More than 100 academic programs, challenges, competitions, events and enrichment opportunities for Minnesota K–12 students.

Reach for the Stars is printed and distributed by Lifetouch. Trusted nationally. Represented locally. Lifetouch serves the photographic needs of children and families across North America, in schools, studios and houses of worship.
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.

New this year is a page to assist users in searching for opportunities by academic content area. 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 website www.synergyexchange.org in a PDF format for your reference, along with newly approved programs and updated information.

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 is made possible through a generous contribution from Lifetouch. Distribution is facilitated through an expanded partnership network including 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, Chair
Minnesota Academic League Council
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AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

• Achievement Awards in Writing
• FIRST LEGO® League Junior
• FIRST® Tech Challenge
• Gathering of Champions
• Jostens Renaissance Education
• Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
• Minnesota Academy of Science High School STEM Writing Competition
• Minnesota Academy of Science Junior Science & Humanities Symposium (JSHS)
• Minnesota Academy of Science State Science & Engineering Fair
• Minnesota DECA
• Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
• Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
• Minnesota PTA Reflections
• Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
• Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards
• Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
• Promising Young Writers Program
• SkillsUSA Minnesota
• Student Television Network (STN)
• United States Senate Youth Program
• Unsung Hero Projects

CHALLENGES & COMPETITIONS

• Academic Decathlon®
• Academic Pentathlon®
• American Mathematics Competitions – 8
• American Mathematics Competitions – 10 & 12
• BestPrep's Minnesota Business Venture
• BestPrep's The Stock Market Game™
• Continental Math League
• Current Events Challenge
• CyberPatriot National High School Cyber Defense Competition
• Destination Imagination
• Dream It. Do It. Minnesota
• Economics Challenge
• Federal Reserve Essay Contest
• FIRST LEGO® League
• FIRST® Tech Challenge
• Global Food Challenge
• Kids Philosophy Slam
• Knowledge Bowl Competition – Jr. High
• Knowledge Bowl Competition – Sr. High
• LifeSmarts
• MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)
• Math Masters
• Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools (MOEMS®)
• Minnesota Academy of Science High School STEM Writing Competition
• Minnesota Academy of Science Junior Science & Humanities Symposium (JSHS)
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• Minnesota Envirothon
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• Minnesota Future City Competition
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• Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
• Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division A)
• Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division B)
• Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division C)
• Minnesota State High School Mathematics League
• Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
• Minnesota Youth Institute Program
• Mock Trial Program
• Moody’s Mega Math (M3) Challenge
• MSHSL Debate
• MSHSL Music
• MSHSL One Act Play
• MSHSL Speech
• MSHSL Visual Arts
• MSHSL/FIRST® Robotics
• MTEEA Super Mileage Competition
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• Perennial Math Online Math Competition
• Poetry Out Loud, Minnesota State Competition
• Promising Young Writers Program
• School Chess Association
• Student Television Network (STN)
• Sumdog Online Math Contest
• TEAMS
• Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
• Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards
• U.S. Academic Triathlon
• U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad
• We the Students Essay Contest
• WordMasters Challenge
• WordWright Challenge
• World Savvy Classrooms & Festival

CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT
• Academic Decathlon®
• Academic Pentathlon®
• Being the Change
• BestPrep's Classroom Plus
• BestPrep's eMentors
• BestPrep's Financial Matters
• BestPrep's The Stock Market Game™
• Calendar in the Classroom
• Center for Talent Development
• Close Up Washington D.C.
• Dream It. Do It. Minnesota
• FIRST LEGO® League Junior
• 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 City Competition
• 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
• Poetry Out Loud, Minnesota State Competition
• Project SUCCESS
• Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
• University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program
• Unsung Hero Projects
• Walker Art Center Art Today Tours
• WordMasters Challenge
• World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
• Youth Energy Summit (YES!)

CONFERENCES & INSTITUTES
• American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
• American Legion Boys State
• 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

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
• American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
• American Legion Boys State
• Being the Change
• BestPrep's Minnesota Business Venture
• Center for Talent Development
• HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar
• Jostens Renaissance Education
• MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)
• Minnesota FCCLA
• Minnesota FFA
• Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
• Project SUCCESS
• 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
• Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools (MOEMS®)
• Minnesota Academy of Science Middle School and High School Science Bowl
• U.S. Academic Triathlon
• Youth Energy Summit (YES!)
# Listing of Programs by Academic Content

**NEW**: Search for opportunities by academic content area. Key for program grade levels:

- **E** = Elementary school (grades K–5)
- **M** = Middle school (grades 6–8)
- **H** = High school (grades 9–12)
- **P** = Post-secondary

### Arts
- Academic Decathlon®
- Academic Pentathlon®
- Center for Talent Development
- FIRST LEGO® League
- FIRST LEGO® League Junior
- Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
- Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
- Minnesota PTA Reflections
- Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards
- MSHSL Music
- MSHSL One Act Play
- MSHSL Visual Arts
- Poetry Out Loud, Minnesota State Competition
- Student Television Network (STN)
- Unsung Hero Projects
- Walker Art Center Art Today Tours

### Business/Career Education
- BestPrep's Classroom Plus
- BestPrep's eMentors
- BestPrep's Financial Matters
- BestPrep's Minnesota Business Venture
- BestPrep's The Stock Market Game™
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
- Minnesota Business Professionals of America, Secondary Division
- Minnesota DECA
- Minnesota FCCLA
- SkillsUSA Minnesota

### General
- BestPrep's Classroom Plus
- BestPrep's Minnesota Business Venture
- Gathering of Champions
- Jostens Renaissance Education
- Knowledge Bowl Competition – Jr. High
- Knowledge Bowl Competition – Sr. High
- LifeSmarts
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC)
- Minnesota FFA
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
- Minnesota Youth Institute Program
- National Current Events League
- Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College
- Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS)
- Project SUCCESS
- Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival

### Language Arts
- Academic Decathlon®
- Academic Pentathlon®
- Achievement Awards in Writing
- Being the Change
- BestPrep's eMentors
- Center for Talent Development
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
- MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
- Mock Trial Program
- MSHSL Debate
- MSHSL Speech
- National Geographic Bee
- National Language Arts League
- Poetry Out Loud, Minnesota State Competition
- Promising Young Writers Program
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- Unsung Hero Projects
- WordMasters Challenge
- WordWright Challenge
- YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session
- YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations

### Social Studies
- Academic Decathlon®
- Academic Pentathlon®
- American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
- American Legion Boys State
- Being the Change
- BestPrep's Financial Matters
- BestPrep's The Stock Market Game™
- Center for Talent Development
- Close Up Washington D.C.
- Current Events Challenge
- Economics Challenge
- Federal Reserve Essay Contest
- Global Food Challenge
- HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
- Kids Philosophy Slam
- MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
- Mock Trial Program
- National Geography Challenge
- National History Day in Minnesota
- National Social Studies League
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- United States Senate Youth Program
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<td>YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session</td>
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<td>STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering Math)</td>
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<td>Academic Pentathlon*</td>
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EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Reach for the Stars offers a comprehensive listing of programs that have met the criteria for approval by the Minnesota Academic League Council, with a cross-reference to skill sets and curricular areas addressed by each program. Programs must provide educational enrichment for schools and students, based on the following four criteria: purpose, inclusiveness, sustainability and evaluation. Use the program listings in Reach for the Stars 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.

To download an electronic version of the Reach for the Stars catalogue, visit www.synergyexchange.org.

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®
Being the Change
BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game™
Center for Talent Development
Concordia Language Villages
Continental Math League
Crazy 8s Math Club
Current Events Challenge
Dream It. Do It. Minnesota Economics Challenge
Gathering of Champions
Global Food Challenge
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
LifeSmarts
MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)
Math Masters
Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools (MOEMS®)
Minnesota Academy of Science High School STEM Writing Competition
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 City Competition
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
Minnesota PTA Reflections
Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
Moody’s Mega Math (M3) Challenge
MTEEA Super Mileage Competition
National Current Events League
National Geography Challenge
National History Day in Minnesota
National Language Arts League
National Science League
National Social Studies League
Perennial Math Online Math Competition
Project SUCCESS
School Chess Association
Student Television Network (STN)
U.S. Academic Triathlon
Unsung Hero Projects
We the Students Essay Contest
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

Academic Decathlon® is the premier national scholastic competition for high school students designed to promote 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 Africa.

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. 20, 2017. AcaDec Online Meets: Oct. 28–29; Nov. 18–19, Dec. 9–10; Regionals: Jan. 13–14; State Online: Feb. 13–16, 2018; State In-Person: Feb. 25–26, 2018 at Oak Ridge in Chaska, Minnesota. National competition will be held April 19–21, 2018 in Frisco, Texas.

Website: www.mnscsc.org
Email: jswenson@mnscsc.org
Phone: (507) 389-5017 or (612) 578-3377
Contact: Joyce Swenson

ACADEMIC PENTATHLON®

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

Academic Pentathlon®, the premier national scholastic competition for middle school students, challenges students to rigorous team and individual competition. Using the USAD curriculum, which addresses several national education content and curriculum standards, students compete in five events: fine arts, literature, mathematics, science and social science. The year’s theme is Africa.

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: Dec. 15, 2017. School registration and curriculum site license: $250. See the website for competition dates. National competition: May 18–19, 2018 in Omaha, Nebraska.

Website: www.mnscsc.org
Email: jswenson@mnscsc.org
Phone: (507) 389-5017 or (612) 578-3377
Contact: Joyce Swenson
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING
Grade 11
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions

A school-based writing program that encourages and recognizes students in their writing. The National Council of Teachers of English presents achievement awards to students nominated and cited as excellent writers by judges. Only students who are juniors in the academic year 2017–18 may be nominated; they must be candidates for high school graduation in 2019.

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. See website for further program details.
Website: www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa
Email: jfournel@ncte.org or aa@ncte.org
Phone: (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283
Contact: Jenna Fournel

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

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-serve basis if qualified.
Website: www.mnboysstate.org
Email: jkelley@mnlegion.org
Phone: (651) 291-1800 or toll free (866) 259-9163
Contact: Jennifer Kelley
AMERICAN MATHEMATICS COMPETITIONS – 8
Grades 6–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

American Math Competitions seek to increase interest in mathematics and develop problem-solving skills. The competition consists of 25-question, 40-minute, multiple choice test with no penalty for guessing. Problems draw on material from the middle school mathematics curriculum. No problem requires the use of algebra or a calculator.

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
Contact: Doug Ensley

AMERICAN MATHEMATICS COMPETITIONS – 10 & 12
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

American Math Competitions seek to increase interest in mathematics and develop problem-solving skills. The competition consists of 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.

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
Contact: Doug Ensley

★ BEING THE CHANGE
Grades 6–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Leadership Development

Interested in applying your leadership skills to peace-building? Get inspired by Nobel Peace Prize laureates whose lives are captured in an iBook, “Being the Change.” Developed by Youthrive, the resource enriches in- or out-of-school programs for middle or high school students. Network with other peace-builders and meet a Nobel laureate at the annual Nobel Peace Prize Forum at Augsburg College!

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Youthrive
Fees and Deadlines: Participation in the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize Forum, Sept. 15–16, is free for youth and adults who are “Being the Change” sites through Youthrive. Enrollment to become a site is ongoing; email the organization for details.
Website: www.youthrive.net
Email: info@youthrive.net
Phone: (612) 354-7571
Contact: Maddy Wegner
BESTPREP’S CLASSROOM PLUS
Grades 4–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Program staff coordinate volunteer speakers, tours, mock interviews 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
Email: cpinfo@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 398-0090

BESTPREP’S EMENTORS
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Email mentoring offers students the chance to exchange emails about a series of career, workplace or business prompts with an adult other than their parents and teachers. 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
Contact: Samantha Funk

BESTPREP’S 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 investing 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) 398-0090
**BESTPREP’S MINNESOTA BUSINESS VENTURE**
Grades 9–12

*Program Category:* Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development

Minnesota Business Venture is for students dreaming of starting a business, searching for career direction, heading to college or just eager to get into the workforce. Students spend a week during the summer on a college campus developing leadership, teamwork and communication skills as well as business experience from professionals.

**Academic Skills:** Critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, problem solving, public speaking, teamwork and time/budget management

**Program Provider:** BestPrep

**Fees and Deadlines:** Check our website for the exact summer dates. Students pay $200 for the week; save $50 with early bird discount.

**Website:** www.bestprep.org

**Email:** mbv@bestprep.org

**Phone:** (763) 233-6325

**Contact:** Amanda Labo

**⭐ BESTPREP’S 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 students how to work in teams to invest a virtual $100,000 in stocks and mutual funds. 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:** Please visit our website for session dates. Three-week trial sessions also available for educators. Registration opens August 2017. $20 per team, free for teachers who use the game with students.

**Website:** www.stockmarketgame.org

**Email:** smg@bestprep.org

**Phone:** (763) 233-6328

**Contact:** Greg Orvik

**CALENDAR IN THE CLASSROOM**
Grades K–5

*Program Category:* Classroom Enrichment

Calendar in the Classroom provides a series of lessons utilizing information and principles contained in the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar. With the help of an informative video and complimentary workshop, these lessons are presented in such a way that the generalist teacher can teach real science with confidence and ease.

**Academic Skills:** Math, science, language arts and visual arts

**Program Provider:** Jeffers Foundation

**Fees and Deadlines:** No fees. Program is ongoing.

**Website:** www.jeffersfoundation.org

**Email:** edorsil@earthlink.net

**Phone:** (651) 429-1228

**Contact:** Sil Pembleton
Center for Talent Development (CTD) at Northwestern University is dedicated to helping gifted students age 4 through grade 12 reach full potential. Research-based assessment, advanced programs and resources to enhance a child’s schooling period is provided. CTD offers enrichment and credit courses in a range of subject areas.

**Academic Skills:** Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, leadership development and problem solving

**Program Provider:** Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University

**Fees and Deadlines:** Please visit www.ctd.northwestern.edu/tuition for tuition and fees.

**Website:** www.ctd.northwestern.edu

**Email:** ctd@northwestern.edu

**Phone:** (847) 491-3782

**Contact:** Dana Boutin, Communications Coordinator

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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

**Email:** info@closeup.org

**Phone:** (800) CLOSE UP

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**CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES**

Ages 6–18

**Program Category:** Out of School Time Enrichment

Concordia Language Villages is the premier language and culture immersion program for youth, families and adults. Youth ages 6–18 can learn one of 15 languages. Summer programs include day camps, one and two-week residential camps and a four-week high school credit option. School groups can attend Village Weekends during the academic year. In addition to language skills, emphasis is placed on cultural awareness.

**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
CONTINENTAL MATH LEAGUE

Grades 2–9
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

This program is designed 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 available. The meets and books 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 and $80 additional teams; Calculus League for Advanced Placement students: $95 first team and $8 additional teams; Computer Science Grades 3–8: $75 first team and $60 additional teams; Registration October 2017; Meet dates: November 2017–April 2018.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Contact: Joseph Quartararo

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 will learn the math behind your favorite activities. It is math gone wild, nothing like your usual math club! You will 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
Contact: Liz Ross

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 years. September–May.
Website: www.currenteventschallenge.com
Email: russ.jam.arm@gmail.com
Phone: (320) 760-0821
Contact: Russell Armstrong
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

DESTINATION IMAGINATION

Grades K–College

Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Destination Imagination’s purpose is to inspire and equip students to become the next generation of innovators and leaders. The organization is a leader in project-based learning experiences, where students work together in teams to solve open-ended STEM and service learning challenges and then present their solutions at tournaments.

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 the website.

Website: www.mndi.org; www.idodi.org

Email: pfschroeder@district287.org

Phone: (763) 550-7212

Contact: Pamela Schroeder, Affiliate Director

★ 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 & Applied Engineering 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: JMeyer@bemidjistate.edu

Phone: (218) 755-2206

Contact: Jaimee Meyer
ECONOMICS CHALLENGE
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Teams of students representing high schools across the state compete in a series of challenging tests of their economic understanding and reasoning abilities. Teams compete at the regional and state level in the spring with a chance to attend the national competition in New York City. Teams can also compete online.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Minnesota Council on Economic Education
Fees and Deadlines: No fee to participate, but transportation to competitions is required.
Website: www.mcee.umn.edu/students/economics-challenge
Email: mcee@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-3727
Contact: Andrea Hanson

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. Finalists announced in late April. Awards Program at Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis in early May. Please check website for specific topic and dates.
Website: www.minneapolisfed.org/community/student-resources/student-essay-contest
Email: Joseph.Mahon@mpls.frb.org
Phone: (612) 204-5254
Contact: Joseph Mahon

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 the website for detailed information.
Website: www.hightechkids.org
Email: vicki@hightechkids.org
Phone: (612) 781-2203
Contact: Vicki Coaty
FIRST LEGO® LEAGUE JUNIOR
Grades K–4
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Classroom Enrichment

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

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, public speaking, research and teamwork
Program Provider: High Tech Kids
Fees and Deadlines: Please visit the website for detailed information.
Website: www.hightechkids.org
Email: vicki@hightechkids.org
Phone: (612) 781-2203
Contact: Vicki Coaty

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 the website for detailed information.
Website: www.hightechkids.org
Email: vicki@hightechkids.org
Phone: (612) 781-2203
Contact: Vicki Coaty

★ GATHERING OF CHAMPIONS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions

An annual event to celebrate academic excellence and to honor outstanding K–12 students as Academic All-Stars. Teachers, administrators and/or academic challenge coaches may nominate their top students or those that have made a dramatic improvement in their academic work for recognition as Academic All-Stars. Nominations may be placed online each spring at www.synergyexchange.org.

Program Provider: Synergy & Leadership Exchange
Website: www.synergyexchange.org
Email: goc@synergyexchange.org
Phone: (507) 389-5115
Contact: Leah Garry
Global Food Challenge explores the basic economics in the context of world food issues, including food markets, trade, security and safety. Each unit includes hands-on activities, research, analysis and a written project, and is aligned with Minnesota Academic Standards. The final project in each unit can be entered into a state competition for cash awards.

**Academic Skills:** Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, research and global citizenship

**Program Provider:** Minnesota Council on Economic Education

**Fees and Deadlines:** No fees. State contest is held in the spring. Curriculum materials are free upon request.

**Website:** www.mcee.umn.edu

**Email:** hans1577@umn.edu

**Phone:** (612) 625-3727

**Contact:** Andrea Hanson

**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’Brian Youth Leadership – Minnesota, Inc.

**Fees and Deadlines:** Cost is $350 per student. Partial scholarship 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

**Contact:** Donna Herbel

**JOSTENS RENAISSANCE EDUCATION**

Grades K–12

**Program Category:** Awards & Recognitions, Leadership Development

Jostens partners with educators to renew school climate and culture through Jostens Renaissance Education. Thousands of schools are proud to call themselves “Jostens Renaissance Schools,” as reflected in the results seen in improved academic performance, behavior, student engagement and overall school spirit. We help 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 the website for details.

**Website:** www.jostensrenaissance.com

**Email:** renaissance@jostens.com

**Phone:** (800) 624-5534
★★ 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. 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: lizg@jaum.org
Phone: (651) 255-0058
Contact: Liz Guimont

★★ JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT K–12 CLASSROOM PROGRAMS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

Junior Achievement (JA) classroom programs inspire and prepare K–12 students to succeed in school and beyond through relevant, experiential curriculum. Elementary age students learn how they can impact the world around them as individuals, workers and consumers. Secondary age students learn how to: take control of their economic success, start and run a business, and prepare for college and a career.

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 further details.
Website: www.jaum.org
Email: lizg@jaum.org
Phone: (651) 255-0058
Contact: Liz Guimont
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 standards-based education program designed to spark interest in habitat conservation through science, art, math and technology. It focuses on wildlife observation, nature journaling, photography, enjoying and exploring the outside world, and investigating the treasures of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Academic Skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, research, environmental stewardship and 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 on March 15 annually. Please see website for details.
Website: www.fws.gov/juniorduck
Email: lynda_knutsen@fws.gov
Phone: (218) 449-4115, ext. 202
Contact: Lynda Knutsen

KIDS PHILOSOPHY SLAM
Grades K–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

A philosophical competition designed to make philosophy accessible and fun for kids, 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 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
Contact: John Davis

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) 737-6517
Contact: Susan Ward
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 2018.
Website: www.lcsc.org/Domain/47
Email: sward@lcsc.org
Phone: (218) 737-6517
Contact: Susan Ward

⭐ LIFESMARTS

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

LifeSmarts is a quiz show-style competition that tests high school students in consumer knowledge in five areas: consumer rights and responsibilities, environment, health and safety, personal finance and technology. The National Consumers League’s free program materials align with national education standards. Materials may be used in the classroom or by an outside organization.

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 takes place between September and January. Check the LifeSmarts website for dates. In-person state competitions take place in early February, location TBD. The national competition will be held in April in a major U.S. city.
Website: www.lifesmarts.org
Email: lifesmarts@mnscsc.org
Phone: 507-389-6999
Contact: Kelsey Rose

CALLING ALL STUDENTS . . .
DESIGN THE 2018 GATHERING OF CHAMPIONS LOGO!

Submit your original logo design ideas for the 2018 Gathering of Champions, which will appear on the certificates of achievement, 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, 2018. 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 Andee Winters from Pine City Elementary, winner of the 2017 Logo Contest.
MAAP STARS (MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS)

Grades 7–12, with emphasis on Secondary 9–12

Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development

MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs: Success, Teamwork, Achievement, Recognition, Self-esteem) is a broad-base vocational-oriented program to help students develop employment, academic and social skills. They want to develop self-confidence, increase motivation to graduate and create a desire for life-long learning leading to a successful future. There are three state-wide student activities and regional events.

Academic Skills: Artistic expression, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, public speaking and teamwork

Program Provider: Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP)

Fees and Deadlines: Annual chapter membership fee: $160; Fall leadership conference October 2017, $45/participant plus housing; Legislative day February 2018, no fee but may include overnight travel and meals; Spring conference April 10–11, 2018, $90/participant plus housing.

Website: www.maapmn.org
Email: pjhaasch@yahoo.com
Phone: (612) 751-2490
Contact: Patti Haasch

MATH MASTERS

Grades 5–6

Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom 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. There are eight rounds of competitions. Students are recognized with plaques, medallions and ribbons in the fact drill round, individual rounds and team competition.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork

Program Provider: Math Masters

Fees and Deadlines: Competition dates: Sixth grade March 1–12, 2018; Fifth grade April 19–30, 2018 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
Contact: Janel Horner
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
Program Provider: University of Minnesota
Fees and Deadlines: For fees and calendar dates call or visit the website. Registration opens in August.
Website: www.mathcep.umn.edu/saturday-enrichment
Email: mathcep@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-2861

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. Tournaments are exciting face-to-face competitions that may be offered by any school or professional organization in the spring. Visit Facebook: www.facebook.com/moems.org or Twitter: @TweetMOEMS for more information.

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 is $109 using online delivery. Standard registration deadline Oct. 15, 2017 (additional fee for late registration).
Website: www.moems.org
Email: office@moems.org
Phone: (516) 781-2400
Contact: Nicholas J. Restivo

Math Mania Tournament
Want more MOEMS? Join us for a live competition March 14 (Pi Day), 2018, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Teams of five students will participate in individual, team and playoff rounds of competition surrounding mathematical thinking and problem solving. Coaches are provided sample problems in advance of the competition and solutions for reviewing with teams afterward. Team and individual awards will be presented at a ceremony following the competition. Schools or other youth groups are invited to form teams, or students can register individually and will be placed on teams for the competition. Visit http://mnsccc.org/math-mania for more information.
MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL STEM WRITING COMPETITION

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 scientific and mathematical research. Communicating their research through writing is key. Top 10 papers are published in the Minnesota Academy of Science’s Student Journal.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, interdisciplinary, problem solving and research
Program Provider: Minnesota Academy of Science
Fees and Deadlines: See website for application, submission requirements and deadlines.
Website: www.mnmas.org/hs-stem-communicator-awards
Email: karennewell@mnmas.org
Phone: (651) 917-3994
Contact: Karen Newell

MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE JUNIOR SCIENCE & HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM (JSHS)

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

A scientific research paper competition for high school students. Students present their original research in science, technology, engineering or mathematics at the North Central Regional JSHS and compete for scholarships, recognition and awards. The top five papers participate in the National JSHS.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, and research
Program Provider: Minnesota Academy of Science
Fees and Deadlines: See website for competition dates, deadlines and fees.
Website: www.mnmas.org
Email: saragomez@mnmas.org
Phone: (612) 643-0627
Contact: Sara Gomez

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

The Minnesota Academic League Council accepts for approval 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 a program 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.
**MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE BOWL**

Grades 6–8, 9–12

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment

The competition consists of five-person teams buzzing in to answer science and math questions in a fast-paced format. Each team competes in a round-robin tournament with the top teams advancing to a double-elimination championship. The winning team represents Minnesota with a paid trip to the National Science Bowl in Washington D.C.

**Academic Skills:** Critical thinking, factual recall, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork

**Program Provider:** Minnesota Academy of Science

**Fees and Deadlines:** See website for competition dates and deadlines. $150 per team of five students.

**Website:** www.mnmas.org

**Email:** bdonoho@mnmas.org

**Phone:** (763) 218-5865

**Contact:** Barbara Donoho

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**MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE STATE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR**

Grades 6–12

**Program Category:** Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

Since 1938, Minnesota State Science & Engineering Fair has been the pinnacle of project-based STEM education in Minnesota, the culmination of Regional Science Fairs throughout the state with 500 students selected to present their research. The top four projects participate in an all-expense paid trip to the International Fair with more than 70 countries.

**Academic Skills:** Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking and research

**Program Provider:** Minnesota Academy of Science

**Fees and Deadlines:** See website for fees, deadlines and competition dates.

**Website:** www.mnmas.org

**Email:** saragomez@mnmas.org

**Phone:** (612) 643-0627

**Contact:** Sara Gomez
MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM (MAITC)

Grades K–16 and General Public

Program Category: Classroom Enrichment

The MAITC program provides free quality classroom resources and teacher professional development designed to educate people about agriculture’s role in their survival and create agriculturally literate individuals. 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.

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: Sue.knott@state.mn.us

Phone: (651) 201-6486

Contact: Sue Knott

★ MINNESOTA BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS OF AMERICA, SECONDARY DIVISION

Grades 9–12

Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The mission of Business Professionals of America 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: MN Business Professionals of America


Website: www.mnbpa.org

Email: jackie@tekstar.com

Phone: (218) 847-5355

Contact: Jackie Schiller
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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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


**Website:** www.mndeca.org

**Email:** jackie@tekstar.com

**Phone:** (218) 847-5355

**Contact:** Jackie Schiller

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**MINNESOTA ENVIROTHON**

**Grades 9–12**

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

The Envirothon is an outdoor learning event where student teams compete in five learning stations: soils, aquatics/wetlands, wildlife, forestry and a current environmental topic, and answer 20 hands-on questions. Students also give a brief oral presentation. At the end of the day, the team with the highest score wins and advances to the next 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

**Contact:** Judy Johnston

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**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.
MINNESOTA FCCLA

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

Minnesota FCCLA is a career and technical student organization where you can learn to be an effective leader in your school, community and explore possible careers. Grades 6–12 youth leaders in FCCLA gain confidence, skills in presenting, working in teams, practical knowledge, character development, and creative and critical thinking.

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 $20. 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: www.mnfccla.org for more information.

Website: www.mnfccla.org
Email: wendy.ambrose@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 330-2950
Contact: Wendy Ambrose

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 through agricultural education.

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: info@mnffa.org
MINNESOTA FUTURE CITY COMPETITION

Grades 6–8

Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

The Minnesota Future City Competition is an exciting, project-based learning experience that allows students to see how engineering is used to solve real-world problems. Students work in teams with a teacher and an engineer mentor to complete deliverables including a research essay, city model, and presentation. First place team wins a trip to National Finals in Washington, DC.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, research, and teamwork

Program Provider: Success Beyond the Classroom


Website: www.futurecity.org/minnesota

Email: colleen.feller@metroecsu.org

Phone: (612) 638-1511

Contact: Colleen Feller

MINNESOTA FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM

Grades K–9 Curriculum, Grades 4–12 Academic Competition

Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

The Future Problem Solving Program teaches students critically-important thinking and problem solving skills that will serve them throughout their lives and help them to create their own positive futures. There are two practice problems and three competitions yearly: Regional, State and International. 2017–18 topics: “Spread of Infectious Disease” (PP #1); “Toxic Materials” (PP # 2); “Disorders” (Regional); and “Cloud Storage” (State). The international topic will be announced in March 2018.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development and problem solving

Program Provider: MN Future Problem Solving Program

Fees and Deadlines: Visit the website for fees and deadlines.

Website: www.mnfpsp.org

Email: cheryl@mnfpsp.org

Phone: (507) 450-4227

Contact: Cheryl Whitesitt

Forestview Middle School in Brainerd placed first at the international competition in Global Issues Problem Solving.
MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC LISTENING CONTEST
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

The Music Listening Contest assists teachers in their efforts to expand the music experiences of students. 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, factual recall, global citizenship, teamwork and time/budget management
Program Provider: Music Listening Contest Board
Fee: $90 per three-member team (includes t-shirts and study guides).
Website: www.musiclisteningcontest.com
Email: deb_nelson@musiclisteningcontest.com
Phone: (763) 862-7647
Contact: Deb Nelson

MINNESOTA JUNIOR HIGH MATH LEAGUE
Grades 6–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

We encourage students to participate in math contests, enable students to meet mathletes from other schools and to provide recognition for students excelling in mathematics. The program also serves as preparation for the annual MATHCOUNTS competition. The meet topics are based on the MATHCOUNTS topics.

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–January (five meets). Fee due at time of registration.
Website: www.mnjhml.com
Email: mnjhml1@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 252-1766
Contact: Luke Olson
MINNESOTA MATHCOUNTS

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

MATHCOUNTS is a middle school math competition, coaching and enrichment program. Through three distinct programs, we empower middle school students of all ability levels and backgrounds to reach their full potential in mathematics: The MATHCOUNTS Competition Series, The National Math Club and the Math Video Challenge.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Minnesota MATHCOUNTS/MN Society of Professional Engineers
Fees and Deadlines: Registration begins in August and closes in December at www.mathcounts.org. Discount rate until early November: $90 per team (four students) and $25 per individual. Regular rate: $100 per team (four students) and $30 per individual. $20 late fee after deadline. 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
Contact: Katie Jamieson

MINNESOTA MATHEMATICS LEAGUE

Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

We encourage student interest and confidence in mathematics through solving worthwhile problems. The Math League has contests for students in grades 4–8, Algebra 1 and high school. Every contest has questions from different areas of mathematics. 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
Contact: Daniel Fleger

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 approved by the Minnesota Academic League Council. All programs listed in Reach for the Stars have been approved 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 PTA REFLECTIONS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

Reflections Art Program encourages students to explore their artistic talents and is designed to promote expression and creativity. Students create their artwork based on an annual theme, this year’s theme is “Within Reach.” Students can tell the world what is within their reach through dance, photography, visual arts, literature, film and music.

Academic Skills: Artistic expression, creativity and interpretation of themes through artwork
Program Provider: Minnesota PTA
Fees and Deadlines: No fees, but school or family must have PTA membership. Deadline February 2018.
Website: www.mnpta.org
Email: mptareflections@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 999-7320
Contact: Lori Ortega

MINNESOTA 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 areas 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: http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/fam/gifted/sod/index.htm
Email: Wendy.Behrens@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 582-8786
Contact: Wendy A. Behrens

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: Co-sponsored by Art Educators of Minnesota, University of Minnesota’s Regis Art Center and the Weisman Art Museum, with additional support from Triarco Art Supplies
Fees and Deadlines: See website for more information.
Website: www.aem-mn.org
Email: Diane Scully: dscully94@gmail.com; Kevan Nitzberg: knitzberg999@centurylink.net; Howard Oransky: horansky@umn.edu; or Jamee Yung: jtyung@umn.edu@dscully94@gmail.com
**MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION A)**

Grades 3–6  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

The Minnesota Science Olympiad is devoted to improving the quality of science education, increasing student interest in science and providing recognition for outstanding achievement. Team competition includes challenging and motivational events ranging from earth science through physics. The winning team from each division will be invited to the National Science Olympiad.

**Academic Skills:** Problem solving, factual recall, critical thinking and teamwork  
**Program Provider:** Minnesota Science Olympiad  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Registration: $50 per team (15 students per school) covers both the national and state fees. Each additional team from a school: $50. Check website for registration link.  
**Website:** www.minnesotaso.org  
**Email:** MnSciOly@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (651) 621-7177  
**Contact:** Michael Huberty

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**MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION B)**

Grades 6–9  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

Science Olympiad is a nationwide organization dedicated to improving science education through competitions like academic track meets of team events. Each year, students prepare for competition by studying a wide range of STEM topics with an emphasis on group participation. Through Science Olympiad, participants bond together and work toward shared goals.

**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.minnesotaso.org  
**Email:** hans1355@isd194.org  
**Phone:** (952) 232-3999, ext. 6864  
**Contact:** Brandi Gordon

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**MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION C)**

Grades 9–12  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

The Minnesota Science Olympiad offers competitions to encourage students to solve problems and become proficient in a variety of topic areas. Participants compete as a team. The winning team from each division at the State competition will be invited to the National Science Olympiad held in May.

**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.minnesotaso.org  
**Email:** MnSciOly@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (651) 621-7177  
**Contact:** Dr. Matt Neibergall
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. 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.

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. Registration deadline Sept. 15; payment due Oct. 15. Meet dates November–February. State tournament is held on the second Monday in March.
Website: www.mnmathleague.org
Email: mathleague@augsburg.edu
Phone: (612) 330-1788
Contact: Dana Koletar

MINNESOTA SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONDALE-QUIE ESSAY CONTEST
Grades 11–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

The Mondale-Quie Essay Contest provides Minnesota high school juniors and seniors with an opportunity to compete for $500 scholarships by writing essays that analyze and take a position on a current topic relevant to Minnesota’s judicial system.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, global citizenship, problem solving, and research
Program Provider: Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. The essay contest topic and other contest information is posted on the Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society website in mid-September. The online essay submission deadline is mid-January of the following year. Check website for topic information and deadlines.
Website: www.mncourthistory.wildapricot.org/Essay-Contest
Email: director@mncourthistory.org
Phone: (612) 492-6178
Contact: Brian Bell

MINNESOTA YOUTH INSTITUTE PROGRAM
Grades 8–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

Become a leader in the global fight against hunger. Students research food security in a developing country, write the findings in an essay, and discuss with experts. Participants are eligible for the Global Youth Institute at the World Food Prize in Iowa, 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: mnyi@umn.edu or yakub002@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 624-6348
Contact: Dr. Mohamed Yakub
MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

The program gives students an insider’s look at the American legal system while helping them develop critical thinking, communication and teamwork skills. A volunteer attorney works with each team to prepare for the simulated trials held in actual courtrooms during January and February. State tournament held in March; state champion competes 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: $250 per team; registration deadline October 2017. Please see website for further details and application.
Website: www.mnbar.org/public/mock-trial
Email: kbasting@mnbar.org
Phone: (612) 278-6306
Contact: Kim Basting

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

Students work 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 with the best solution papers receive 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
Website: https://m3challenge.siam.org/
Email: m3challenge@siam.org
Phone: (267) 350-6388
Contact: Frank Kunkle

MSHSL DEBATE
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website.

Program Provider: MSHSL
Fees and Deadlines: Fees vary by school. Registration deadline is Dec. 1.
Website: www.mshsl.org
Email: cfranson@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Contact: Chris Franson
**MSHSL MUSIC**
Grades 7–12
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website.

**Program Provider:** MSHSL
**Fees and Deadlines:** Fees vary by school. Registration deadline is Dec. 1.
**Website:** www.mshsl.org
**Email:** cfranson@mshsl.org
**Phone:** (763) 560-2262
**Contact:** Chris Franson

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**MSHSL ONE ACT PLAY**
Grades 7–12
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website.

**Program Provider:** MSHSL
**Fees and Deadlines:** Fees vary by school. Registration deadline is Dec. 1.
**Website:** www.mshsl.org
**Email:** cfranson@mshsl.org
**Phone:** (763) 560-2262
**Contact:** Chris Franson

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**MSHSL SPEECH**
Grades 7–12
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website. Contests are held in the following events: Creative Expression, Informative Speaking, Discussion, Original Oratory, Duo Interpretation, Serious Drama, Interpretation, Extemporaneous Reading, Serious Poetry Interpretation, Extemporaneous Speaking, Serious Prose Interpretation, Great Speeches, Storytelling and Humorous Interpretation.

**Program Provider:** MSHSL
**Fees and Deadlines:** Fees vary by school. Registration deadline is Dec. 1.
**Website:** www.mshsl.org
**Email:** cfranson@mshsl.org
**Phone:** (763) 560-2262
**Contact:** Chris Franson

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**MSHSL VISUAL ARTS**
Grades 10–12
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website.

**Program Provider:** MSHSL
**Fees and Deadlines:** Fees vary by school. Registration deadline is Dec. 1.
**Website:** www.mshsl.org
**Email:** cfranson@mshsl.org
**Phone:** (763) 560-2262
**Contact:** Chris Franson
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 Saturday in January; MSHSL Tournament in May.
Website: www.mnfirstregional.org
Email: kr71@aol.com
Phone: (952) 884-5169
Contact: Ken Rosen

★ 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: (320) 396-3393
Contact: Luke Becker

★ 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
Contact: Joseph Quartararo
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BEE

Grades 4–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The National Geographic Bee is an annual competition designed to inspire and reward students’ curiosity about the world. Students compete for a chance to win college scholarships and the glory of being the National Geographic Bee Champion. It is a classroom and school-based competition; registration is not open to individual students.

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) 828-5455

🌟 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 and 10–12. Contests reflect the main themes of geography, appropriate to each grade level.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking and factual recall
Program Provider: National Geography Challenge
Fees and Deadlines: First team $80, additional teams $55; Registration October 2017–March 2018; Event: April 23–May 4, 2018.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Contact: Joseph Quartararo

🌟 NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN MINNESOTA

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

National History Day is a co-curricular academic fair in which students learn academic research, analysis and effective presentation of ideas with the help of staff and partnership organizations. Students are eligible to compete in school, regional, state and national contests. The 2017–18 History Day theme is Conflict and Compromise.

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
Contact: Sarah Aschbrenner
NATIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS LEAGUE
Grades 2–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

National language arts contest that takes place in the classroom. Multiple-choice questions appropriate for grades 2 and 3–4. Multiple-choice questions based on spelling, vocabulary, reading comprehension, analogies and grammar available for grades 5–6, 7–9 and 10–12.

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 2017–March 2018; Event: April 23–May 4, 2018.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Contact: Joseph Quartararo

NATIONAL SCIENCE LEAGUE
Grades 2–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

National science contest that takes place in the classroom. Contests in general science for grades 2, 3–4 and 5–6. Contests for middle and high school levels in life science, physical science, earth science, biology, chemistry and physics. Questions based on both factual knowledge and students’ understanding of scientific 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 2017–March 2018; Event: April 23–May 4, 2018.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Contact: Joseph Quartararo

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 and 10–12. Questions for grades 2–9 based on topics appropriate to each grade level in American Studies, U.S. Geography and U.S. Government. Two contests available for grades 10–12 in American History 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 2017–March 2018; Event: April 23–May 4, 2018.
Website: www.cmleague.com
Email: support@cmleague.com
Phone: (631) 584-2016
Contact: Joseph Quartararo
NATIONAL SPANISH EXAMINATIONS
Grades 6-12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

The National Spanish Examinations are online, standardized assessment tools given voluntarily by over 4,000 teachers to approximately 150,000 students throughout the United States to measure proficiency and achievement of students who are studying Spanish as a second language.

Academic Skills: Spanish language
Program Provider: The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP)
Fees and Deadlines: Please see website for fees and deadlines. Registration begins in November.
Website: www.aatsp-mn.org
Email: nse-coordinator@aatsp-mn.org

NOBEL CONFERENCE AT GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE
High school to adult
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes

Join nearly 1,000 high school students at the 2017 Nobel Conference. Reproductive Technologies: How Far Do We Go? brings top scientists and scholars to explore the science of the emerging technologies and delve into the ethical complexities and social consequences that result when we reshape a process so central to human life.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, interdisciplinary and research
Program Provider: Gustavus Adolphus College Nobel Conference
Fees and Deadlines: The 53rd Nobel Conference held Oct. 3–4, 2017. 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
Contact: Lorie Siebels

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 PSAT, ACT or SAT. NUMATS identifies academic ability, measures growth, and connects advanced 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: microtubel@me.com or numats@ctd.northwestern.edu
Phone: (847) 491-3782, ext. 3
Contact: Dr. Bill Keilty
PERENNIAL MATH ONLINE MATH COMPETITION

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

Math is COOL! The goal of this competition is to stimulate students’ enthusiasm for problem solving. Students in grades 3–12 can join the online competition, travel to an on-site tournament or compete in our virtual tournaments. Visit the website or Facebook page at www.facebook.com/perennialmath for more information.

Academic Skills: Mathematics
Program Provider: Perennial Math, LLC
Fees and Deadlines: $75 per team (up to 30 students); $25 for individual student membership.
Website: www.perennialmath.com
Email: info@perennialmath.com
Phone: (888) 835-2366

POETRY OUT LOUD, MINNESOTA STATE COMPETITION

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

Poetry Out Loud is an exciting national recitation competition in which high school students build self-confidence and master public speaking skills while learning about art and literature through memorization and performance of classical and contemporary poetry.

Academic Skills: Mastering public speaking skills, building self-confidence and learning about literary heritage
Program Provider: The Loft Literary Center in partnership with the Minnesota State Arts Board, National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation
Fees and Deadlines: Free. Registration in the fall; please check website for details.
Website: www.loft.org/events__programs/poetry_out_loud/
Email: ksavage@loft.org
Phone: (612) 215-2590
Contact: Kathryn Savage

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. Students build life skills, supportive relationships, confidence, motivation and graduate with plans for the future.

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
Contact: Emily Heagle, Senior Director of Development
PROMISING YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM
Grade 8
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

The Promising Young Writers Program stimulates and recognizes eighth-grade students’ writing talents and emphasizes the importance of writing skills. Students must be nominated by their teachers. All nominees from the same school must have the same nominating teacher.

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: jfournel@ncte.org or pyw@ncte.org
Phone: (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283
Contact: Jenna Fournel

SCHOOL CHESS ASSOCIATION
Grades K–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

Learn a lifetime activity – CHESS! The School Chess Association sponsors tournaments, matches, instruction, camps and clubs at schools. The Tournament of Champions 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.

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
Contact: Lorene Lampert

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

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps each student excel. SkillsUSA provides educational programs, events and competitions that support career and technical education in the nation’s classrooms. SkillsUSA students are “Job-Ready Day One!”

Academic Skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, public speaking, teamwork, leadership development and global citizenship
Program Provider: Minnesota Department of Education
Fees and Deadlines: Visit the website for details.
Website: www.mnskillsusa.org
Email: skillsusaminnesota@comcast.net
Phone: (763) 560-1932
Contact: Jennifer Polz, Executive Director
STUDENT TELEVISION NETWORK (STN)

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions

STN supports and encourages scholastic broadcasting and provides a forum for teachers to share ideas, ask questions and learn from professionals in the industry. Over the past 18 years, STN has expanded to include film, media and other forms of communication taught in high schools and middle schools. STN serves teachers and students with curriculum, communication and competitions year-round.

**Academic Skills:** Artistic expression, creativity, leadership development, public speaking and teamwork

**Program Provider:** Student Television Network

**Fees and Deadlines:** $75 annual membership for school/broadcast/film program. STN 2018 Convention held March 15–18 in Nashville, Tennessee. For more details visit https://www.studenttelevision.com/convention.htm

**Website:** www.studenttelevision.com
**Email:** info@studenttelevision.com
**Phone:** (877) 786-1001
**Contact:** Nancy Held-Loucas

SUMDOG ONLINE MATH CONTEST

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

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. Sumdog is also a classroom enrichment tool aimed at mastery of math skills.

**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:** andres@sumdog.com
**Phone:** (877) 978-6364
**Contact:** Andres Doussinague

TEAMS

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

TEAMS is an annual one-day, two-part STEM competition challenging students to work collaboratively and apply their math and science knowledge in practical, creative ways to solve real everyday engineering challenges. Teams of four to eight students compete. 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. Registration fees average $25 per student and are determined by the competition site.

**Website:** http://teams.tsaweb.org/
**Email:** teams@tsaweb.org
**Phone:** (888) 860-9010
### THINKING CAP QUIZ BOWL

**Grades 5–8**

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

Fun, scholastic competitions in school. All quizzes are self-scoring, online contests of 100 multiple-choice questions. Areas covered include math, geography, government, sports, spelling, science, literature, language arts, history, general information and fun trivia. An adult is needed to monitor but no adult help can be given. See website for 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

**Contact:** Harvey Kimble

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### TOSHIBA/NSTA EXPLORAVISION AWARDS

**Grades K–12**

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions

ExploraVision is a competition which challenges students to envision and communicate new technology 20 years in the future through collaborative brainstorming and research of current science and technology. A teacher will sponsor and guide students as they work in groups of 2–4 to simulate real research and development.

**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:** Form on website.

**Phone:** (703) 312-9258

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### U.S. ACADEMIC TRIATHLON

**Grades 5–8**

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment

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

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

**Program Provider:** U.S. Academic Triathlon

**Fees and Deadlines:** Fees: $225/team for the year, due Dec. 1, 2017. Additional fee if teams advance to the state competition. Registration deadline: Nov. 3, 2017. See website for competition dates.

**Website:** www.usacademictriathlon.com

**Email:** sarah@usacademictriathlon.com

**Phone:** (507) 645-2560

**Contact:** Sarah Kirchner Sheldon
U.S. NATIONAL CHEMISTRY OLYMPIAD  
Grades 9–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions  

U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad 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  

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 and be awarded a $10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate studies, with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science. The 56th annual program will be held in Washington, D.C. March 3–10, 2018.  

Academic Skills: Leadership, critical thinking and cooperation  
Program Provider: Minnesota Department 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  
Contact: Ken Kaffine  

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA TALENTED YOUTH MATH PROGRAM  
Grades 5–12  
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment  

An accelerated math program, the University of Minnesota Talented Youth 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
UNSUNG HERO PROJECTS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Classroom Enrichment

The Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes works across diverse academic disciplines to discover and share the stories of individuals who have made a profound and positive impact in history. Through a unique project-based learning approach, students produce documentaries, plays, websites and visual arts projects that champion unsung heroes.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, research and teamwork
Program Provider: Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes
Fees and Deadlines: Free! See website for program details.
Website: https://lowellmilkencenter.org/unsung-heroes-projects
Email: info@lowellmilkencenter.org
Phone: (620) 223-1312
Contact: Norm Conard

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 art appreciation
Program Provider: Walker Art Center
Fees and Deadlines: Group tours must be booked at least three weeks in advance. Self-guided group visits must be booked at least one week in advance. Scheduling is based on availability. See website for details.
Website: www.walkerart.org/visit/tours-field-trips
Email: tours@walkerart.org
Phone: (612) 375-7609

WE THE STUDENTS ESSAY CONTEST
Grades 8–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions

We the Students is an essay contest that tackles current events. The contest is open to students ages 14–18 and features up to $20,000 in prizes!

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking and research
Program Provider: Bill of Rights Institute
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Contest begins: Sept. 15, 2017; Contest ends: February 2017 (exact date TBD).
Website: www.billofrightsinstitute.org/engage/students-programs-events/scholarship/
Email: mcarper@billofrightsinstitute.org
Phone: (703) 894-1776
Contact: Madi Carper
WORDMASTERS CHALLENGE  
Grades 3–8  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

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 your school. Aligns perfectly with CCSS ELA-Literacy standards for Vocabulary Acquisition and Use. More than 125,000 students participate annually!

**Academic Skills:** Critical thinking, problem solving, verbal reasoning and vocabulary acquisition  
**Program Provider:** WordMasters, LLC  
**Fees and Deadlines:** $95 per team (no limit on number of students per team). Enroll by Sept. 30 to maximize preparation time for your students. Challenge meets take place in November, February and April (see website for details).  
**Website:** www.wordmasterschallenge.com  
**Email:** lisa.lombardi@wordmasterschallenge.com  
**Phone:** (888) 385-5656  
**Contact:** Lisa Lombardi

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 60,000 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:** Fees: $108 one grade, $197 two adjacent grades (9–10 or 11–12), $394 all four grades. Discounts for districts enrolling teams from multiple high schools. Enrollment deadline is Sept. 29, 2017.  
**Website:** www.wordwrightchallenge.com  
**Email:** n.mcgrath213@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (201) 327-4201  
**Contact:** Nancy McGrath

WORLD SAVVY CLASSROOMS & FESTIVAL  
Grades 6–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment

World Savvy partners with educators, schools and districts to integrate the highest quality of global competence, teaching and learning into K–12 classrooms. Resources, curriculum, professional development and support are provided to embed into classrooms. Students may submit a project for the festival and compete for prizes or display their work in a non-competitive showcase event.

**Academic Skills:** Research, teamwork, critical thinking, geography, current events and history  
**Program Provider:** World Savvy  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Registration deadline is Nov. 1, 2017.  
**Website:** www.worldsavvy.org  
**Email:** rolland@worldsavvy.org  
**Phone:** (415) 813-1685  
**Contact:** Rolland Janairo
YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT MODEL ASSEMBLY SESSION

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

Students form groups through local YMCAs and high schools. They research and discuss state issues, draft legislation and develop legal opinions. The culmination is a four-day model state government session at the State Capitol and conference facility. Focus is on state government with an emphasis on leadership development, personal skill building and developing friendships with peers from across 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. 4–7, 2018.

Website: www.mnyig.org
Email: yig@ymcatwincities.org
Phone: (612) 823-1381
Contact: Sam Alley

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 playing 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 diverse opinions and world-views.

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 April 5–7, 2018.

Website: www.mnyig.org
Email: yig@ymcatwincities.org
Phone: (612) 823-1381
Contact: Sam Alley
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? YES! is a team-oriented youth program that uses hands-on, experiential learning and energy action projects to address energy opportunities and issues.

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: Visit our website to host a team at school this year or call Shelli-Kae Foster at (320) 441-9254.

Website: www.youthenergysummit.org
Email: sayyes@youthenergysummit.org
Phone: (320) 354-5894
Contact: Shelli-Kae Foster

REACH FOR THE STARS WITH SOUTH CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE STUDENT PROGRAMS

Based in North Mankato, South Central Service Cooperative provides a variety of enrichment options for students in south central Minnesota and beyond. Visit the SCSC website to learn more about the academic conferences, activities, challenges and classroom extension opportunities available!

- Academic Decathlon*
- Academic Pentathlon*
- Chess Tournaments
- High-STEP Health Science Academy
- Knowledge Bowl*
- LifeSmarts*
- Math Dice Tournament
- Math Mania Tournament
- Math Masters*
- Science & Nature Conference
- SCSC Writing Contest
- SOCRATES Online
- SourceCode Information Technology Academy
- Spelling Bee
- Sumdog Math Contest*
- Young Writers & Artists Conference

* See individual listing for more on these programs.
ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES OFFERED FOR STUDENTS

- Children’s Authors & Illustration Program
- Creative Writing Contest
- Conference for Young Artist
- Conference for Young Writers
- Culinary Skills Challenge
- Digital Photography Contest
- Knowledge Bowl - Senior High & Junior High
- Science & Nature Conference
- Spelling Bee

Helping student success and achievement!

spelling bee
knowledge bowl
student art show

Learn more at NJPAcoop.org/education

202 12th Street NE • P.O. Box 219 • Staples, MN 56479
For more information, visit www.mnservcoop.org or the service cooperative that serves your area.
MINNESOTA CHARACTER COUNCIL
The role of the council is to promote and celebrate positive character and ethical leadership development in Minnesotans through advising, assisting and advocating for Synergy & Leadership Exchange.

MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE
Synergy & Leadership Exchange provides administrative support for the Minnesota Academic League Council, which reviews and approves programs and activities that meet the criteria to appear in the Reach for the Stars catalogue, as well as advocates for academic enrichment opportunities.

REACH FOR THE STARS
This free guide lists more than 100 academic enrichment programs and activities that have received the Minnesota Academic League Council's approval. It is created, published and distributed as a public service by Synergy & Leadership Exchange with generous support from Lifetouch Publishing and other partners.

CHARACTER RECOGNITION AWARDS
This program celebrates the statewide achievements of schools and community programs in their efforts to improve achievement, behavior and climate. Awards presented include the Minnesota Schools of Character, Minnesota Promising Practices and Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award.

GATHERING OF CHAMPIONS
Each year K-12 students who are consistent top academic performers; have shown significant improvement in achievement or have overcome barriers to academic achievement; or are local, regional or state champions in a Minnesota Academic League Council approved event are named Minnesota Academic All-Stars and recognized at a free event hosted by Synergy and its partners.

WEM OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS PROGRAM
Synergy administers the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program on behalf of the WEM Foundation 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. Educators, administrators and academic challenge coaches from Minnesota public or non-public schools and educational institutions are eligible.

HELPING MINNESOTANS BE THEIR BEST THROUGH COLLABORATION, EDUCATION AND CELEBRATION
THANK YOU TO THE
MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE STRATEGIC PARTNERS

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.