation to produce optimum design. Students are in charge of this project from the vehicle’s conception to planning, fabrication and testing.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary, research, teamwork, leadership development and time/budget management
Program provider: Minnesota Technology & Engineering Educators Association (MTEEA)
Fees and Deadlines: Visit website for fees and dates.
Website: www.mteea.net/index.php/competitions/supermileage
Email: mteeasupermileage@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 213-2522
Mailing Address: Michael Sandell
Chisago Lakes High School
29400 Olinda Trail
Lindstrom, MN 55045
NATIONAL CURRENT EVENTS LEAGUE

Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Current events competition with four meets per year.

Academic skills: Critical thinking and factual recall
Program provider: National Current Events League
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Mailing Address: Joseph Quartararo
National Current Events League
P.O. Box 2196
Saint James, NY 11780

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BEE

Grades 4–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The National Geographic Bee is a nationwide outreach program of the National Geographic Society. It is a classroom and school-based competition. The national champion will receive a $50,000 college scholarship, a lifetime membership in the National Geographic Society and a Lindblad expedition to Southeast Alaska provided by Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic. Principals of eligible schools must register their schools to participate.

Program provider: National Geographic Bee
Fees and Deadlines: Visit website for fees and deadlines.
Website: www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee
Email: ngbee@ngs.org
Phone: (202) 828-6659
Mailing Address: National Geographic Bee
National Geographic Society
1145 17th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY CHALLENGE

Grades 2–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

National geography contest that takes place in the classroom. Five levels: grade(s) 2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–9, 10–12.

Academic skills: Critical thinking and factual recall
Program provider: National Geography Challenge
Fees and Deadlines: First team $80, additional teams $55; Registration October 2016–February 2017; Event: April 24–May 5, 2017.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Mailing Address: Joseph Quartararo
National Geography Challenge
P.O. Box 2196
Saint James, NY 11780
NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN MINNESOTA

Grades 6–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

National History Day is a co-curricular academic fair of papers, exhibits, documentaries, performances and websites developed around an annual theme. The program focuses on academic research, analysis and the effective presentation of ideas. Participating classrooms have access to support from History Day staff and partner organizations. Students progress from school History Day fairs to regional events and State History Day at the University of Minnesota. State winners are eligible to participate in the national contest in Washington, D.C. The 2016-17 History Day theme will be: Taking a Stand in History.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, factual recall, interdisciplinary, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork and time/budget management

Program provider: Minnesota Historical Society and the University of Minnesota

Fees and Deadlines: Regional events take place in March and registration fees begin at $10 per student. There is no classroom fee to participate and program materials are sent to teachers free of charge.

Website: http://education.mnhs.org/historyday
Email: sarah.aschbrenner@mnhs.org
Phone: (651) 259-3489
Mailing Address: Sarah Aschbrenner
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Blvd. W.
St. Paul, MN 55102

NATIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS LEAGUE

Grades 2–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

National language arts contest that takes place in the classroom. Five levels: grade(s) 2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–9, 10–12. Questions based on spelling, vocabulary, reading comprehension, analogies and grammar.

Academic skills: Critical thinking and factual recall
Program provider: National Language Arts League
Fees and Deadlines: $105 for two teams, $55 for additional teams; Registration October 2016–February 2017; Event April 24–May 5, 2017.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Mailing Address: Joseph Quartararo
National Language Arts League
P.O. Box 2196
Saint James, NY 11780
**National Science League**

**Grades**: 2–12  
**Program Category**: Challenges & Competitions

National science contest that takes place in the classroom. Five levels: grade(s) 2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–9, 10–12. Questions based on both factual knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes.

**Academic skills**: Critical thinking and factual recall  
**Program provider**: National Science League  
**Fees and Deadlines**: $105 for two teams, $55 for additional teams; Registration October 2016–February 2017; Event April 27–May 5, 2017.  
**Website**: www.cmleague.com  
**Email**: support@cmleague.com  
**Phone**: (631) 584-2016  
**Mailing Address**: Joseph Quartararo  
National Science League  
P.O. Box 2196  
Saint James, NY 11780

**National Social Studies League**

**Grades**: 2–12  
**Program Category**: Challenges & Competitions

National social studies contest that takes place in the classroom. Five levels: grade(s) 2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–9, 10–12. Questions based on American studies, geography, government and world history.

**Academic skills**: Critical thinking and factual recall  
**Program provider**: National Social Studies League  
**Fees and Deadlines**: $105 for 2 teams, $55 for additional teams; Registration October 2016–February 2017; Event April 24–May 5, 2017  
**Website**: www.cmleague.com  
**Email**: support@cmleague.com  
**Phone**: (631) 584-2016  
**Mailing Address**: Joseph Quartararo  
National Social Studies League  
P.O. Box 2196  
Saint James, NY 11780

**National Spanish Exam**

**Grades**: 7–12; Immersion schools  
**Program Category**: Challenges & Competitions

There is an exam for each level, 1–6. Be sure to do the practice exams online: nationalspanishexam.org

**Academic skills**: Be a Spanish language student  
**Program provider**: The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP)  
**Fees and Deadlines**: Please see website for fees and deadlines.  
**Website**: www.mn-aatsp.org/AATSP-MN/Student_Involvement.html  
**Email**: MN.NSE.Coord@gmail.com  
**Phone**: (651) 683-1700  
**Mailing Address**: Donovan Williams  
Visitation High School  
2455 Visitation Drive  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120
NOBEL CONFERENCE AT GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

High school to adult
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes

The 2016 Nobel Conference: In Search of Economic Balance brings top economists from around the world to help us understand some of the challenges in implementation of economic theories. Join us at Gustavus Adolphus College for one or both days of the Nobel Conference happening Sept. 27–28, 2016.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, interdisciplinary and research
Program provider: Gustavus Adolphus College Nobel Conference
Fees and Deadlines: The 52nd Nobel Conference held Sept. 27–28, 2016. Reserved section tickets $120, general admission tickets $75, high school delegations $6/person, and college delegations $20/person.
Website: www.gustavus.edu/nobelconference
Email: marketing@gustavus.edu
Phone: (507) 933-7520
Mailing Address: Lorie Siebels
Gustavus Adolphus College Nobel Conference
Gustavus Adolphus College
800 W. College Ave.
St. Peter, MN 56082

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY MIDWEST ACADEMIC TALENT SEARCH (NUMATS)

Grades 3–9
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

NUMATS is an opportunity for students to take above-level assessments, such as EXPLORE, ACT or SAT. NUMATS identifies academic ability, measures growth, and connects students to resources and opportunities for advanced students.

Academic skills: Recall, problem solving, critical thinking and writing
Fees and Deadlines: Visit website for details.
Website: www.ctd.northwestern.edu/numats
Email: bkeilt@district16.org or numats@ctd.northwestern.edu
Phone: (763) 795-6686
Mailing Address: Bill Keilty
District Services Center
1415 81st Ave. NE
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432

PERENNIAL MATH ONLINE MATH COMPETITION

Grades 3–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

Math is COOL and the goal of the competitions is to stimulate enthusiasm for problem solving. As students meet the challenges in these competitions, creativity and strategies for problem solving will surely grow. Join other students from around the world to face off in this year’s online competition or for a monthly virtual tournament. Perennial Math has three types of competition formats. The first is an annual membership for grades 3–12 with separate levels (Rookie: grades 3–4, Intermediate: grades 5–6, Advanced: grades 7–8, Apprentice: grades 9–10, and Master: grades 11–12). There are two competition seasons to choose from, November–February or January–April. The competitions have four tests with six questions each and take 30 minutes to complete. The second is virtual tournaments held in a WebEx chat room. Finally, the third competition is live on-site tournaments at schools and colleges. Visit Facebook (www.facebook.com/perennialmath) to find events in your area.

Academic skills: Mathematics
Program provider: Perennial Math, LLC
Fees and Deadlines: $75 per team (up to 30 students); $25 per individual student membership.
Website: www.perennialmath.com
Email: info@perennialmath.com
Phone: (888) 835-2366
Mailing Address: Perennial Math
P.O. Box 16002
Huntsville, AL 35802
POETRY OUT LOUD, MINNESOTA STATE COMPETITION
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

In Poetry Out Loud, high school students learn about great poetry through memorization, performance and competition. It is a fun, participatory way to teach poetry and meet English/language arts requirements. At the state level, the winner will receive $200 and an all-expense paid trip with an adult chaperone to Washington, D.C. The winner’s school will receive $500 for the purchase of poetry books. The runner-up will receive $100 and their school will receive $200 for the purchase of poetry books. At the national level, students compete for $50,000 in college scholarships; the national champion receives a $20,000 college scholarship. All participants past the school level receive prizes for participating, which vary each year based on donations. Typically, students receive poetry books and other poetry-related gifts.

Academic skills: Mastering public speaking skills, building self-confidence and learning about literary heritage
Program provider: Minnesota State Arts Board in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation
Fees and Deadlines: Free, registration in the fall, please check website for details.
Website: www.arts.state.mn.us/other/poetry.htm
Email: Sue.Gens@arts.state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 215-1617
Mailing Address: Connie Skildum
Minnesota State Arts Board
400 Sibley St., #200
St. Paul, MN 55101

PROJECT SUCCESS
Educators and students, grades 1–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Leadership Development

Project SUCCESS works with partner schools to offer programs which motivate and inspire young people to dream about their futures, help them take steps to get there, and give them the tools they need to achieve their goals. Through goal-setting workshops, professional and student theater experiences, and enrichment activities designed to deepen their skills and experiences, students build life skills, supportive relationships, confidence, motivation and graduate with plans for their futures.

Academic skills: Critical and reflective thinking, planning, goal-setting, interpersonal and social skills, perseverance and developing growth mindset
Program provider: Project SUCCESS
Fees and Deadlines: Ongoing. Call to schedule or see website for details.
Website: www.my.projectsuccess.org
Email: emilyh@projectsuccess.org
Phone: (612) 874-7710
Mailing Address: Emily Heagle, Senior Director of Development
Project SUCCESS
One Groveland Terrace, Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55403
PROMISING YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM
Grade 8
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

The Promising Young Writers Program was established to stimulate and recognize students’ writing talents and to emphasize the importance of writing skills among eighth-grade students. Students who are eighth-graders in the current academic school year are eligible to be nominated for the Promising Young Writers program. Students must be nominated by their teachers. All nominees from the same school must have the same nominating teacher. One nominee per form. To request the complete brochure by mail, including the impromptu topic and address information on state coordinators, email pyw@ncte.org.

Academic skills: Writing, creativity and critical thinking
Program provider: National Council of Teachers of English
Fees and Deadlines: Check the website for fees and deadlines.
Website: www.ncte.org/awards/student/pyw
Email: cstewart@ncte.org
Phone: (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283
Mailing Address: Carrie Stewart
National Council of Teachers of English
1111 W. Kenyon Road
Urbana, IL 61801

SCHOLARS OF DISTINCTION AWARD PROGRAM
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development

This program recognizes high school students who have demonstrated expert or highly accomplished levels of performance in social studies, leadership, mathematics, science, STEM or theater arts. Students may pursue one or more area of focus throughout all or part of their K-12 education.

Academic skills: Factual recall, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary, research, public speaking, leadership development, time/budget management and artistic expression
Program provider: Minnesota Department of Education
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Deadlines, scoring rubrics and project consultants are listed on the website.
Website: www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/ScholarRecog/ScholarsDistinc/index.html
Email: Wendy.Behrens@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 582-8786
Mailing Address: Wendy A. Behrens
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Hwy. 36 W.
Roseville, MN 55113

BECOME A REACH FOR THE STARS STRATEGIC PARTNER

Distribution of Reach for the Stars is facilitated through a partnership network that supports the catalogue by distributing it directly to schools, educators, parents and students or promoting it in publications, newsletters and websites as appropriate.

To become a Reach for the Stars Strategic Partner, contact us at reach@synergyexchange.org.
**SCHOOL CHESS ASSOCIATION**

Grades K–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

In existence since 1969, the School Chess Association sponsors tournaments, matches, instruction, camps and other activities. Each year the School Chess Association holds an annual statewide tournament for grades K–6 and another section for the Lawrence Lampert Memorial Tournament, which is open to students in grades 7–12 as well as adults. The final tournament of the year is the Tournament of Champions, which takes the top 16 players in both primary and elementary sections of the statewide tournament to compete in a United States Chess Federation (USCF) rated tournament. The winner of the primary and elementary sections will earn the title of School Chess Association Primary and Elementary Champion. All 32 players receive a special walnut plaque commemorating their participation. Students learn a lifetime activity. School Chess Association has widened its mission to include summer chess camps and to help schools start a chess club in their building.

**Academic skills:** Problem solving and critical and analytical thinking  
**Program provider:** School Chess Association  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Call for fees and dates, or check the website for more information.  
**Website:** www.schoolchess.org  
**Email:** lorene@schoolchess.org  
**Phone:** (763) 593-1168  
**Mailing Address:** Lorene Lampert  
School Chess Association  
5901 Laurel Ave., #134  
Golden Valley, MN 55416

**SKILLSUSA MINNESOTA**

Grades 9–12  
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

The SkillsUSA Championships is a showcase of career and technical education students. This conference will have more than 77 different hands-on trade, technical and leadership competitions for the students in competitive events. Students work against the clock and each other, proving their expertise in occupations like automotive, carpentry, precision machining, medical assisting and culinary arts to name a few. Contests are run with the help of industry, trade associations and labor organizations and test competency areas set by industry. Leadership contestans will demonstrate skills including extemporaneous speaking and conducting meetings by parliamentary procedure. Competitors who win in a contest are offered the opportunity to represent Minnesota at the National Leadership & Skills Conference. SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry representatives, working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. It helps each student excel. SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization serving teachers and high school and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, including health occupations.

**Academic skills:** Problem solving, critical thinking, public speaking, teamwork, leadership development and global citizenship  
**Program provider:** Minnesota Department of Education, SkillsUSA Minnesota  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Visit the website for details.  
**Website:** www.mnskillsusa.org  
**Email:** skillsusaminnesota@comcast.net  
**Phone:** (763) 560-1932  
**Mailing Address:** Jennifer Polz, Executive Director  
SkillsUSA Minnesota  
P.O. Box 29286  
Minneapolis, MN 55429
SUMDOG ONLINE MATH CONTEST

Grades K–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Sumdog’s online contests are aimed at grades K–8. Students can participate from school or home during the contest week. Contests run Friday through Thursday several times per year.

Academic skills: Mathematics
Program provider: Sumdog, Inc.
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Visit www.sumdog.com/enter_contest to see the upcoming dates for your area.
Website: www.sumdog.com
Email: colleen@sumdog.com
Phone: (877) 978-6364
Mailing Address: Colleen Fehm
Sumdog, Inc.
902 Broadway, Sixth Floor
New York, NY 10010

TEAMS

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

TEAMS is a one-day, two-part competition. Students learn how the math and science concepts they are learning are applied to real world problems. TEAMS encourages team cooperation and group effort with up to eight students per team. Please check the TEAMS website for more information.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking and cooperation
Program provider: Technology Student Association (TSA)
Fees and Deadlines: Online registration opens in September and all schools and groups must register through TSA. The competition site is selected at the time of registration. Registration fees average $15–$20 per student and are determined by the competition site.
Website: http://teams.tsaweb.org
Email: teams@tsaweb.org
Phone: (888) 860-9010
Mailing Address: Technology Student Association (TSA)
1914 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1540

THE STOCK MARKET GAME™

Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

The Stock Market Game™ is an online investing simulation designed to teach more than just business and math. Students work in teams of two to five participants to invest a virtual $100,000 in stocks and mutual funds. This experiential learning tool allows students to actively manage their portfolio while learning real-world skills. This engaging activity can be used once per week or every day, during class or after school.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, research and teamwork
Program provider: BestPrep
Fees and Deadlines: Sessions: Yearlong (Sept. 12, 2016–April 21, 2017), Fall (Sept. 12–Dec. 16, 2016), Spring (Jan. 17–April 21, 2017) and Late Spring (March 20–May 26, 2017). Participation dates flexible within these session windows. Three-week trial sessions also available for educators. Registration opens August 2016. $20 per team, free for teachers who use the game with students.
Website: www.stockmarketgame.org
Email: smg@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6328
Mailing Address: Greg Orvik
BestPrep
7100 Northland Circle N., Suite 120
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428
THINKING CAP QUIZ BOWL
Grades 5–6, 7–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

Fun, scholastic in-school computer competitions. All quizzes are self-scoring, computer contests of 100 multiple-choice questions. Areas covered include math, geography, government, sports, spelling, science, literature, language arts, history, general information and just plain fun trivia. An adult is needed to monitor but no adult help can be given. There is a fall Lakes Regional contest (made up of teams entering from Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin) and a spring nationwide contest called America Answers. See the website for full details.

Academic skills: Factual recall, problem solving, critical thinking, research, teamwork, leadership development, time/budget management and verbal reasoning
Program provider: Harvey Kimble, owner
Fees and Deadlines: Check website for entry forms, info, fees and deadlines.
Website: www.thinkingcapquizbowl.com
Email: thinkcap5@gmail.com
Phone: (515) 278-5097
Mailing Address: Harvey Kimble
Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
4220 Park Hill Circle
Urbandale, IA 50322

TOSHIBA/NSTA EXPLORAVISION AWARDS
Grades K–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

ExploraVision is a competition for all students in grades K–12 enrolled full-time in a public, private or home school. It is designed to encourage students to combine their imagination with their knowledge of science and technology to explore visions of the future. Teams of students select a technology, research how it works and why it was invented, and then project how that technology may change in the future. They must then identify what breakthroughs are required for their vision to become a reality and describe the positive and negative consequences of their technology on society. A teacher will sponsor and lead students in groups of two to four.

Academic skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and cooperation
Program provider: Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision
Fees and Deadlines: See website for more information.
Website: www.exploravision.org
Email: amckenna@nsta.org
Phone: (703) 312-9258
Mailing Address: Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision
1840 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM
Grades 11–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Leadership Development

Two high school juniors or seniors will spend a week studying the legislative process in Washington, D.C. and be awarded $10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate studies, with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science. The 55th annual program will be held in Washington, D.C., from March 4–11, 2017.

Academic skills: Leadership, critical thinking and cooperation
Program provider: Minnesota Dept. of Education
Fees and Deadlines: Contact Minnesota Department of Education for dates.
Website: www.ussenateyouth.org
Email: Ken.Kaffine@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 582-8570
Mailing Address: Ken Kaffine
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA TALENTED YOUTH MATH PROGRAM
Grades 5–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

An accelerated math program, UMTYMP has two components: A two-year high school component covering Algebra I and II, Geometry, and Math Analysis, and a three-year college component starting with two years of honors Calculus.

Academic skills: Analytic ability and mathematical skills
Program provider: UMTYMP - MathCEP
Fees and Deadlines: Registration for the entrance exam begins in January for admission the following fall. Each year more than 600 students test for less than 150 positions in the incoming algebra course. Check the website for exam registration and exam fees.
Website: www.mathcep.umn.edu/umtymp
Email: mathcep@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-2861
Mailing Address: UMTYMP - MathCEP
U of M, 4 Vincent Hall
206 Church St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

⭐U.S. ACADEMIC TRIATHLON
Grades 5–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment

U.S. Academic Triathlon, established nearly 30 years ago, is an extra-curricular academic and creativity competition that encourages students to think outside the box to solve problems while promoting teamwork and leadership skills. Teams of five students work together and compete in three round robins throughout the year to build up to the regional and possibly state competitions. Each competition includes three parts: Face-Off!, Mind Sprints and PARTY in a Box.

Academic skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, factual recall, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, teamwork, time/budget management, verbal reasoning and out-of-the-box thinking
Program provider: U.S. Academic Triathlon
Website: www.usacademictriathlon.com
Email: sarah@usacademictriathlon.com
Phone: (507) 645-2560
Mailing Address: Sarah Kirchner Sheldon
U.S. Academic Triathlon
204 Seventh St. E., #123
Northfield, MN 55057

Students during their skit-planning session, part of the creativity program for middle school students.
U.S. NATIONAL CHEMISTRY OLYMPIAD
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

USNCO is a recognition program that identifies outstanding high school chemistry students. It is sponsored by the American Chemical Society. More than 16,000 students participate in a series of qualifying events to select the four representatives of the U.S. to the International Chemistry Olympiad.

Academic skills: Problem solving, chemistry and mathematical skills
Program provider: American Chemical Society
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Local event in March; National event in April; International event in July (Location changes every year).
Website: www.acs.org
Email: USNCO@acs.org
Phone: (202) 872-6328 or (800) 227-5558, ext. 6169
Mailing Address: Cecilia Hernandez
Chemistry Olympiad
1155 16th St. NW, Room 834
Washington, D.C. 20036

WALKER ART CENTER ART TODAY TOURS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Public, school and self-guided tours exploring contemporary art through Walker’s permanent collection and special exhibitions.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, creativity and literacy
Program provider: Walker Art Center
Fees and Deadlines: Group tours must be booked at least four weeks in advance. Self-guided group visits must be booked at least two weeks in advance. Scheduling is based on availability. Tour fees vary depending on type of tour requested.
Website: www.walkerart.org/visit/tours
Email: tours@walkerart.org
Phone: (612) 375-7609
Mailing Address: Walker Art Center
1750 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55403

★ WORDMASTERS CHALLENGE
Grades 3–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Students use vocabulary they have studied in advance to complete analogies expressing various kinds of logical relationships. Two levels of difficulty are offered at each grade level (Blue and Gold). Competitions are held three times per year at each participating school. The program aligns perfectly with CCSS ELA-Literacy standards for Vocabulary Acquisition and Use in grades 3–8. Now in our 30th year, nearly 3,000 schools and more than 125,000 students participate annually!

Academic skills: Critical thinking, problem solving and verbal reasoning
Program provider: WordMasters, LLC
Fees and Deadlines: $95 per team (no limit on number of students per team). Enrollment deadline is Sept. 30, 2016. Challenge meets take place in November 2016, February and April 2017 (see website for details).
Website: www.wordmasterschallenge.com
Email: lisa.kennedy@wordmasterschallenge.com
Phone: (888) 385-5656
Mailing Address: Lisa Kennedy
WordMasters, LLC
5026 Washington Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
**WORDWRIGHT CHALLENGE**

Grades 9–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The WordWright Challenge is a national reading competition for students in grades 9–12 that requires analytical reading of many kinds of prose and poetry. It emphasizes perceptive interpretation, sensitivity to language and an appreciation of style. More than 59,000 students from some of the best public and private high schools in 47 states participated last year.

**Academic skills:** Close reading, analysis and interpretation  
**Program provider:** WordWright  
**Fees and Deadlines:** The fees will be $105 for one grade, $190 for two adjacent grades (9–10 or 11–12), $380 for all four grades. Discounts for school districts enrolling teams from several high schools.  
**Website:** www.wordwrightchallenge.com  
**Email:** n.mcgrath213@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (201) 327-4201  
**Mailing Address:** Nancy McGrath  
WordWright  
213 E. Allendale Ave.  
Allendale, NJ 07401-2016

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**WORLD SAVVY CLASSROOMS & FESTIVAL**

Grades 6–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

World Savvy is a national education nonprofit that addresses the need for global competence by partnering with educators, schools and districts to integrate the highest quality of global competence teaching and learning into K–12 classrooms, so all young people can be prepared to meet the challenges of global citizenship in the 21st century. The program also provides teachers with the resources, curriculum, professional development and support to embed this program into their classrooms. For more details, be sure to visit www.worldsavvy.org.

**Academic skills:** Research, teamwork, critical thinking, geography, current events and history  
**Program provider:** World Savvy  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Registration deadline is Nov. 30, 2016.  
**Website:** www.worldsavvy.org  
**Email:** jim@worldsavvy.org  
**Phone:** (612) 584-9962  
**Mailing Address:** Jim Zacchini  
World Savvy  
1304 University Ave. NE, Suite 305  
Minneapolis, MN 55413
YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT MODEL ASSEMBLY SESSION

Grades 8–12
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

Students form groups in local YMCAs and high schools throughout the state. They research and discuss state issues, draft legislation and develop legal opinions. The culmination is the four-day model state government session at the State Capitol and conference facility in the Twin Cities. Focus is on state government and issues with an emphasis on leadership development, personal skill building and developing friendships with peers from all over Minnesota.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork and verbal reasoning

Program provider: YMCA Youth in Government
Fees and Deadlines: Approximately $450 (includes lodging) plus minimal local expenses. Registration is in early October via local school or YMCA group. State Conference is Jan. 5–8, 2017.

Website: www.mnyig.org
Email: yig@ymcatwincities.org
Phone: (612) 823-1381
Mailing Address: Sam Alley
YMCA Youth in Government
University YMCA
1801 University Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414

YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

Model United Nations gives students the opportunity to gain an international outlook on issues that affect the way we live, while they play a role as an international diplomat. Student delegates form alliances, debate resolutions and seek solutions to world problems, all from another country’s perspective. Focus is placed on diplomacy and cooperation among diversity of opinions and worldviews.

Academic skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork and verbal reasoning

Program provider: YMCA Youth in Government
Fees and Deadlines: Approximately $375 (includes lodging) plus minimal local expenses. Registration is in January. Conference is March 30–April 1, 2017.

Website: www.mnyig.org
Email: yig@ymcatwincities.org
Phone: (612) 823-1381
Mailing Address: Sam Alley
YMCA Youth in Government
University YMCA
1801 University Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414
YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT (YES!)

Grades 8–12

Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Leadership Development, Out of School Time Enrichment

Do you have students who want to build solar panels, start a school garden, do energy audits, design and build composting bins, or educate their peers and community on energy conservation and climate change? If you said “YES!,” then this is the program for your school! YES! is a team-oriented youth program that uses hands-on, experiential learning and energy action projects to address energy opportunities and issues. This unique program exposes students to how STEM is applied in real life while participating in meaningful service learning projects.

Academic skills: Creativity, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, research, teamwork and time/budget management

Program provider: Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, in partnership with the Laurentian Environmental Center, Ney Nature Center, and Lakes Country Service Cooperative with major funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), the McKnight Foundation and Southwest Initiative Foundation.

Fees and Deadlines: YES! is looking to expand to up to 45 teams statewide. Contact YES! or visit our website for registration forms and information about fees. Registration forms preferred by Oct. 15 of each school year.

Website: www.youthenergysummit.org
Email: sayyes@youthenergysummit.org
Phone: (320) 354-5894
Mailing Address: Shelli-Kae Foster
12718 10th St. NE
Spicer, MN 56288

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR PROGRAM TO BE PART OF REACH FOR THE STARS?

The Minnesota Academic League Council accepts for endorsement academic challenges and competitions, awards and recognitions, classroom enrichment, conferences and institutes, leadership development and out of school time programs available on a statewide basis in Minnesota. To download an endorsement inquiry form, please visit: http://synergyexchange.org/Educate/AcademicLeague.aspx

The print version of Reach for the Stars is distributed directly to schools and families across Minnesota through our partnership distribution network. In addition, Reach for the Stars is available in an electronic format at www.synergyexchange.org.
Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) is a membership organization that asks members to commit to actively advocate for and create school cultures that value academic achievement while supporting development of the whole person. It seeks to provide expanded opportunities for students to excel while supporting teachers, schools and classrooms in this work. In addition to membership fees, donations, service revenues and earnings from several endowments, Synergy raises funds and in-kind contributions to underwrite its work of fostering collaboration with business, family, community and faith organizations for the development of ethical citizens, facilitating student and educator recognition programs and supporting academic enrichment opportunities.

**Mission:** To foster collaboration, provide resources and celebrate achievement.

Visit Synergy at www.synergyexchange.org or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SynergyExchange.

**DONATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS**

There are two ways you can support Synergy: Make a personal or organizational donation or become a school/district member.

**Donations & Memberships Support:**

- Gathering of Champions is an annual celebration recognizing Minnesota’s Academic All-Stars, as selected by schools and academic challenge coaches.
- WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program recognizes state and regional honorees each year for Ethics in Education, Teacher Achievement and Academic Challenge Coach.
- Minnesota Schools of Character and Promising Practices Awards recognize schools with character education programs based on Character.org’s 11 Principles of Effective Character Education.
- Reach for the Stars catalogue is a resource of more than 100 statewide awards and recognitions, challenges and competitions, conferences and institutes, leadership development, classroom enrichment, and out of school time enrichment programs.
- The Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award celebrates community-based programs with outstanding character and ethical leadership development.

Visit the membership page at www.synergyexchange.org for more information.
MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE COUNCIL

The Academic League Council was first created in 1988. It was re-established as the Minnesota Academic League Council in 2006 to work in cooperation with Synergy. The council consists of volunteers representing academic challenge coordinators, students, educators and education stakeholder groups who meet regularly to review and endorse academic enrichment programs that are available on a statewide basis. Synergy provides administrative support for the council and creates and publishes the Reach for the Stars catalogue, which lists programs and activities endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council. Please refer to the Synergy website www.synergyexchange.org for program/activity endorsement criteria and more information on the Minnesota Academic League.

CHARACTER RECOGNITION AWARDS

Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) celebrates the statewide achievements of schools and community programs in their efforts to improve academic achievement, behavior, school climate and character through the following awards:

Minnesota Schools of Character & Promising Practices
Schools and/or districts that excel in exemplifying the 11 Principles of Effective Character Education may apply to receive recognition as a Minnesota School of Character. The application process offers a path to school improvement by providing a proven framework, self-assessment, professional feedback and models of excellence. Minnesota Promising Practices recognize successful and unique ways developed by schools, districts and youth serving organizations to promote character development in PreK-12 students. The practice should exemplify one or more of the 11 Principles. Training, professional development and resources are also provided as part of the program. Synergy administers the program in partnership with Character.org.

Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award
The Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award celebrates community programs with outstanding character and ethical leadership development. Anyone may nominate an exemplary program; nominees are invited to submit an application to become eligible for the award.

For additional information, visit www.synergyexchange.org and view under the Celebrate tab.
THE WEM OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS

The WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program was created in 1998 by the WEM Foundation in support of educators, administrators and academic coaches and their important role in helping all students achieve academically, and seeks to bring recognition to the often “unsung heroes” who meet the challenges of teaching in a variety of settings. Synergy administers the award program on behalf of the WEM Foundation.

Each state honoree receives an unrestricted $15,000 gift and crystal apple award. In addition, regional honorees receive an unrestricted $1,500 gift, trophy and the opportunity to compete in the state competition the following year.

Honorees are chosen in each of the following categories:

- **Teacher Achievement Awards** – recognizing exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement. Only licensed Minnesota educators are eligible.

- **Academic Challenge Coach Awards** – recognizing academic coaches of students and/or teams that participate and compete in academic challenges endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council. A Minnesota teaching license is not required for the Academic Challenge Coach category.

- **Ethics in Education Awards** – recognizing exemplary educators or administrators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum. Only licensed Minnesota educators are eligible.

- **Excellence in Education Award** – A lifetime achievement award, recognizing superior contributions of educators whose leadership and dedication inspire a spirit of learning in students of all ages, backgrounds and abilities outside the traditional education system and classroom. This award is for educators outside the traditional classroom and nominees do not need to be licensed teachers. Awards are not given on an annual basis.

For additional information on the educator awards program, including ways to submit a nomination, visit the Synergy website: www.synergyexchange.org. Students, parents and educators are encouraged to submit nominations at any time.

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Ron Hustvedt Jr. (right), a teacher and National History Day coach at Salk Middle School, recipient of a 2015 WEM Outstanding Educator Award as an Academic Challenge Coach along with 2010 Excellence in Education Honoree Tim Hoogland (left), co-coordinator of National History Day in Minnesota and manager of education outreach services at the Minnesota Historical Society.

Karlyn Doyle (left), a teacher and Minnesota Future Problem Solving and Knowledge Bowl coach at North Junior High in the St. Cloud Area School District with Cheryl Whitesitt (right), Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program executive director.
Reach for the Stars

2016-2017 Catalogue of Programs and Activities

More than 100 academic programs, challenges, competitions, events and enrichment opportunities endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council for Minnesota K-12 students.

SYNERGY & LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE
2075 Lookout Drive
North Mankato, MN 56003
(507) 389-2461
reach@synergyexchange.org
www.synergyexchange.org

MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE AFFILIATES

MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE STRATEGIC PARTNERS

SYNERGY & LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE

MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE STRATEGIC PARTNERS