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

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 resource features information on statewide programs to complement classroom teaching and learning.

These programs cover a wide range of subject areas and grade levels from kindergarten through adult. Whether offered outside the school day or embedded within classroom curricula, these programs will help students discover and develop their interests, passions and talents. They will help schools and communities support and integrate programs for students to stretch their abilities, learn new skills and reach new heights in learning.

With 118 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. Please refer to the program and activity providers’ websites listed in Reach for the Stars for event schedules and program updates. New programs are added to the catalogue each year. A program inquiry form is available on the Synergy website for any statewide academic enrichment program wanting to be reviewed by the Minnesota Academic League Council for inclusion in Reach for the Stars.

Reach for the Stars 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 Jostens. Distribution is facilitated through an expanded partnership network including several statewide and regional education organizations and associations as referenced in this catalogue. Preparation and updates of the catalogue are supported in part by the affiliate members of the Minnesota Academic League. Finally, our thanks go to the hundreds of volunteers, organizations and program providers whose combined efforts result in tens of thousands of Minnesota students enjoying challenging, stimulating and entertaining academic enrichment opportunities!

Best wishes for a great academic year,

Wanda Sommers Wall, Executive Director
Synergy & Leadership Exchange

Paul Brinkman, Chair
Minnesota Academic League Council
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 cross-references to skill sets and curricular areas addressed by each program. Programs must provide educational enrichment for schools and students based on 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, curricular area, contact information, fees and deadlines. If you have difficulty finding an activity, check the table of contents page under Minnesota, MN or National as 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 using the information provided in the listing. The sponsor will provide the additional information and support you will need to enroll or participate. If the program is not currently available in your community, try contacting your local school or community education organization and encourage them to sponsor the program.

To download an electronic version of the Reach for the Stars catalogue, visit www.synergyexchange.org. A limited number of print copies are available; email reach@synergyexchange.org to request a copy.

LOCAL ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES
There are many enrichment programs and activities that are not listed in Reach for the Stars because they are only offered locally and not statewide, a criterion for inclusion. For local program ideas outside of Reach for the Stars, the Minnesota Academic League Council recommends contacting your local school district, community education program, city park and recreation board, public library, university or college, or after school regional network. Examples of after school regional networks:

• Brooklyn Center/Brooklyn Park – www.brooklynsallianceforyouth.org
• Duluth – www.activityhero.com/in/duluth-mn/activity-providers
• Itasca – www.getlearning.org/page/2694
• Northfield – http://primetimekids.org/about/
• Minneapolis – www.whatsup612.com
• St. Paul – www.sprocketssaintpaul.org/program-finder

JOSTENS
Jostens is a trusted partner in the academic and achievement area, providing products, programs and services that help its customers celebrate moments that matter. The company’s products include yearbooks, publications, jewelry and consumer goods that serve the K–12 educational, higher education and professional sports market. Founded in 1897 and based in Minneapolis, Jostens is one of the leading brands in Newell Brand’s portfolio that touch hundreds of millions of people every day where they Live, Learn, Work and Play and can be found online at www.jostens.com.
MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE AFFILIATES

Academic Decathlon®
Academic Pentathlon®
BestPrep's Minnesota Business Venture
BestPrep's The Stock Market Game™
Center for Talent Development
College Dollars & Sense
Continental Mathematics League
Current Events Challenge
Economics Challenge
Gathering of Champions
German Language and Culture Festival
Global Food Challenge
H2O for Life
Jostens Renaissance Education
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
LifeSmarts
MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)
Math Masters
Minnesota Academy of Science Middle School and High School Science Bowl
Minnesota Business Professionals of America, Secondary Division
Minnesota DECA
Minnesota FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
Minnesota Future City Competition
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota Invention Convention
Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division B)
MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
National Current Events League
National Geography Challenge
National History Day in Minnesota
National Language Arts League
National Science League
National Social Studies League
Personal Finance Decathlon
Project SUCCESS
School Chess Association
Spelling Bee
U.S. Academic Triathlon
WAM Teen Architecture Workshop
WordMasters Challenge
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session
YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations
Youth Eco Solutions (YES!)
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LISTING OF PROGRAMS BY CATEGORY

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS
- FIRST LEGO® League Junior
- FIRST® Tech Challenge
- Gathering of Champions
- Jostens Renaissance Education
- Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
- MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)
- Minnesota Academy of Science Junior Science & Humanities Symposium (JSHS)
- Minnesota Academy of Science State Science & Engineering Fair
- Minnesota Invention Convention
- Minnesota PTA Reflections
- Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
- Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards
- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
- NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing
- NCTE Promising Young Writers Program
- SkillsUSA Minnesota
- 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 Mathematics League
- Current Events Challenge
- CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition
- Destination Imagination
- Dream It. Do It. Minnesota
- Economics Challenge
- Federal Reserve Essay Contest
- FIRST LEGO® League
- FIRST® Tech Challenge
- German Language and Culture Festival
- 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 Junior Science & Humanities Symposium (JSHS)
- Minnesota Academy of Science Middle School and High School Science Bowl
- Minnesota Academy of Science State Science & Engineering Fair
- Minnesota Business Professionals of America, Secondary Division
- Minnesota DECA
- Minnesota Envirothon
- Minnesota FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
- Minnesota FFA
- Minnesota Future City Competition
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
- Minnesota Invention Convention
- Minnesota Junior High Math League
- Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
- Minnesota Mathematics League
- 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
- MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
- 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
- National Current Events League
- National Geographic Bee
- National Geography Challenge
- National History Day in Minnesota
- National Language Arts League
- National Science League
- National Social Studies League
- National Spanish Examinations
- Perennial Math Online Math Competition
- Personal Finance Decathlon
- Poetry Out Loud, Minnesota State Competition
- School Chess Association
- SkillsUSA Minnesota
- Spelling Bee
- 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.
• Continental Mathematics League
• Current Events Challenge
• Dream It. Do It. Minnesota
• Federal Reserve Essay Contest
• FIRST LEGO® League Junior
• H2O for Life
• 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 High School Music Listening Contest
• 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
• Student Television Network (STN)
• Sumdog Online Math Contest
• TEAMS
• Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
• University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program
• Unsung Hero Projects

CONFERENCES & INSTITUTES
• 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
• Minnesota FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
• 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

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
• Minnesota FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
• Minnesota FFA
• Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
• Project SUCCESS
• SkillsUSA Minnesota
• United States Senate Youth Program
• World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
• YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session
• YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME ENRICHMENT
• College Dollars & Sense
• Concordia Language Villages
• Crazy 8s Math Club
• German Language and Culture Festival
• H2O for Life
• Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools (MOEMS®)
• Minnesota Academy of Science Middle School and High School Science Bowl
• Minnesota PTA Reflections
• MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
• U.S. Academic Triathlon
• WAM Teen Architecture Workshop
• Youth Eco Solutions (YESI)
LISTING OF PROGRAMS BY ACADEMIC CONTENT

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®
- Calendar in the Classroom
- Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
- MAAP STARS
- Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
- Minnesota PTA Reflections
- Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards
- Mock Trial Program
- MSHSL Music
- MSHSL One Act Play
- MSHSL Visual Arts
- Poetry Out Loud, Minnesota State Competition
- Student Television Network
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- Unsung Hero Projects
- Walker Art Center Art Today Tours
- WAM Teen Architecture Workshop
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival

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 Capstone Programs
- LifeSmarts
- MAAP STARS
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
- Minnesota Business Professionals of America
- Minnesota DECA
- Minnesota FCCLA
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
- Mock Trial Program
- Personal Finance Decathlon
- SkillsUSA Minnesota
- Student Television Network
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival

GENERAL
- BestPrep's eMentors
- Calendar in the Classroom
- College Dollars & Sense
- Gathering of Champions
- H2O for Life
- Jostens Renaissance Education
- Knowledge Bowl Competition – Jr. High
- Knowledge Bowl Competition – Sr. High
- LifeSmarts
- MAAP STARS
- Minnesota Academy of Science
- Middle School and High School Science Bowl
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
- Minnesota FCCLA
- Minnesota FFA
- Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
- Minnesota Youth Institute Program
- Mock Trial Program
- Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search
- Project SUCCESS
- Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
- Youth Eco Solutions (YES!)

LANGUAGE ARTS
- Academic Decathlon®
- Academic Pentathlon®
- Being the Change
- BestPrep's eMentors
- Calendar in the Classroom
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
- MAAP STARS
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
- Minnesota Future City Competition
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota Invention Convention
- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
- MSHSL Debate
- MSHSL Speech
- National Language Arts League
- NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing
- NCTE Promising Young Writers Program
- Poetry Out Loud, Minnesota State Competition
- Spelling Bee
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- Unsung Hero Projects
- WordMasters Challenge
- WordWright Challenge
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
- YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session
- YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations
SOCIAL STUDIES
- Academic Decathlon® H
- Academic Pentathlon® M
- American Legion Auxiliary Girls State H
- American Legion Boys State H
- Being the Change M, H
- BestPrep's The Stock Market Game™ E, M, H
- Close Up Washington D.C. M, H
- Current Events Challenge E, M, H
- Economics Challenge H
- Federal Reserve Essay Contest H
- Global Food Challenge H
- HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar H
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs E, M, H
- Kids Philosophy Slam E, M, H
- MAAP STARS (Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs) M, H
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom E, M, H
- Minnesota Future City Competition M
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program E, M, H
- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest H
- Mock Trial Program M, H
- National Current Events League E, M, H
- National Geographic Bee E, M
- National Geography Challenge E, M, H
- National History Day in Minnesota M, H
- National Social Studies League E, M, H
- Personal Finance Decathlon H
- U.S. Academic Triathlon E, M
- United States Senate Youth Program H
- Unsung Hero Projects E, M, H
- We the Students Essay Contest M, H
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival M, H
- YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly Session M, H
- YMCA Youth in Government Model United Nations M, H

STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING MATH)
- Academic Decathlon® H
- Academic Pentathlon® M
- American Mathematics Competitions – 8 M
- American Mathematics Competitions – 10 & 12 H
- BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game™ E, M, H
- Calendar in the Classroom E
- Center for Talent Development E, M, H
- Continental Mathematics League E, M, H
- Crazy 8s Math Club E
- CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition M, H
- Destination Imagination E, M, H, P
- Dream It. Do It. Minnesota M, H
- FIRST LEGO® League E, M
- FIRST LEGO® League Junior E
- FIRST® Tech Challenge M, H
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs E, M, H
- Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program E, M, H
- LifeSmarts H
- MAAP STARS M, H
- Math Masters E, M
- MathCEP – Saturday Math Enrichment Programs E, M
- Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools E, M
- Minnesota Academy of Science Junior Science & Humanities Symposium H
- Minnesota Academy of Science Middle School and High School Science Bowl M, H
- Minnesota Academy of Science State Science & Engineering Fair M, H
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom E, M, H
- Minnesota Envirothon H
- Minnesota Future City Competition M
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program E, M, H
- Minnesota Invention Convention E, M, H
- Minnesota Junior High Math League M
- Minnesota MATHCOUNTS M
- Minnesota Mathematics League E, M, H
- Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division A) E, M
- Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division B) M, H
- Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division C) H
- Minnesota State High School Mathematics League H
- Moody’s Mega Math (M3) Challenge H
- MSHSL/FIRST® Robotics H
- MTEEA Super Mileage Competition M, H
- National Science League E, M, H
- Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College H
- Perennial Math Online Math Competition E, M, H
- School Chess Association E, M, H
- Sumdog Online Math Contest E, M, H
- TEAMS M, H
- Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards E, M, H
- U.S. Academic Triathlon E, M
- U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad H
- University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program E, M, H
- WAM Teen Architecture Workshop H
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival M, H
- Youth Eco Solutions (YESI) M, H

WORLD LANGUAGES
- Concordia Language Villages E, M, H
- German Language and Culture Festival M, H
- National Spanish Examinations M, H
- World Savvy Classrooms & Festival M, H
**ACADEMIC DECATHLON®**

Grades 9–12  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** Arts, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

A national scholastic competition designed to stimulate intellectual growth and encourage greater respect for knowledge. The format includes students from each GPA category, honor (3.75-4.0), scholastic (3.0-3.749) and varsity (0.0-2.999) competing in 10 curricular areas. Competitions range from local scrimmages to national contests. This year’s theme is The 1960s: A Transformational Decade.

**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  

**Website:** www.mnscsc.org/decathlon  
**Email:** jswenson@mnscsc.org  
**Phone:** (507) 389-5107 or (612) 578-3377  
**Contact:** Joyce Swenson

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**ACADEMIC PENTATHLON®**

Grades 6–8  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** Arts, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

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. This year’s theme is The 1960s: A Transformational Decade.

**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. 14, 2018. School registration and curriculum site license: $275. See the website for competition dates. National competition: May 2019, details to follow.

**Website:** www.mnscsc.org/pentathlon  
**Email:** jswenson@mnscsc.org  
**Phone:** (507) 389-5107 or (612) 578-3377  
**Contact:** Joyce Swenson
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY GIRLS STATE

Grade 11
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Social Studies

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
Contact: MN American Legion Auxiliary

AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE

Grade 11
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Social Studies

American Legion Boys State is a practical training program in local and state government in which selected boys participate in authentic learning experiences. The program goals are to illustrate 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
Academic Content: STEM

American Math Competitions seek to increase interest in mathematics and develop problem-solving skills. The competition consists of a 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. Students compete for individual recognition rather than as part of a team.

Academic Skills: Problem-solving
Program provider: Mathematical Association of America
Fees and Deadlines: Please see website for details.
Website: www.maa.org/math-competitions
Email: amcinfo@maa.org
Phone: (800) 527-3690
Contact: Doug Ensley
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

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 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Forum, Sept. 13-15, 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: (651) 999-7379

Program staff coordinate volunteer speakers, tours, mock interviews and career days to supplement classroom curricula. More than 600 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, leadership development, public speaking, teamwork, career skills and exploration
Program provider: BestPrep
Fees and Deadlines: Program is free. Educators may request speakers for classes of 10 or more students. Please allow four weeks to schedule speakers.
Website: www.bestprep.org
Email: cpinfo@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6332
Contact: Julie Anderson
**BESTPREP’S EMENTORS**

Grades 9–12  
**Program Category:** Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** Business/Career Education, General, Language Arts  

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, if 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) 233-6329  
**Contact:** Tyler Ormson

**BESTPREP’S FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Grades 6–12  
**Program Category:** Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** Business/Career Education  

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 credit, budgeting to buying a car, the program provides real-life lessons in money management.

**Academic Skills:** Critical thinking, time/budget management, financial literacy and personal finance  
**Program provider:** BestPrep  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Program is free. Educators may request speakers for classes of 10 or more students. Please allow four weeks to schedule speakers.  
**Website:** www.bestprep.org  
**Email:** fm@bestprep.org  
**Phone:** (763) 233-6332  
**Contact:** Julie Anderson

**BESTPREP’S MINNESOTA BUSINESS VENTURE**

Grades 9–12  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development  
**Academic Content:** Business/Career Education  

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 gaining 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) 233-6322  
**Contact:** Jonathan Filzen
**BESTPREP’S THE STOCK MARKET GAME™**

Grades 4–12  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment  
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, Social Studies, STEM

Students invest a virtual $100,000 in stocks, mutual funds and bonds, monitoring their portfolios in an online portal. An experiential learning program, The Stock Market Game can be used during or after school, every day or once per week. Students gain business, math, economics and financial literacy skills as they collaborate to make smart investment decisions.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, interdisciplinary, problem-solving, research and teamwork  
Program provider: BestPrep  
Fees and Deadlines: Visit bestprep.org for session dates. Three-week trials are available for educators. Registration opens August 2018. $14 fee per team.

Website: www.stockmarketgame.org  
Email: smg@bestprep.org  
Phone: (763) 233-6328  
Contact: Stephanie Musgrove

**CALENDAR IN THE CLASSROOM**

Grades K–5  
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment  
Academic Content: Arts, General, Language Arts, STEM

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 complementary workshop, these lessons are presented in such a way that the generalist teacher can teach real science with confidence and ease.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, global citizenship and interdisciplinary  
Program provider: Jeffers Foundation  
Fees and Deadlines: No cost. Program is ongoing.

Website: www.jeffersfoundation.org  
Email: tbwesterhaus@gmail.com  
Phone: (715) 629-7223  
Contact: Tom Westerhaus

**CENTER FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

Age 4–Grade 12  
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Leadership Development  
Academic Content: STEM

Center for Talent Development 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: Visit www.ctd.northwestern.edu/tuition for tuition and fees.

Website: www.ctd.northwestern.edu  
Email: ctd-admissions@northwestern.edu  
Phone: (847) 467-1575  
Contact: Admissions and Advising Office
CLOSE UP WASHINGTON D.C.
Grades 6–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Social Studies

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

⭐ COLLEGE DOLLARS & SENSE
Grades 9–11
Program Category: Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: General (Personal Finance, College Readiness)

What happens at College Dollars & Sense? Learn more about exploring your future career, paying for college, debt, savings and credit. Explore the University of Minnesota and visit a local company. Hear from guest speakers from a variety of fields. Lunch, breakfast and bus passes are provided each day! Receive a certificate of completion from the University of Minnesota.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, research, time/budget management and personal finance for life after high school
Program provider: Minnesota Council on Economic Education
Fees and Deadlines: Applications for the 2019 program will open in spring 2019. Participation is free. Priority will be given to those who are first in their family to attend college, are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or are students of color.
Website: https://www.mcee.umn.edu/students/college-dollars-sense
Email: hans1577@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-3727
Contact: Andrea Hanson

CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES
Ages 6–18
Program Category: Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: World Languages

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
Fees and Deadlines: Check website for fees, scholarships and dates.
Website: www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org
Email: clv@cord.edu
Phone: (800) 222-4750
CONTINENTAL MATHEMATICS LEAGUE

Grades 2–9
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

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 are 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 $80 additional teams; Computer Science Grades 3–8: $75 first team and $60 additional teams; Registration by November 2018; Meet dates: November 2018–April 2019.
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
Academic Content: STEM

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, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Social Studies

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

Academic Skills: Factual recall, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, teamwork and global citizenship
Fees and Deadlines: $50/year for new subscribers; $100/year subsequent year. September–May.
Email: russ.jam.arm@gmail.com
Phone: (320) 760-0821
Contact: Russell Armstrong
CYBERPATRIOT NATIONAL YOUTH CYBER DEFENSE COMPETITION

Grades 6–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

CyberPatriot is the premiere national youth cyber-defense competition created to inspire middle and 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
Academic Content: STEM

Destination Imagination (DI) inspires and equips 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: pfshroeder@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
Academic Content: STEM

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
Academic Content: Social Studies

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, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Social Studies

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. Please check website for specific topic and dates.
Website: www.minneapolisfed.org/community/student-resources/student-essay-contest
Email: EssayContest@mpls.frb.org
Phone: (612) 204-5254

FIRST LEGO® LEAGUE

Grades 4–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

FIRST LEGO League 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: 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
Academic Content: STEM

FIRST LEGO League Junior 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 on a yearly theme.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, public speaking, research and teamwork
Program provider: High Tech Kids
Fees and Deadlines: 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
Academic Content: STEM

FIRST Tech Challenge 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: 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
Academic Content: General

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 on the website.

Program provider: Synergy & Leadership Exchange
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Statewide recognition event is on the first Friday in August.
Website: www.synergyexchange.org/Celebrate/GOC.aspx
Email: goc@synergyexchange.org
Phone: (507) 389-5115
Contact: Leah Garry
GERMAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE FESTIVAL
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: World Languages

The German Language and Culture Festival brings together students from Minnesota and Wisconsin for a half-day immersion experience in which they engage in level-appropriate activities in German and build a sense of community with other language learners. Additionally, the festival invites students to showcase their talents by submitting projects to a competition based on a predetermined theme.

Academic Skills: Creativity, global citizenship, interdisciplinary and teamwork
Program provider: German Studies Program, University of Minnesota Duluth
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Notifications regarding the deadlines will be sent via email.
Email: hbrining@d.umn.edu
Phone: (218) 726-8245
Contact: Holly Brining

GLOBAL FOOD CHALLENGE
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Social Studies

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: https://www.mcee.umn.edu/students/global-food-challenge
Email: hans1577@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-3727
Contact: Andrea Hanson

H2O FOR LIFE
Grades K–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: General (International, Service Learning)

H2O for Life provides a service-learning opportunity for schools in the United States that raise awareness about the global water crisis while taking action to provide funds for a water, sanitation and hygiene education project for a partner school in the developing world.

Academic Skills: Environmental stewardship, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, leadership development and teamwork
Fees and Deadlines: None
Website: www.h2oforlifeschools.org
Email: danielle@h2oforlifeschools.org
Phone: (651) 587-5204
Contact: Danielle MacGillivray
HOBY YOUTH LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

Grade 10
Program Category: Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Social Studies

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 worldwide 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 $395 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.hobyminnesota.org
Email: See form on website.

★★ JOSTENS RENAISSANCE EDUCATION

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

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. Resources such as The Harbor™ weekly video series, The Idea Exchange library of activities that work and the annual Jostens Renaissance National Conference provide a framework for using recognition to connect with students and help everyone feel like part of the school community.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, leadership development, problem-solving, public speaking and teamwork
Program provider: Jostens Renaissance Education
Fees and Deadlines: No cost for Jostens customers. Visit the website for information on resources and events.
Website: www.jostensrenaissance.com
Email: renaissance@jostens.com
Phone: (800) 624-5534

CALLING ALL STUDENTS . . . DESIGN THE 2019 GATHERING OF CHAMPIONS LOGO!

Submit your original logo design ideas for the 2019 Gathering of Champions, which will appear on the certificates of achievement, T-shirts, banners and other materials. The winner receives $100 and framed copy of their 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, 2019. 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 Anthony Fuentes from Eagle View Elementary, New Prague, winner of the 2018 Logo Contest!
JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CAPSTONE PROGRAMS

Grades 5–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education

Junior Achievement 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 program 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
Academic Content: Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

Junior Achievement 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 program 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)
Academic Content: Arts, STEM

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, exploring and investigating 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. Entry deadline for the Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest is March but specific date is subject to change. Contact Lynda Knutsen 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
Academic Content: Social Studies

A philosophical competition designed to make philosophy accessible and fun for kids, promote a philosophical dialogue between kids and adults, and 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. See website for topic and entry deadlines.
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
Academic Content: General

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

Academic Skills: Recall, critical thinking, cooperation and problem-solving
Program provider: Lakes Country Service Cooperative
Fees and Deadlines: Fees and dates vary by region.
Website: www.lcsc.org/Domain/47
Email: sward@lcsc.org
Phone: (218) 739-3273
Contact: Susan Ward
KNOWLEDGE BOWL COMPETITION — SR. HIGH

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: General

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 2019.
Website: www.lcsc.org/Domain/47
Email: sward@lcsc.org
Phone: (218) 739-3273
Contact: Susan Ward

LIFESMARTS

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, General, STEM

LifeSmarts provides teens with the skills and knowledge they need to evaluate risks and opportunities in order to make informed decisions regarding personal finance, consumerism, health/safety, technology and the environment. LifeSmarts materials can be used in the classroom or within other student organizations. Students can choose to participate in online and/or live competitions on things they have learned.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, environmental stewardship, interdisciplinary, problem-solving and time/budget management
Program provider: South Central Service Cooperative
Fees and Deadlines: Participation is free. Online competitions take place September to January. In-person state competition is in early February. The national competition is held in April in a major U.S. city.
Website: www.mnsccc.org/lifesmarts or www.lifesmarts.org
Email: lifesmarts@mnsccc.org

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

The Minnesota Academic League Council reviews 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 for inclusion in Reach for the Stars.

Visit www.synergyexchange.org/Educate/AcademicLeague.aspx to download a program inquiry form.

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.
MAAP STARS (MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS)

Grades 7–12, with emphasis on Secondary 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Arts, Business/Career Education, General, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

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

Academic Skills: Artistic expression, critical thinking, leadership development, public speaking and teamwork
Program provider: Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP)
Fees and Deadlines: There is an annual membership fee. Fall Leadership Conference $45/participant, October 2018. Legislative Day no fee, but there may be costs for overnight travel and meals, February 2019. Spring Events Conference $110/participant plus hotel, May 9–10, 2019.
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
Academic Content: STEM

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 competition. 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 Feb. 28–March 9, 2019; Fifth grade April 25–May 4, 2019, at more than 42 different sites. Check website for locations, 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  
Academic Content: STEM

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), Grades 6–8 (Division M)  
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment  
Academic Content: STEM

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 www.facebook.com/moems.org or @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 is Oct. 15, 2018 (additional fee for late registration).  
**Website:** www.moems.org  
**Email:** info@moems.org  
**Phone:** (516) 781-2400  
**Contact:** Nicholas J. Restivo

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**Math Mania Tournament**

Want more MOEMS? Join us for a live competition! 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 www.mnscsc.org/math-mania for more information.
MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE JUNIOR SCIENCE & HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM (JSHS)

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

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/junior-science-and-humanities-symposium/north-central-regional-jshs
Email: saragomez@mnmas.org
Phone: (612) 643-0627
Contact: Sara Gomez

MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE BOWL

Grades 6–8, 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: General, STEM

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/science-bowl/science-bowl
Email: bdonoho@mnmas.org
Phone: (763) 218-5865
Contact: Barbara Donoho

MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE STATE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR

Grades 6–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

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/state-science-engineering-fair/about-state-science-engineering-fair
Email: saragomez@mnmas.org
Phone: (612) 643-0627
Contact: Sara Gomez
MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM (MAITC)

Grades K–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, General, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

MAITC seeks to improve student achievement by applying authentic, agricultural-based content as the context to teach core concepts in science, social studies, language arts and nutrition. By encouraging teachers to embed agriculture into their curriculum, MAITC cultivates an understanding and appreciation of the food system that we rely on every day.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, environmental stewardship, global citizenship, interdisciplinary and agricultural literacy
Program provider: MAITC at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Fees and Deadlines: All MAITC resources are free except the Children’s Literature Book Bundle.
Website: https://minnesota.agclassroom.org
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, Conferences & Institutes
Academic Content: Business/Career Education

The mission of Business Professionals of America is to contribute to the preparation of a world-class workforce 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
**MINNESOTA DECA**

Grades 9–12  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Conferences & Institutes  
**Academic Content:** Business/Career Education

DECA is a school-to-work student organization that 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](http://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  
**Academic Content:** STEM

The Envirothon is an outdoor learning event where student teams compete in five learning stations including soils, aquatics/wetlands, wildlife, forestry and a current environmental topic, and answer 20 additional 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](http://www.maswcd.org/envirothon.htm)  
**Email:** judy.johnston@stevenswcd.org  
**Phone:** (320) 589-4886, ext. 114  
**Contact:** Judy Johnston
The Jostens Renaissance National Conference is a one-of-a-kind experience that brings all educational stakeholders together with the sole focus of creating a positive culture and climate. It is a premier educational conference in sharing ideas by making connections, hearing new ways to promote and build character for students, staff, and faculty, and a celebration of the best educators and students in the nation.

For over 25 years, Jostens Renaissance Education has helped schools across North America renew their climate and culture. Hand in hand with an amazing nationwide network of educators and students, Jostens is able to provide unparalleled strategies and resources focused on the hearts, minds, and souls of schools to drive results. School communities across the country credit Jostens Renaissance with their school culture revival.

RESOURCES

The Harbor™ is an online video series that builds character in students and culture on campus with a library of over 100 videos and new weekly episodes from September–April, each with a downloadable teaching guide for student-led discussions. The Harbor will engage, inspire and motivate your students.

Visit JostensRenaissance.com to be part of the movement of sharing ideas that lift the culture and climate of schools everywhere. Browse the Idea Exchange to find downloadable step-by-step guides for activities to try at your school. Then submit your ideas for more Renaissance schools to see!

The Pulse is a scientifically valid survey that will help you understand how your students feel recognized. The customized report will aid you in strengthening your student recognition strategy.

Ready to energize the climate and culture at your school? Check out the new Jostens Renaissance Getting Started Kit! With a series of videos showcasing Renaissance schools in action, self-assessments, ideas and seven sections thoroughly covering different aspects of Renaissance, this kit will guide you as you start your Renaissance Journey.

HEART.
The heart of the school is its students and staffulty (staff + faculty), and to have a positive climate and culture everyone needs to feel like they matter and contribute to the school. Do they feel like they belong in the building? Do they feel like they are seen, heard, and loved on a daily basis? Do they take care of each other and their community to make sure everyone feels that way? Renaissance will help you make sure that students and staffulty feel like members of your community and continue to live out these values.

MIND.
The mind of the school is the motivation that the students and staffulty bring to each day. Schools using Renaissance have found that recognizing all students for working hard and improving throughout the year leads to higher test scores, higher graduation rates, fewer absences and tardies, and fewer discipline issues. When your students show improvement, how do you recognize that effort and reinforce their progress? With Renaissance, any improvement is a reason to celebrate.

SOUL.
The soul of a school is found in the staff and faculty who drive the climate and culture by modeling the behaviors you want to see. As a society we ask so much of those who work in education. Jostens Renaissance inspires the students, parents and community to recognize the staffulty for all their hard work. When students recognize their teachers, staffulty are reminded of why they became educators and are reassured that they are helping to create the leaders of tomorrow.

JostensRenaissance.com
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MINNESOTA FCCLA (FAMILY, CAREER AND COMMUNITY LEADERS OF AMERICA)

Grades 6–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, General

Minnesota FCCLA is a career and technical student organization where you can learn to be an effective leader in your school and 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 fees collected in early fall by chapter advisers. Competitive Events (STAR Events) are held in January–February for regions and in April for state competition. Check website for more information.

Website: www.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
Academic Content: General

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agriculture 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: jtolosky@umn.edu
Phone: (518) 832-0313
Contact: Juleah Tolosky

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). Synergy & Leadership Exchange administers the award program on behalf of the WEM Foundation. To place a nomination, visit synergyexchange.org/wem.aspx.
MINNESOTA FUTURE CITY COMPETITION

Grades 6–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

The Future City Competition empowers students in grades 6–8 to imagine, research, design and build cities of the future. Keeping the engineering design process and project management in the forefront, students are asked to address an authentic relevant question: How can we improve the world? Deliverables include a virtual city design, research essay, physical city model and team presentation. The winning team competes nationally!

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–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

This program teaches students how to think, not what to think, as they learn problem-solving skills that can be applied throughout their lives. Annually, there are two practice problems and three competitions. The 2018–19 topics are: Mission to Moon, Mars, & Beyond; Drones; Food Loss & Waste (regional); and Coping With Stress (state). International topic announced in March 2019. Curriculum for grades K–9; academic competition grades 4–12. Junior division grades 4–6, middle division grades 7–9 and senior division grades 10–12.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, leadership development, problem-solving and research
Program provider: Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Fees and Deadlines: Visit website for fees and deadlines.
Website: www.mnfpsp.org
Email: cheryl@mnfpsp.org
Phone: (507) 450-4227
Contact: Cheryl Whitesitt

CAN'T FIND A PROGRAM YOU ARE LOOKING FOR?
If you have difficulty finding an activity, check the table of contents 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 HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC LISTENING CONTEST

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

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: Active listening, artistic expression, critical analysis, factual recall and teamwork
Program provider: Music Listening Contest Board
Fees and Deadlines: Registration opens September 2018. Regional contests: January 2019; Championship contest: February 2019. Fee: $99 per three-member team (includes t-shirts, free one-year subscription to Naxos Music Library, practice test and study guide).
Website: www.musiclisteningcontest.com
Email: deb_nelson@musiclisteningcontest.com
Phone: (763) 862-7647
Contact: Deb Nelson

MINNESOTA INVENTION CONVENTION

Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognition, Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Language Arts, STEM

If you are a student in grades K–12 you are eligible to participate in Invention League’s Minnesota Invention Convention program at no cost. Invention League believes all students have the superpower to seek out problems that impact their world and invent real solutions.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, public speaking and research
Program provider: Invention League
Fees and Deadlines: No charge to districts, schools or students to participate. Registration for districts and student organizations opens Aug. 31 with a Dec. 31 registration deadline. Local competitions (school, district or student organization level) typically take place between November and February with top students advancing to the state competition in April. Top students at the state level qualify for the National Invention Convention & Entrepreneurship Expo (NICEE) at the end of May.
Website: www.inventionconvention.org/minnesota
Email: juli@inventionleague.org
Phone: (614) 348-1763
Contact: Juli Shively
MINNESOTA JUNIOR HIGH MATH LEAGUE

Grades 6–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

Minnesota Junior High Math League encourages students to participate in math contests, enables students to meet mathletes from other schools and provides 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
Academic Content: STEM

MATHCOUNTS is a middle school math competition, coaching and enrichment program. Through three distinct programs, middle school students of all ability levels and backgrounds are empowered to reach their full potential in mathematics: 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: Early priority team registration is $120 and individual student registration is $30. Priority registration deadline is in early November. The regular rates are $140 per team and $35 per individual up until the regular registration deadline of early December. The sooner you register the sooner you will receive your competition material. There are reduced rates for schools entitled to receive Title I funds. There is a $20 additional charge for late registrations or additions made to an existing registration after the deadline.
Website: www.mathcountsmn.org
Email: katie@mathcountsmn.org
Phone: (651) 457-2347
Contact: Katie Jamieson

More than 135 Minnesota Mathletes cheered to show their support for MATHCOUNTS at the state meet.
MINNESOTA MATHEMATICS LEAGUE
Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

The Minnesota Mathematics League encourages student interest and confidence in mathematics through solving worthwhile problems. There are 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

MINNESOTA PTA REFLECTIONS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts

Reflections art program encourages students to explore their artistic talent and is designed to promote expression and creativity. Students create their artwork based on an annual theme. This year’s theme is Heroes Around Me. Students can show the world what a hero means through dance, photography, visual arts, literature, film and music.

Academic Skills: Artistic expression, creativity and critical thinking
Program provider: Minnesota PTA
Fees and Deadlines: No fees, but school or student must have PTA membership status. Deadline is February 2019.
Website: www.mnpta.org/reflections
Email: reflections@mnpta.org
Phone: (651) 999-7320
Contact: Lori Ortega

MINNESOTA SCHOLARS OF DISTINCTION AWARD PROGRAM
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Leadership Development
Academic Content: General

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: www.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
Academic Content: Arts

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/advocacy/minnesota-scholastic-art-awards
Email: ec2018msaa@gmail.com

MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION A)
Grades 3–6
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

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 to 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 is $50. Check website for registration link.
Website: www.minnesotasos.org
Email: MnSciOly@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 621-7177
Contact: Michael Huberty

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

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 the team to advance to the state and national tournaments. Each additional team from a school is $100. Check website for the registration link.
Website: www.minnesotasos.org
Email: hans1355@isd194.org
Phone: (952) 232-3999, ext. 6864
Contact: Brandi Gordon
MINNESOTA SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (DIVISION C)
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

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 is $100. Check website for registration link.
Website: www.minnesotaso.org
Email: MnsSciOly@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 621-7177
Contact: Cheryl Moertel

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS LEAGUE
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

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-State Team that represents Minnesota in national competitions. The Summer Math Institute, a residential summer camp, is in June.

Academic Skills: Mathematical 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 is Sept. 15; payment is due Oct. 15. Meet dates are 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
Academic Content: Language Arts, Social Studies

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 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: General

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. Students who participate earn a $1,000 scholarship to study in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota, recognition as a Borlaug Scholar, and qualify for internships and further opportunities.

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 and essay deadline 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

MN CUP COMPETITION – YOUTH DIVISION

Grades K–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education

The Minnesota Cup is an early-stage business competition that takes place annually between April and October. Through the Youth and Student divisions, young entrepreneurs are provided a supportive environment from which to start a new business and compete for prize money. More information about the competition is available on the website.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, leadership development, problem-solving, public speaking, verbal reasoning
Program provider: Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship, University of Minnesota
Fees and Deadlines: The competition is free to enter. Applications will be available during the month of April 2019 with most activities scheduled during the summer of 2019. Check website beginning in 2019 to get more detailed scheduling information.
Website: www.mncup.org
Email: support@breakthroughideas.org
Phone: (612) 6245-9808
Contact: Jessica Berg

MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts, Business/Career Education, General, Social Studies

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 is 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 2018. 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
Academic Content: STEM

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 exciting profession. Teams with the best solution papers receive tuition scholarships for their college education.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, research, teamwork, math modeling, computer programming and writing skills
Program provider: Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) and The Moody’s Foundation
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Registration opens November 2018. Visit website for deadlines.
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
Academic Content: Language Arts


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
Academic Content: Arts

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website. The contest events provide for competition in major groups (choir, orchestra and band), special groups, ensembles and solos.

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 ONE ACT PLAY

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Arts

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 SPEECH

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Language Arts

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website. Contests are held in creative expression, discussion, duo interpretation, extemporaneous reading, extemporaneous speaking, great speeches, humorous interpretation, informative speaking, original oratory, serious drama interpretation, serious poetry interpretation, serious prose interpretation and storytelling.

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 VISUAL ARTS

Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Arts

See Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website. Artwork may be submitted in the categories of drawing, painting, sculpture, film-based photograph, digital photography, video art, computer-based artwork, crafts, print making, ceramics, 2D mixed media/collage and graphic design.

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
Academic Content: STEM

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.mnfirst.org
Email: kr71@aol.com
Phone: (952) 884-5169
Contact: Ken Rosen

MTEEA SUPER MILEAGE COMPETITION
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

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: mteeeasupermileage@gmail.com
Phone: (320) 396-3393
Contact: Luke Becker

★ NATIONAL CURRENT EVENTS LEAGUE
Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Social Studies

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
Academic Content: Social Studies

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. Registration opens in the fall. There must be a minimum of six eligible students in order for the school to participate.
Website: www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee
Email: ngbee@ngs.org
Phone: (202) 828-5455
Contact: Bee Office

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY CHALLENGE
Grades 2–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Social Studies

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 through March 2019; Meet date: Any date between April 29 and May 10, 2019.
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
Academic Content: Social Studies

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 2018–19 theme is Triumph & Tragedy in History.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, interdisciplinary, research and teamwork
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  
Academic Content: Language Arts  

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 through March 2019. Meet date: Any date between April 29 and May 10, 2019.  
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  
Academic Content: STEM  

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 through March 2019. Meet date: Any date between April 29 and May 10, 2019.  
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  
Academic Content: Social Studies  

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 through March 2019. Meet date: Any date between April 29 and May 10, 2019.  
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
Academic Content: World Languages

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: See website for fees and deadlines. Registration begins in November.
Website: www.aatsp-mn.orgstyled-5styled-7/
Email: nse-coordinator@aatsp-mn.org
Contact: Russell Simonsen

NCTE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING
Grade 11
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions
Academic Content: Language Arts

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Achievement Awards in Writing encourages high school juniors to write and to publicly recognize the best student writers. Juniors, who have been nominated by their schools, submit a best and a themed writing to be evaluated by judges. Juniors earn either a Certificate of Superior Writing or a Certificate of Nomination.

Academic Skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, verbal reasoning and writing
Program provider: National Council of Teachers of English
Fees and Deadlines: Nominations due in February. Winners are announced in May. See website for further program details. No fee.
Website: www2.ncte.org/awardsachievement-awards-in-writing/
Email: aa@ncte.org
Phone: (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283

NCTE PROMISING YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM
Grade 8
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions
Academic Content: Language Arts

The purpose of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Promising Young Writers Program is 1) to stimulate and recognize the writing talents of eighth-grade students and 2) to emphasize the importance of writing skills among eighth-grade students. Eighth-graders, nominated by their schools, submit a best and themed writing. Judges evaluate their works. Students can earn a Certificate of Recognition or a Certificate of Participation.

Academic Skills: Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, verbal reasoning and writing
Program provider: National Council of Teachers of English
Fees and Deadlines: Check the website for deadlines. No fee.
Website: www2.ncte.org/awardspromising-young-writers/
Email: pyw@ncte.org
Phone: (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283
NOBEL CONFERENCE AT GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Conferences & Institutions
Academic Content: STEM

Join nearly 1,000 high school students at the 2018 Nobel Conference – “Living Soil: A Universe Underfoot.” It invites participants to consider the vast diversity and complexity of soil, and to ponder the challenges we face in protecting this most fundamental resource.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, environmental stewardship, global citizenship and interdisciplinary
Program provider: Gustavus Adolphus College
Fees and Deadlines: The 54th Nobel Conference held Oct. 2–3, 2018. High school delegations are FREE but need to register in advance.
Website: www.gustavus.edu/nobelconference
Email: nobelconference@gustavus.edu
Phone: (507) 933-7520
Contact: Office of Marketing and Communication

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY MIDWEST ACADEMIC TALENT SEARCH (NUMATS)
Grades 3–9
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: General

NUMATS is an opportunity for students to take internationally recognized tests such as PSAT, ACT or SAT before the grade levels at which they are normally administered. NUMATS identifies academic ability, measures growth, and highlights resources and opportunities for advanced students. It also helps parents and educators better understand their students’ educational needs.

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
Academic Content: STEM

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 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
Contact: Perennial Math
The Personal Finance Decathlon is an exciting competition for high school students that engages students’ content knowledge and critical and creative thinking skills. Twelve teams will be invited to the state competition based on online test scores. At the state competition, teams receive a case study and prepare a presentation of financial recommendations to a panel of judges. Never competed before? Email Andrea Hanson to request a starter kit and get everything you need to know to form a team in one easy package!

**Academic Skills:** Critical thinking, problem-solving, public speaking, teamwork, verbal reasoning
**Program provider:** Minnesota Council on Economic Education
**Fees and Deadlines:** All high school students are eligible. Teachers may enter multiple teams. There is no registration cost to teachers or students to participate. Registration for the competition will open in winter 2019.
**Website:** [www.mcee.umn.edu/students/personal-finance-decathlon](http://www.mcee.umn.edu/students/personal-finance-decathlon)
**Email:** Hans1577@umn.edu
**Phone:** (612) 625-3727
**Contact:** Andrea Hanson

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**POETRY OUT LOUD, MINNESOTA STATE COMPETITION**

Poetry Out Loud is an exciting national recitation competition. 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:** Public speaking
**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/](http://www.loft.org/events_programs/poetry_out_loud/)
**Email:** mwray@loft.org
**Phone:** (612) 215-2564
**Contact:** Melissa Wray

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**PROJECT SUCCESS**

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](http://www.my.projectsuccess.org)
**Email:** emilyh@projectsuccess.org
**Phone:** (612) 874-7710
**Contact:** Emily Heagle, Senior Director of Development
SCHOOL CHESS ASSOCIATION

Grades K–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

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 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, College/Postsecondary
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Business/Career Education

SkillsUSA is a national membership association serving high school and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, including health occupations. Leadership training and putting new leadership skills into practice is a key part of the SkillsUSA experience.

Academic Skills: Leadership development, public speaking, teamwork, time/budget management and state/national competition
Program provider: SkillsUSA Minnesota
Fees and Deadlines: Check the website for conference locations, fees and deadlines.
Website: www.mnskillsusa.org
Email: executive.director@mnskillsusa.org
Phone: (763) 560-1932
Contact: Caitlin Cahill

SPELLING BEE

Grades 5–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Language Arts

In addition to improving students’ spelling skills and increasing their vocabularies, spelling bee participation provides valuable experience in developing poise—a necessary skill for success in public speaking, performing arts and other activities.

Academic Skills: Factual recall and verbal reasoning
Program provider: Spelling sponsors vary by region.
Fees and Deadlines: Visit the website for details.
Website: www.spellingbee.com
STUDENT TELEVISION NETWORK (STN)

Grades 7–12  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** Arts, Business/Career Education

STN supports and encourages scholastic broadcasting and provides a forum for teachers to share ideas, ask questions and learn from professionals in the industry. Since 1999, 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 Convention will be held March 28–31, 2019 in Seattle, Washington.  
**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  
**Academic Content:** STEM

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:** esther@sumdog.com  
**Phone:** (877) 978-6364  
**Contact:** Esther Droop

TEAMS

Grades 7–12  
**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** STEM

TEAMS is an annual one-day 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 are determined by the competition site. Statewide competitions take place during February and March.  
**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
Academic Content: General

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.

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

TOSHIBA/NSTA EXPLORAVISION AWARDS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

ExploraVision is a science 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. Each student may submit one project online per year.

Academic Skills: Problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity and cooperation
Program provider: Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision
Fees and Deadlines: No entry fee. Projects must be received online; deadline is early February. See website for submission details.
Website: www.exploravision.org
Email: See form on website.
Phone: (703) 312-9258

⭐ U.S. ACADEMIC TRIATHLON
Grades 5–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts, General, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

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, interdisciplinary, problem-solving and teamwork
Program provider: U.S. Academic Triathlon
Fees and Deadlines: Discounts available for new districts. Contact the main office for more information. Fees: $225/team for the year, due Nov. 30, 2018. Additional fee if teams advance to the state competition. Registration deadline: Nov. 2, 2018. See website for competition dates.
Website: www.usacademictriathlon.com
Email: sarah@usacademictriathlon.com
Phone: (507) 645-2560
Contact: Sarah Sheldon
U.S. NATIONAL CHEMISTRY OLYMPIAD

Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

The U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad is a multi-tiered competition sponsored by the American Chemical Society. Participants compete in a series of qualifying events and the top four students of the national competition represent the United States in the annual 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). Visit website for rules and eligibility.
Website: www.acs.org/olympiad
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
Academic Content: Social Studies

Two high school junior or senior leaders will spend a week experiencing their national government in action and be awarded a $10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate studies, with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science. The 57th annual program will be held in Washington, D.C. March 2–9, 2019. For more information and eligibility requirements visit www.education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/youth.

Academic Skills: Leadership, critical thinking and cooperation
Program provider: Minnesota Department of Education
Fees and Deadlines: The deadline to apply is Oct. 12, 2018.
Website: www.us senateyouth.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
Academic Content: STEM

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

Academic Skills: Analytic ability and mathematical skills
Program provider: UMTYMP – MathCEP
Fees and Deadlines: Registration for the entrance exam begins in mid-December for admission the following fall; fee varies per University of Minnesota campus (Twin Cities, Rochester, Duluth). Scholarships available for students with financial need. Each year more than 900 students test for less than 150 positions in the incoming algebra course. Check the website for exam registration and 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
Academic Content: Arts, Language Arts, Social Studies

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: www.lowellmilkencenter.org/programs/projects/about
Email: info@lowellmilkencenter.org
Phone: (620) 223-1312
Contact: Norm Conard

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

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: Interactive, learner-centered and inquiry-based explorations of the Walker galleries and/or the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. Customized tour options available for Special Education classrooms. Discounted admission for groups of 10 or more. Group tours must be scheduled at least three weeks in advance and self-guided group visits must be scheduled at least one week in advance to qualify for the special group rate.
Website: www.walkerart.org/visit/tours-field-trips
Email: tours@walkerart.org
Phone: (612) 375-7609

WAM TEEN ARCHITECTURE WORKSHOP
Grades 10–12
Program Category: Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts, STEM

This week long day camp for high school students is a hands-on opportunity to explore the world of architecture with professional architects from the community. Participants work collaboratively in small design teams to explore, design, model and present creative solutions to a proposed architectural project. All sessions are held at the Weisman Art Museum on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, public speaking and teamwork
Program provider: Weisman Art Museum
Fees and Deadlines: Eligible students must be entering grades 10–12 in the fall of 2019. The fee for all attendees is $200. A limited number of need-based scholarships are available. The workshop is Aug. 5–9, 2019 from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Check website for application and additional details.
Website: www.wam.umn.edu/visits/workshops
Email: jtyung@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-9656
Contact: Jamee Yung
WE THE STUDENTS ESSAY CONTEST

Grades 8–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Social Studies

We the Students is an essay contest that tackles current events. The contest is open to students ages 14–19 and features cash prizes!

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking and research
Program provider: Bill of Rights Institute
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. See website for contest dates.
Website: www.billofrightsinstitute.org/engage/students-programs-events/scholarship/
Email: mhoward@billofrightsinstitute.org
Phone: (703) 894-1776
Contact: Madi Howard

WORDMASTERS CHALLENGE

Grades 3–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Language Arts

Students use vocabulary they have studied in advance to complete analogies expressing various kinds of logical relationships. 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 – now enrolling teams for the 32nd year of competition!

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, problem-solving, verbal reasoning and vocabulary enrichment
Program provider: WordMasters, LLC
Fees and Deadlines: $99 per team (same grade/division; no limit to number of students on team). Discounts available to schools and districts that enroll 5+ teams. Competition begins Oct. 1, 2018, with meets in November, February and April. Register by Sept. 30 to maximize preparation time for your students. Check 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
Academic Content: Language Arts

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: $111 one grade, $199 two adjacent grades (9–10 or 11–12) or $398 all four grades. Discounts for districts enrolling teams from multiple high schools. Enrollment deadline is Sept. 28, 2018.
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, Leadership Development

**Academic Content:** Arts, Business/Career Education, General, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM, World Languages

The World Savvy Classrooms program integrates real-world global content, high-quality collaborative coaching for teachers and the most promising methods for student engagement into the school day. Students in the program explore how to take action on local and global issues. They have the opportunity to submit a project for the World Savvy Festival and compete for prizes or display their work in a noncompetitive showcase.

**Academic Skills:** Critical thinking, global citizenship, problem-solving, research and teamwork

**Program provider:** World Savvy

**Fees and Deadlines:** Registration deadline is Nov. 1, 2018.

**Website:** www.worldsavvy.org

**Email:** erica@worldsavvy.org

**Phone:** (612) 259-7849

**Contact:** Erica Ahlgren

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**YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT MODEL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

Grades 8–12

**Program Category:** Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development

**Academic Content:** Language Arts, Social Studies

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. 10–13, 2019.

**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
Academic Content: Language Arts, Social Studies

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 28–30, 2019.

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

YOUTH ECO SOLUTIONS (YES!)

Grades 8–12

Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: General, STEM

Do you have students who want to complete hands-on environmental action projects and compete with other teams throughout the state? YES! provides a unique opportunity for students to learn by engaging directly in community efforts that lead to dramatic demonstrations of renewable energy technology and conservation practices and exposes them to how science is applied in real life.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, environmental stewardship, problem-solving and teamwork

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, the McKnight Foundation and Southwest Initiative Foundation.

Fees and Deadlines: $550 per team (no limit on number of students per team) for an all year program. Call or visit our website to host a team at your school or call Shelli-Kae Foster at (320) 441-9254.

Website: www.yesmn.org
Email: sayyes@yesmn.org
Phone: (320) 354-5894
Contact: Shelli-Kae Foster
Think outside the classroom.

- Academic Decathlon
- Art Show
- Knowledge Bowl
- Spelling Bee
- Student Recognition Banquet
- Young Authors Conference
The Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC) are proud to be MINNESOTA ACADEMIC LEAGUE strategic partners, distributing Reach for the Stars to schools, educators and families in their regions.

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 advise, assist and advocate for programs and activities in Minnesota that promote and celebrate positive character and ethical leadership development.

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 support from Lifetouch Publishing and other partners.

CHARACTER RECOGNITION AWARDS
This event celebrates the statewide achievements of schools and community programs in their efforts to improve achievement, behavior and climate. Recognitions include the Minnesota Schools of Character, Minnesota Promising Practices Awards 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, academic challenge coaches and athletic coaches from Minnesota public or non-public schools and educational institutions are eligible.
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.