REACH
FOR THE
Stars
2021-2022

CATALOGUE OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

More than 120 academic enrichment programs, activities, challenges, competitions, events and opportunities for Minnesota K–12 students.
REACH FOR THE STARS — EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Reach for the Stars is your guide to high-quality academic enrichment programs and activities to supplement classroom teaching and learning and broaden or increase student performance. The programs featured in this catalogue cover a wide range of subject areas and grade levels from pre-kindergarten to post-secondary. All programs listed have met the criteria for approval set by the Minnesota Academic League Council.

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!

Find a Program

Programs are listed alphabetically by name and each listing includes a brief description, appropriate grade or age level, skill sets used, curricular area, and contact information to learn more. Programs are also listed by academic content area, category and grade level. Please contact the sponsoring organization directly using the information provided in the listing to participate in the activity or for schedules and program updates.

Access and Share

You can access this great resource electronically as a PDF and/or text-only Word document format at www.synergyexchange.org/reach-for-the-stars. A promotional postcard is available to share with your students, families, and staff and includes the website link to download Reach for the Stars. The postcard is a great visual reminder of the numerous programs available to students statewide. A limited number of print copies are also available. Email reach@synergyexchange.org to request your postcards or print copies.

Supported By

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Synergy & Leadership Exchange
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We are proud to be Minnesota Academic League strategic partners, distributing Reach for the Stars to schools, educators & families.

Visit www.mnservcoop.org or the service cooperative in your region to view the activities offered.

**Northeast Service Cooperative**
www.nescmn.net
Region 3

**Northwest Service Cooperative**
www.nw-service.k12.mn.us
Regions 1 and 2

**Lakes Country Service Cooperative**
www.lcsc.org
Region 4

**Sourcewell**
www.sourcewell-mn.gov
Region 5

**Resource Training and Solutions**
www.resourcecoop-mn.gov
Region 7

**SWWC Service Cooperative**
www.swwc.org
Regions 6 and 8

**Metro ECSU**
www.metroecsu.org
Region 11

**Southeast Service Cooperative**
www.ssc.coop
Region 10

**South Central Service Cooperative**
www.mnscsc.org
Region 9
REACH FOR THE STARS WITH SOUTH CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE STUDENT PROGRAMS

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

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

* See individual listing for more on these programs.

WWW.MNSCSC.ORG/STUDENT

Think outside the classroom.

- Academic Decathlon
- Art Show
- Knowledge Bowl
- Math Masters
- Science Fair
- Spelling Bee
- Tech Mobile
- Young Authors Conference
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GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
Although these programs are not active this year, please look for them in the future:
Minnesota Scholars of Distinction Award Program
National Geographic Bee
WAM Teen Architecture Workshop

LOCAL ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Some enrichment programs and activities are not listed in Reach for the Stars because the focus is not academic or they are only offered locally and not statewide, a criterion for inclusion. For local program ideas, contact your area school district, community education program, city park and recreation board, public library, university and college, or after school regional network. Find a school or public library at www.education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/lib/.
Examples of after school regional networks:
Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth – www.brooklynsallianceforyouth.org
Duluth – www.activityhero.com/in/duluth-mn/activity-providers
Greater St. Cloud Area – partnerforstudentsuccess.org
Itasca Network for Youth – www.getlearning.org/page/2694
Northfield Healthy Community Initiative – www.northfieldhci.org/primetime
Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board – www.ycb.org/whatsup612
Sprockets of St. Paul – www.sprocketssaintpaul.org/program-finder
★ 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 (3.80–4.0), scholastic (3.20–3.799) and varsity (0.0–3.199) competing in 10 curricular areas. Competitions range from local scrimmages to national contests. This year’s theme is “Water: A Most Essential Resource.”  

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: adosch@mnscsc.org  
Phone: (507) 386-2966  
Contact: Amy Dosch

★ 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 “Water: A Most Essential Resource.”  

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. 10, 2021. School registration and curriculum site license: $275. Practice competition Jan. 13, 2022; Essay for regional competition Jan. 27, 2022; Regional competition Feb. 17, 2022; Essay for state competition March 10, 2022; State competition March 31, 2022; Essay for national competition April 21, 2022. National competition will be held May 19-21, 2022 in Mesa, AZ.  

Website: www.mnscsc.org/pentathlon  
Email: adosch@mnscsc.org  
Phone: (507) 386-2966  
Contact: Amy Dosch
ACADEMIC WORLDQUEST
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, Social Studies, World Languages & Cultures

Academic WorldQuest builds global competency and is the only international knowledge team competition of its kind in the state! Interactive and fun, this event challenges high school students to think globally and quiz locally about critical issues facing the U.S. and the world. The winners go on to compete at the National Competition in Washington, D.C.!

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, global citizenship, research and teamwork
Program Provider: Global Minnesota
Fees and Deadlines: Free to participate. Registration opens in October. Check website for competition details.
Website: www.globalminnesota.org/education/high-school-programs/academic-worldquest/
Email: info@globalminnesota.org
Phone: (612) 625-1662
Contact: Sylvia Oxenham

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

The program trains young women to be leaders grounded in patriotism and Americanism. Participants learn about the democratic process and how the republic works at the state and national level.

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 week-long experience of learning about Minnesota government at the local, county and state levels by “doing.” It is a week of intensive study and involvement. Highlights of the week include political speakers, mock trials, campaigning, elections, and announcement of the Boys State Governor and State Constitutional Officers.

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: Jennifer Barton

AMERICAN MATHEMATICS COMPETITIONS – 10 & 12
Grades 9–12
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, 75-minute, multiple choice test 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: Jennifer Barton

BEING THE CHANGE
Grades 6–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Language Arts, Social Studies

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.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Youthrive
Fees and Deadlines: Enrollment to become a site is ongoing; email the organization for details.
Website: www.youthrive.wixsite.com/youthrive/being-the-change
Email: info@youthrive.net
Phone: (651) 353-2492
BESTPREP’S CLASSROOM PLUS
Grades 6–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education

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 career 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/classroom-plus
Email: cpinfo@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6320
Contact: Sarah Hammel

BESTPREP’S EMENTORS
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, General, Language Arts, STEM

eMentors is an online mentoring program that offers high school students the opportunity to develop a relationship with a mentor in a professional field. Over the course of eight weeks, students and mentors discuss topics including college and career experience, interviewing skills, workplace etiquette, and more. eMentors has curriculum specifically created for AVID, STEM, and personal finance classes.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, leadership development and time/budget management
Program Provider: BestPrep
Fees and Deadlines: No cost to participate. eMentors connections are available throughout the school year.
Website: www.bestprep.org/ementors
Email: ementors@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6332
Contact: Julie Anderson

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/financial-matters
Email: fm@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6320
Contact: Sarah Hammel
★ BESTPREP’S MINNESOTA BUSINESS VENTURE
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, STEM

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, leadership development, problem solving, teamwork and time/budget management

Program Provider: BestPrep
Fees and Deadlines: July 10–15, 2022 at the University of St. Thomas; July 24–29, 2022 at St. John’s University. Students pay $200, save $50 with early bird discount.
Website: www.bestprep.org/mbv
Email: mbv@bestprep.org
Phone: (763) 233-6325
Contact: Janae Olinger

★ BESTPREP’S THE STOCK MARKET GAME
Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, General, Social Studies, STEM

Students work in teams of 2–5 to invest $100,000 in stocks, bonds and mutual funds, managing their portfolios in an online portal. SMG is an experiential learning program and can be used during or after school, every day or once per week. Students gain business, math, economics and financial literacy skills, collaborating to research and 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. Registration opens in June. Three-week trials are available for educators. Contact Stephanie directly to waive the fee to participate.
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: https://jeffersfoundation.org/programs/calendar-in-the-classroom/
Email: tbwesterhaus@gmail.com
Phone: (715) 629-7223
Contact: Tom Westerhaus
**CANCER UNWRAPPED TEEN WRITING CONTEST**

Grades 9–12

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions  
**Academic Content:** Language Arts

We invite you to write an essay about your experiences, emotions and realities when dealing with cancer for the opportunity to win one of several $1,000 cash prizes. Essays can be about your own diagnosis or that of a loved one (e.g., a family member, teacher or friend). Winning essays from this national contest are shared on our website for others to read and know that they are not alone.

**Academic Skills:** Artistic expression, creativity, critical thinking, factual recall and verbal reasoning

**Program Provider:** Cancer Pathways  
**Fees and Deadlines:** No fees. See website for contest information and deadline.

**Website:** www.cancerpathways.org/programs/cancer-unwrapped/  
**Email:** cancerunwrapped@cancerpathways.org  
**Phone:** (206) 708-1400  
**Contact:** Lisa Hubert

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**CENTER FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

Age 3–Grade 12

**Program Category:** Classroom Enrichment, Leadership Development  
**Academic Content:** Arts, General, Language Arts, STEM

Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University is dedicated to helping gifted students, age 3 through grade 12, reach their full potential. CTD offers a myriad of programs from online and hybrid offerings to summer residential experiences. Enrichment and accelerated, credit-bearing courses are available 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:** ctdmarketingcommunications@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (847) 467-1575  
**Contact:** Admissions and Advising Office

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**CLASSROOM CONNECTION**

Grades K–8

**Program Category:** Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** General, Language Arts, Social Studies, World Languages & Cultures

Classroom Connection brings the world to your school! It is an interactive program that brings students, teachers and international volunteers together for a series of cross-cultural lessons. It provides global perspectives, introduces positive role models, promotes understanding and respect, and supports Minnesota education standards. Online options are available.

**Academic Skills:** Creativity, critical thinking, global citizenship, interdisciplinary, verbal reasoning

**Program Provider:** Global Minnesota  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Free! Check the website for registration details.

**Website:** https://www.globalminnesota.org/education/elementary-school-program/how-it-works/  
**Email:** soxenham@globalminnesota.org  
**Phone:** (612) 625-1662  
**Contact:** Sylvia Oxenham
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 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

★ CODERZ PROGRAM
Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

CoderZ is an innovative and exciting virtual robotics competition for students of all coding levels — from Blockly to Java. Students explore robotics and coding with engaging gamified challenges and competitions. This program offers team competition as well as curriculum.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, leadership development, problem solving, teamwork and coding
Program Provider: High Tech Kids
Fees and Deadlines: League play spans October-January
Website: www.hightechkids.org/coderz-program/
Email: vicki@hightechkids.org
Phone: (612) 781-2203
Contact: Vicki Coaty

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

College Dollars & Sense offers students the personal finance and college preparation skills needed for success after high school and an understanding of how their personal finances will affect their lives. In this one-week summer program, students are introduced to personal finance concepts, learn strategies for affording and saving for college, experience life on a major university campus, and interact with students, professors, and business leaders.

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 2022 program will be open Nov. 2021–April 2022. 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 and/or are students of color.
Website: www.mcee.umn.edu/programs/classroom-learning
Email: mcee@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-3727
Contact: Angela Zappa
CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES
Ages 2–18
Program Category: Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: World Languages & Cultures

Concordia Language Villages is the premier language and culture immersion program for youth, families and adults. Youth ages 2–18 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; Register by November 2021; Meet dates: November 2021–April 2022.
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
CYBERPATRIOT NATIONAL YOUTH CYBER DEFENSE COMPETITION

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

CyberPatriot is the premier 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
Fees and Deadlines: $205 per open division team of 2–6 students. $165 for middle school teams. Registration April 1 - Oct. 5, 2021. 20% discount for teams registered by July 1. Visit website for competition schedule.
Website: www.uscyberpatriot.org
Email: info@uscyberpatriot.org
Phone: (877) 885-5716
Contact:

DESTINATION IMAGINATION

Grades K–12, Post-secondary
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

Destination Imagination 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
Email: pfschroeder@district287.org
Phone: (763) 550-7212
Contact: Pamela Schroeder, affiliate director

SHARE REACH FOR THE STARS WITH STUDENTS, STAFF AND FAMILIES

Our goal is to share Reach for the Stars with as many educators, students and families as possible! Through this free resource we can connect students to new academic enrichment opportunities. Here are a few ways to share this resource with your community: add a blurb about Reach for the Stars in your newsletters or other print or electronic communications; embed a thumbnail of the catalogue cover and link it to the PDF; and/or request free promotional postcards or print catalogues to distribute. Email reach@synergyexchange.org for support in implementing these ideas!
**ECONOMICS CHALLENGE**

**Grades 9–12**

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions  
**Academic Content:** Social Studies

In the Economics Challenge, teams of high school students compete in a series of tests on economic problems, theory and current events to demonstrate their critical-thinking abilities. Teams can compete online or at one of the in-person competitions across Minnesota to qualify for the state championship.

**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. All registration opens on January 1 of the competition year. Visit website for registration process and competition schedule.  
**Website:** [https://www.mcee.umn.edu/programs/competitions/econ-challenge](https://www.mcee.umn.edu/programs/competitions/econ-challenge)  
**Email:** mcee@umn.edu  
**Phone:** (612) 625-3727  
**Contact:** Angela Zappa

**ENGINEERING MACHINE DESIGN CONTEST**

**Grades 5–8 (Junior Division), 9–12 (Senior Division)**

**Program Category:** Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment  
**Academic Content:** Arts, Business/Career Education, STEM

Using everyday objects, teams of 3-10 students design and build a complex, multi-step machine that achieves a simple task with the guidance of a coach. Teams showcase and exhibit their machines at a regional contest with the opportunity to advance to the Championship. Teams are scored on Team Journal, Team Presentation, and Machine Design and Operation.

**Academic Skills:** Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, problem solving and teamwork  
**Program Provider:** Minnesota State Engineering Center of Excellence  
**Fees and Deadlines:** Varies by contest site; regional contests: February–April; check website for fees and deadlines.  
**Website:** [https://engineering.mnsu.edu/engineering-machine-design-contest/](https://engineering.mnsu.edu/engineering-machine-design-contest/)  
**Email:** engineering@mnsu.edu  
**Phone:** (507) 389-2110  
**Contact:** Melissa Huppert

**FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF MINNEAPOLIS 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  
**Fees and Deadlines:** No fees. Please check website for specific topic and dates.  
**Website:** [www.minneapolisfed.org/essaycontest](http://www.minneapolisfed.org/essaycontest)  
**Email:** EssayContest@mpls.frb.org  
**Phone:** (612) 204-6689
FIRST LEGO LEAGUE CHALLENGE
Grades 4–8
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

FIRST LEGO League encourages young innovators to build self confidence in STEM while developing critical thinking and team building skills. Teams design, build and program an autonomous LEGO robot as well as research and solve a real world problem associated with a yearly theme.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, 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 LEGO LEAGUE EXPLORE
Grades K–4
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

FIRST LEGO League Explore 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 held on the first Friday in August.
Website: https://synergyexchange.org/gathering-of-champions
Email: goc@synergyexchange.org
Phone: (507) 389-5115
Contact: Leah Garry

GENES IN SPACE
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM
Students in grades 7–12 pioneer research on the International Space Station (ISS) by designing DNA experiments for space! We invite students to propose experiments that address real-life challenges and opportunities of space exploration. One winning experiment will launch to the ISS and be carried out by astronauts. There is no cost to enter the competition and entry does not require equipment.
Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, research and teamwork
Program Provider: Genes in Space
Fees and Deadlines: The 2022 contest will close in April 2022; see website for further details.
Website: www.genesinspace.org
Email: genesinspace@minipcr.com
Phone: (781) 990-8727
Contact: Katy Martin

CALLING ALL STUDENTS . . . DESIGN THE 2022 GATHERING OF CHAMPIONS LOGO!
Submit your original logo design ideas for the 2022 Gathering of Champions, which will appear on the certificates of achievement, T-shirts, banners and other materials. The winner receives $100 and a 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, 2022. See complete rules for submission and download the logo contest entry form 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 Reyanna Enriquez Arenos, a 6th grader at Zimmerman Middle School. She was the winner of the 2021 Logo Contest!
GERMAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE FESTIVAL
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: World Languages & Cultures

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

GIRLS WHO CODE CLUBS
Grades 3–12
Program Category: Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, General, STEM

Girls Who Code offers a free curriculum and resources for grades 3–12 to learn computer science and join a growing sisterhood of girls using tech to change the world. Our interactive curriculum teaches girls coding, while also creating a culture of bravery where girls feel supported and encouraged to take risks and learn new skills. Join the movement by bringing a Girls Who Code Club to your community – whether you meet in-person or virtually. No prior coding experience needed!

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Girls Who Code
Fees and Deadlines: Completely free! (Includes curricula, customizable lesson guides, ongoing support, grant funding and more.) Clubs can begin at any point and run for 10 or more sessions.
Website: www.girlswhocode.com/programs/clubs-program
Email: kibret.yebetit@girlswhocode.com
Contact: Kibret Yebetit

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

The Global Food Challenge is a unique competition for students to engage in research about food issues around the world and solve problems using their economic knowledge. Participants research a question or issue they are curious about in food trade, markets, safety, or food security. Using this research and their understanding of economics, students communicate their conclusions in a paper that is entered to win cash prizes.

Academic Skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, research and global citizenship
Program Provider: Minnesota Council on Economic Education
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. The state contest is held in the spring. Project submissions are accepted January to May. Curriculum materials are free upon request.
Website: https://www.mcee.umn.edu/programs/competitions/global-food
Email: mcee@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-3727
Contact: Angela Zappa
H2O FOR LIFE
Grades K–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: General

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
Program Provider: H2O for Life
Fees and Deadlines: None
Website: www.h2oforlifeschools.org
Email: mitchell@h2oforlifeschools.org
Phone: (651) 756-7577
Contact: Mitchell LeGrand

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 world-wide network of HOBY alumni.

Academic Skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership development, global citizenship and time/budget management
Program Provider: Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership – Minnesota, Inc.
Fees and Deadlines: Cost for the first student at each school is $225; additional students pay the full cost of $495 per student. Leadership Seminar occurs every June. See packet sent to school guidance counselor or website for more details.
Website: www.hobyminnesota.org
Email: info@hobyminnesota.org

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. Resources such as The Harbor by Jostens 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
JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CAPSTONE PROGRAMS
Grades 5–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

Junior Achievement Capstone Programs combine practical applications in real world situations with classroom principles, which allows learning to come to life! 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: jennifer@jaum.org
Phone: (651) 255-0055
Contact: Jennifer Baldwin

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT K–12 CLASSROOM PROGRAMS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, 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: sharon@jaum.org
Phone: (651) 255-0055
Contact: Sharon Severson

JUNIOR DUCK STAMP CONSERVATION PROGRAM
Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Classroom Enrichment
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, enjoying and exploring the outside world, and investigating the treasures of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Academic Skills: Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, research, environmental stewardship and artistic expression
Program Provider: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Fees and Deadlines: No fee. Entry deadline for the Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest is in 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 $2,500 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 COMPETITIONS – JR. AND SR. HIGH
Grades 7–8, 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: General

Knowledge Bowl is an interdisciplinary academic contest for junior and senior high school students. Teams of students answer questions in a variety of academic areas. Senior High Knowledge Bowl 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. Senior High State Knowledge Bowl meets spring 2022.
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. Free LifeSmarts curriculum materials and lessons 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–January. In-person state competition is in early February. The national competition is held in April in a major U.S. city.
Website: www.mnscsc.org/lifesmarts or https://lifesmarts.org/
Email: lifesmarts@mnscsc.org
MAAP STARS
Grades 7–12
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-based, vocational-oriented program to help students develop professional employment, academic and social skills. STARS helps students gain self-confidence, increases motivation to graduate and creates a desire for life-long learning. There are regional and three statewide events.

Academic Skills: Artistic expression, critical thinking, leadership development, public speaking and teamwork

Program Provider: Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP)

Fees and Deadlines: Annual STARS membership fee plus Fall Leadership Conference is $50/participant and is held Oct. 13–14, 2021 at Lake Beauty Camp in Long Prairie; Legislative Day at the State Capitol in St. Paul is held on Feb. 16, 2022; and the Spring Events Conference in Mankato is $135/participant and is held on May 5–6, 2022.

Website: www.maapmn.org/stars
Email: maapstarschair@gmail.com
Phone: (612) 751-2490
Contact: Patti Haasch, MAAP STARS Chair

MATH MASTERS
Grades 5–6
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

The Math Masters mathematics competition program challenges 5th and 6th grade students to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Students compete as individuals and on teams in eight rounds of competition held in March and April each year. Students’ academic effort and achievement is recognized with plaques, medallions and ribbons in each competition element: Fact Drill, Individual Round and Team Competition.

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

Program Provider: Math Masters

Fees and Deadlines: Visit www.math-masters.org for fee and registration details. Registration opens in September; competitions are held in March and April at dozens of regional sites. Individual and team registrations are available.

Website: www.math-masters.org
Email: mary@math-masters.org
Phone: (507) 460-1843
Contact: Mary Detloff
MATHCEP – SATURDAY MORNING MATH ENRICHMENT
Grades 5–7
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

Spend your Saturdays delving into what keeps the internet working, takes us to space, lets us talk about infinity and helps us win more games: math! The School of Mathematics Center for Educational Programs (MathCEP) at the University of Minnesota offers Saturday Morning Math Enrichment programs during the school year where students in grades 5–7 engage in innovative activities that focus on mathematical topics that go beyond the classroom.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, analytic ability, STEM concepts and mathematical skills
Program Provider: University of Minnesota – MathCEP
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
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.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking and problem solving
Program Provider: MOEMS – Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
Fees and Deadlines: Early bird fee is $109 due by June 30. The standard fee to enroll a team is $119 between July 1–Oct. 15 and $139 between Oct. 16–31.
Website: www.moems.org
Email: info@moems.org
Phone: (516) 781-2400
Contact: Nicholas J. Restivo

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.mnsccsc.org/math-mania for more information.
MATHWORKS MATH MODELING CHALLENGE
Grades 11–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM
M3 Challenge is a free, internet-based applied math competition known for inspiring students to pursue STEM majors and careers. Working in teams of 3–5, participants solve an open-ended problem focused on a realistic issue in 14 hours. Teams with the best solution papers receive tuition scholarships for their college education. Extra credit awards available for outstanding and optional code.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Registration opens in November. Challenge weekend is in late Feb./early March. Visit website for deadlines.
Website: https://m3challenge.siam.org/
Email: m3challenge@siam.org
Phone: (267) 350-6333
Contact: Adrianne Ali

MINNESOTA 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
Grades K–13
Program Category: Leadership Development, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts, General, STEM
Minnesota 4-H Youth Development programs are found in urban, suburban, tribal and rural communities across Minnesota. There are many ways to participate: 4-H clubs, 4-H afterschool programs, project-based learning, 4-H day and residential camps, and regional and state programs and events.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development and public speaking
Program Provider: University of Minnesota Extension – Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
Fees and Deadlines: See website for details.
Website: www.extension.umn.edu/4-h
Email: fourh@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 624-2116
Contact: Jennifer A. Skuza, Ph.D.

MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE – JUNIOR SCIENCE & HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM
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-humanities-symposium
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: 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 four to five students.
Website: www.mnmas.org/science-bowl
Email: kfowler@mnmas.org
Phone: (651) 917-3994
Contact: Kris Fowler

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 four top 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/about-science-engineering-fair
Email: saragomez@mnmas.org
Phone: (612) 643-0627
Contact: Sara Gomez

MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

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: www.minnesota.agclassroom.org
Email: Sue.knott@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 201-6486
Contact: Sue Knott
MINNESOTA ARCGIS ONLINE STUDENT COMPETITION

Grades 4–8, 9–12

Program Category: Challenges & Competition, Classroom Enrichment

Academic Content: Social Studies, STEM

The competition asks middle and high school students to investigate and create a story map based on a Minnesota topic. Each school may submit up to five entries to the state competition. The top five receive prizes. The first-place entry in each division represents Minnesota in Esri’s national competition.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, geographic inquiry, problem solving and research

Program Provider: Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education (MAGE)

Fees and Deadlines: There are no competition fees. Each school is required to have a free Esri ArcGIS Online school software bundle account that students use to create entries. See the competition website for information on registering and applying for a free account. 2022 competition deadlines: Schools must register for the competition by April 8, 2022. School entries must be submitted to the state competition committee no later than May 6, 2022.

Website: https://mnk12-umn.hub.arcgis.com/pages/competition-home

Email: jimsoli@mac.com

Phone: (612) 590-6422

Contact: Jim Hanson

★ MINNESOTA BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS OF AMERICA

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 work force through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic and technological career skills for business and office students. It combines school-based and work-based learning.

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

Program Provider: MN Business Professionals of America


Website: www.mnbpa.org

Email: jackie@arvig.net

Phone: (218) 847-5355

Contact: Jackie Schiller, executive director
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
Email: jackie@arvig.net
Phone: (218) 847-5355
Contact: Jackie Schiller, executive director

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

The Minnesota Envirothon is an outdoor environmental learning competition where teams of high school students compete in five learning stations including soils, aquatics/wetlands, wildlife, forestry and a current environmental topic. Teams are tested in each area and students also give an oral presentation on the current events topic. It is a one-day event; teams must qualify from an area event to compete at state.

Academic Skills: Knowledge of natural resource issues and topics, public speaking, research, critical thinking, problem solving skills, interdisciplinary, creativity and teamwork

Program Provider: NCF Envirothon (national), Association of Conservation District (State), and Minnesota Area and Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (area events)
Fees and Deadlines: No fees for regional and state level. Regional events are in late April/early May; State event is the third Monday in May; National event is typically held in July or August.

Website: www.maswcd.org/envirothon.htm
Email: judy.johnston@stevensswcd.org
Phone: (320) 589-4886, ext. 114
Contact: Judy Johnston

CHECK OUT THE ELECTRONIC VERSIONS OF THE CATALOGUE!

Did you know Reach for the Stars is available electronically both as a full-color PDF or a text-only Word document? Visit www.synergyexchange.org/reach-for-the-stars to download!
MINNESOTA FAMILY, CAREER AND COMMUNITY LEADERS OF AMERICA
Grades 6–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Conferences & Institutes, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Business/Career Education

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. Youth leaders in FCCLA gain confidence, practical knowledge, character development and skills in presenting, working in teams, 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 fee 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 the website for information.
Website: www.mnffa.org
Email: jtolosky@umn.edu
Phone: (518) 832-0313
Contact: Juleah Tolosky

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

Future City is a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math program. Students spend September to January creating cities that exist at least 100 years in the future. The competition is made up project deliverables including a project plan, research essay, physical city model, and team presentation. The 2021-2022 theme is “The Waste-Free City.” The first-place team competes in the National Future City Competition.

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

Program Provider: Success Beyond the Classroom
Fees and Deadlines: Grades 6–8: $25 per school; Registration deadline: Oct. 31, 2021
Website: www.futurecity.org/Minnesota
Email: colleen.feller@metroecsu.org
Phone: (612) 638-1511
Contact: Colleen Feller
MINNESOTA FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM
Grades K–3 (Non-competitive Primary Division), Grades 4–6 (Junior Division), Grades 7–9 (Middle Division), Grades 10–12 (Senior Division)
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Arts, Business/Career Education, General, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM, World Languages & Cultures

Teaching students how to think, not what to think; learning lifelong problem-solving skills. Critical and creative thinking skills are applied to real topics. The 2021-22 topics are: Water Supply, Building Green, Insects and Mining Classroom. Curriculum available for grades K–9. Competitive opportunities for grades 4–12 include Global Issues Problem Solving, Community Problem Solving, Scenario Writing and Scenario Performance.

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

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 in September and closes in November. See website for specific dates. Fees: $99 per three-member team (includes t-shirts, free one-year subscription to Naxos Music Library, practice test and study guide); $75 new schools/organizations.
Website: www.musiclisteningcontest.com
Email: deb_nelson@musiclisteningcontest.com
Phone: (763) 862-7647
Contact: Deb Nelson

MINNESOTA INSTITUTE FOR TALENTED YOUTH
Grades 1–12
Program Category: Leadership Development, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts, General, Language Arts, Social Studies, STEM

Our mission is to inspire and challenge intellectually curious students to pursue their passions within a diverse, inclusive community and empower them by building skills and relationships for lifelong success. MiTY offers unique STEM, humanities and fine arts courses in three academic programs. Students engage in hands-on, inquiry-based learning during the summer, on Saturdays during the school year, and/or online. Older students can live in dorms at Macalester College.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, interdisciplinary, problem solving and teamwork
Fees and Deadlines: Check website for details.
Website: www.mity.org
Email: mity@macalester.edu
Phone: (651) 696-6590
Contact: Erica Brewinski
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
Program Provider:
Fees and Deadlines: First team: $150, each additional team $50. 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 for ALL middle school math students. Educators, use our free resources in your classrooms and math clubs. 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, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Minnesota MATHCOUNTS/MN Society of Professional Engineers
Fees and Deadlines: Registration opens in August. The Club and Video Challenge programs are free. The competition program fees will be released each August by National MATHCOUNTS: www.mathcounts.org. Registration fees includes the School Competition Kit, entry into the Chapter Competition (1–10 Mathletes), competition entry for the school's students for as far as they progress in the competition series including the state or national level.
Website: www.mathcountsmn.org
Email: mathcountsmn@gmail.com
Phone: (651) 457-2347
Contact: Katie Jamieson

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

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
Program Provider: The Math League
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 Flegar
MINNESOTA PTA REFLECTIONS
Grades K–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts
Reflections arts 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 “I Can Change the World By...” Students are able to show the world how they matter through their visual artwork, photography, music composition, film production, dance and literature.
Academic Skills: Artistic expression and creativity
Program Provider: Minnesota PTA
Fees and Deadlines: No fees, but school or student must have MN PTA membership. Entry deadline is Feb. 5, 2022.
Website: www.mnpta.org/reflections
Email: reflections@mnpta.org
Phone: (952) 767-4909
Contact: Lori Ortega

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: Submissions open in September and are due the first week in December.
Website: www.artandwriting.org/affiliate/MN001A/ or www.aem-mn.org/advocacy/minnesota-scholastic-art-awards
Email: dscully94@gmail.com
Phone: (612) 834-6881
Contact: Diane Scully

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. Check website for registration link.
Website: www.minnesotasso.org
Email: mnelemscioly@gmail.com
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.minnesotaso.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: Critical thinking, factual recall, problem solving 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: kfoley@edenpr.org
Phone: (612) 597-2499
Contact: Katie Foley

MINNESOTA SKILLSUSA
Grades 6–12, Post-secondary
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Leadership Development
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, STEM
SkillsUSA helps students become future leaders by developing their personal, workplace and technical skills. Students who are engaged in technically skilled courses and programming as well as those looking for career exploration activities and opportunities can benefit!
Academic Skills: Critical thinking, leadership development, problem solving, teamwork and communication
Program Provider: Minnesota SkillsUSA
Fees and Deadlines: Check website for fees and deadlines.
Website: www.mnskillsgsa.org
Email: executive.director@mnskillsusa.org
Phone: (715) 225-4784
Contact: Jessa Dahmes
MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS LEAGUE

Grades 6–12  
**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 held in June.

**Academic Skills:** Mathematical problem solving and teamwork  
**Program Provider:** Augsburg University  
**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. 1; payment is due Sept. 30. 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 up to $1,000 in scholarship money 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 the fall. The online essay submission deadline is in the winter each year. Check website for topic information and deadlines.

**Website:** www.mncourthistory.wildapricot.org/Essay-Contest  
**Email:** director.mschs@gmail.com  
**Phone:** (612) 492-6178  
**Contact:** Brian Bell

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

The Minnesota Academic League Council reviews and approves applications from 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 the Reach for the Stars catalogue. Applications are available on the Synergy & Leadership Exchange website. Questions? Email reach@synergyexchange.org.
MINNESOTA YOUTH INSTITUTE
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: General, Social Studies, STEM, World Languages

The Minnesota Youth Institute challenges high school students to solve local and global food security issues. MNYI is a half-day program where high school students from across Minnesota share research, participate in interactive experiences, and network with research/industry leaders in agricultural/food/natural resource fields. Participating students are eligible for scholarships; international and domestic internships; and an opportunity to represent Minnesota at the Global Youth Institute and World Food Prize International Borlaug-Dialogue Symposium.

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.mnyi.cfans.umn.edu
Email: mnyi@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 624-1745
Contact: Mary Buschette

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 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 available starting in March. Check the website for more detailed information.
Website: www.mncup.org
Email: hellomncup@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-4772
Contact: Jessica Berg

MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts, Business/Career Education, Language Arts, 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: Critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, teamwork and verbal reasoning
Program Provider: Minnesota State Bar Association
Fees and Deadlines: $275 per team; registration deadline is Oct. 21, 2021.
Website: www.mnbar.org/public-resources/mock-trial
Email: kbasting@mnbars.org
Phone: (612) 278-6306
Contact: Kim Basting
MSHSL DEBATE, SPEECH
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Language Arts

For each program, see Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website. Debate is a MSHSL winter activity. Competition events in policy debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, public forum debate and congressional debate. Speech is a MSHSL spring activity. 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.
Email: adoherty@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Contact: Amy Doherty

MSHSL MUSIC, ONE ACT PLAY, VISUAL ARTS
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Arts

For each program, see Fine Arts Rules and Polices manual available on the MSHSL website. Music is a spring MSHSL activity. The contest events provide for competition in major groups (choir, orchestra and band), special groups, ensembles and solos. One Act Play is a winter MSHSL activity. Visual Arts is a spring MSHSL activity. 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.
Email: tleighton@mshsl.org, adoherty@mshsl.org, jnickleby@mshsl.org
Phone: (763) 560-2262
Contact: Tim Leighton (Music), Amy Doherty (One Act Play), Jason Nickleby (Visual Arts)

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 is the first Saturday in January; MSHSL tournament is in May.
Website: https://firstuppermidwest.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
Fees and Deadlines: Visit website for fees and dates.
Website: www.mteea.net/index.php/competitions/supermileage
Email: mteeasupermileage@gmail.com
Phone: (320) 396-3393
Contact: Luke Becker

★ NATIONAL CURRENT EVENTS LEAGUE
Grades 4–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
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 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 2022; Meet date: Any date between April 25–May 6, 2022.
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 2021—2022 annual theme is “Debate and Diplomacy: Successes, Failures, Consequences.”

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, factual recall, interdisciplinary, research and teamwork
Program Provider: Minnesota Historical Society
Fees and Deadlines: Regional events take place in March and registration fees begin at $12 per student. There is no classroom fee to participate and program materials are sent to teachers free of charge.
Website: www.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 first two teams, $55 for additional teams. Registration through March 2022. Meet date: Any date between April 25–May 6, 2022.
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 first two teams, $55 for additional teams. Registration through March 2022. Meet date: Any date between April 25–May 6, 2022.
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 first two teams, $55 for additional teams. Registration through March 2022. Meet date: Any date between April 25–May 6, 2022.

**Website:** [www.cmleague.com](http://www.cmleague.com)  
**Email:** support@cmleague.com  
**Phone:** (631) 584-2016  
**Contact:** Joseph Quartararo

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**NCTE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING**

Grade 11

**Program Category:** Awards & Recognitions  
**Academic Content:** Language Arts

The National Council of Teachers of English 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:** Submissions due Feb. 15. See website for further program details. No fee.

**Website:** [https://ncte.org/awards/achievement-awards-in-writing/](https://ncte.org/awards/achievement-awards-in-writing/)  
**Email:** aa@ncte.org  
**Phone:** (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283

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**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 Promising Young Writers Program is to stimulate and recognize the writing talents of eighth-grade students and to emphasize the importance of writing skills among them. Eighth graders, nominated by their schools, submit a best and a themed writing piece. 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:** Submissions due Feb. 15. Check the website for deadlines. No fee.

**Website:** [https://ncte.org/awards/promising-young-writers/](https://ncte.org/awards/promising-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 2021 Nobel Conference, “Big Data REvolution.” How is big data changing our lives, and what challenges and opportunities does this transformation present?

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, environmental stewardship, global citizenship and interdisciplinary
Program Provider: Gustavus Adolphus College
Fees and Deadlines: The 57th Nobel Conference is held Oct. 5–6, 2021. 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

NOETIC LEARNING MATH CONTEST
Grades 2–8
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

The Noetic Learning Math Contest is a semiannual problem solving contest for elementary and middle school students. The goal of the competition is to encourage students’ interest in math, to develop their problem-solving skills and to inspire them to excel in math. During the contest, students are given 45 minutes to solve 20 problems.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, problem solving
Program Provider: Noetic Learning
Fees and Deadlines: See website for details.
Website: www.noetic-learning.com/mathcontest/index.jsp
Email: info@noetic-learning.com
Phone: (913) 735-4088
Contact: Li Kelty

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY MIDWEST ACADEMIC TALENT SEARCH
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
Program Provider: Northwestern University Center for Talent Development
Fees and Deadlines: Visit website for details.
Website: https://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/northwestern-universitys-midwest-academic-talent-search-numats
Email: numats@northwestern.edu
Phone: (847) 491-3782, ext. 3
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
Fees and Deadlines: $75 per team (up to 30 students at one testing level); $25 for individual student membership.
Website: www.perennialmath.com
Email: info@perennialmath.com
Phone: (888) 835-2366

PERSONAL FINANCE DECATHLON
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: Business/Career Education, Social Studies

The Personal Finance Decathlon is an exciting competition for high school students to practice real-world skills in managing money and solving problems. Teams of students compete online to demonstrate their knowledge of fundamental personal finance topics, with the top teams being invited to the state competition to showcase their talent in solving problems and communicating effectively.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, teamwork and verbal reasoning
Program Provider: Minnesota Council on Economic Education
Fees and Deadlines: There is no registration cost for teachers or students to participate. Registration opens on January 1 of the competition year and closes in mid-February; exact dates can be found on the MCEE calendar.
Website: https://www.mcee.umn.edu/programs/competitions/personal-finance-decathlon
Email: mcee@umn.edu
Phone: (612) 625-3727
Contact: Angela Zappa

★ POETRY OUT LOUD
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: Arts, Language Arts

Poetry Out Loud encourages students to learn about great poetry through memorization and recitation. This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life. Educator resources are provided free of charge. Contests begin at the classroom level and progress through the all-expenses-paid national competition.

Academic Skills: Public speaking
Program Provider: South Central Service Cooperative in partnership with the Minnesota State Arts Board, National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation
Fees and Deadlines: Free. Registration is in the fall; please check website for details.
Website: www.mnscsc.org/poetry-out-loud or www.poetryoutloud.org
Email: mhillmann@mnscsc.org
Contact: Mary Hillmann
**REAL WORLD DESIGN CHALLENGE**
Grades 9–12
Program Category: Awards & Recognitions, Challenges & Competitions
Academic Content: STEM

Real World Design Challenge is a competition that provides students the opportunity to work on real world engineering challenges in a team environment. Teams address a challenge that confronts our nation’s leading industries. Students utilize professional engineering software to develop their solutions and generate business-style presentations. RWDC provides students with opportunities to apply the lessons of the classroom to the technical problems that are being faced in the workplace.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, leadership development, problem solving, teamwork and time/budget management
Program Provider: Real World Design Challenge
Fees and Deadlines: Check website for fees and deadlines.
Website: www.realworlddesignchallenge.org
Email: bryan.farmer@isd832.net
Phone: (651) 762-5934
Contact: Bryan Farmer

**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

**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

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 Feb. 18–21, 2022 in Long Beach, CA.
Website: www.studenttelevision.org
Email: info@studenttelevision.com
Phone: (877) 786-1001
Contact: Josh Cantrell

SUMDOG

Grades K–8
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: Language Arts, STEM

Sumdog provides engaging learning and practice in numeracy for children ages 5–14 and literacy for children ages 5–11. The online learning service adapts to each individual, using engaging game-based learning to motivate and build confidence. A learning engine reports progress to student’s teachers and parents and frees educators to target their interventions.

Academic Skills: Numeracy and literacy
Program Provider: Sumdog, Inc.
Fees and Deadlines: Free login. Family membership and school subscription available for additional access.
Website: www.sumdog.com
Email: support@sumdog.com
Phone: (877) 978-6364

TEAMS

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

TEAMS (Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science) is an annual theme-based 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.

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: https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/programs/teams
Email: awilliams@tsaweb.org
Phone: (888) 860-9010

FREE OPPORTUNITIES FROM POETRY OUT LOUD

Learn more through the virtual workshop that was compiled by the Minnesota Poetry Out Loud participants, educators and competition judges to help educators and students increase knowledge about the program and to improve poetry presentation skills. Check out the free Poetry Speaks events offered during the summer! Details at https://mnscc.org/student/poetry-out-loud
TECHNOVATION[MN]

Grades 5–12

Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

Technovation [MN], the Minnesota chapter of the Global Technovation Challenge, is the world’s largest all girls entrepreneurship and technology program. This program inspires and enables teen girls to dream up, design, code and pitch mobile phone apps supported by trained mentors in the business community. In May, the Minnesota Appapalooza event celebrates the girls’ success and the Minnesota quarter-finalists are announced.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking and teamwork
Program Provider: Code Savvy
Fees and Deadlines: The program is free to all girls and non-binary individuals. Registration opens in October. Check the website for deadlines and meet dates.
Website: www.technovationmn.org
Email: jean@codesavvy.org
Phone: (612) 963-3344
Contact: Jean Weiss

THINKING CAP QUIZ BOWL

Grades 5–8

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

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

Academic Skills: Factual recall, problem solving, critical thinking, research, teamwork, leadership development, time/budget management and verbal reasoning
Program Provider: Harvey Kimble, owner
Fees and Deadlines: Check website for entry forms, info, fees and deadlines.
Website: www.thinkingcapquizbowl.com
Email: thinkcap5@gmail.com
Phone: (515) 278-5097
Contact: Harvey Kimble

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. Students work in groups of two to four and are guided by a team coach and an optional mentor. Students may submit only 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: exploravision@nsta.org
Phone: 1-800-explor-9
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: Season runs December–April. Check website for fees, registration and competition dates. Discounts available for new districts.
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 is in March; National event is in April; International event is 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. 6328

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 60th annual program will be held in Washington, D.C. March 5–12, 2022.

Academic Skills: Leadership, critical thinking and cooperation
Program Provider: Minnesota Department of Education
Fees and Deadlines: Application deadline is in early fall. For more information and eligibility requirements visit www.education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/youth.
Website: www.ussenateyouth.org
Email: MDE.communications@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 582-8734
Contact: Gloriann McDonald
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA TALENTED YOUTH MATH PROGRAM
Grades 5–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

An accelerated math program where middle and high school students take rigorous, fast-paced math courses once a week on the University of Minnesota campuses. UMTYMP students learn traditional high school math – Algebra I and II, Geometry, and Precalculus – in just two years. Students then take university-level Calculus courses over three years. Participants earn college credits while learning in a community of highly talented and hardworking peers.

Academic Skills: Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, analytic ability, STEM concepts 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). Check the website for exam registration and fees. Scholarships are available for students with financial needs.
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. 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.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, creativity and art appreciation
Program Provider: Walker Art Center
Fees and Deadlines: 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
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: cjanson@mybri.org
Phone: (703) 894-1776
Contact: Chris Janson

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 35th 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 a team). Discounts available to schools that enroll 5+ teams or districts that enroll 5+ schools. Competition begins Oct. 1, so register by Sept. 30 to maximize preparation time for your students. Check website for Challenge Schedule and discount details.
Website: www.wordmasterschallenge.com
Email: lisa.lombardi@wordmasterschallenge.com
Phone: (888) 385-5656
Contact: Lisa Lombardi

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 non-competitive showcase.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, problem solving, research and teamwork
Program Provider: World Savvy
Fees and Deadlines: See website for more information.
Website: www.worldsavvy.org/our-programs/schools/
Email: erica@worldsavvy.org
Phone: (612) 259-7849
Contact: Erica Ahlgren
★ YES! (YOUTH ECO SOLUTIONS)
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Challenges & Competitions, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: STEM

Join YES! and be part of a statewide network of students working to create solutions for today’s ecological challenges. Students work in teams to build solar boats, grow produce for their school, plant pollinator gardens, restore shorelines, design supermileage cars and more! The year culminates in a state championship event at a Minnesota Twins game.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, environmental stewardship, leadership development, problem solving and teamwork
Program Provider: Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Ney Nature Center and Laurentian Environmental Center
Fees and Deadlines: Registration: early fall; Competition dates: spring; fees vary.
Website: www.yesmn.org
Email: shelli-kae@yesmn.org
Phone: (320) 491-1894
Contact: Shelli-Kae Foster

★ YMCA MODEL UNITED NATIONS
Grades 7–12
Program Category: Conferences & Institutions, 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 worldviews.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, public speaking and teamwork
Program Provider: YMCA Center for Youth Voice
Fees and Deadlines: Approximately $375 (includes lodging) plus minimal local expenses. Registration is in December. Conference is late March, 2022 (see website for exact dates).
Website: www.ymcamn.org/kid__teen_activities/center_youth_voice/programs
Email: yig@ymcamn.org
Phone: (612) 823-1381
Contact: Orville Lindquist

★ YMCA RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS IN SCHOOLS
Middle and High School
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: General, Language Arts

The Respectful Conversations in Schools protocol is designed to provide teachers and students with tools for approaching controversial public issues that are responsive to the current political climate, particularly the increase in political polarization.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, leadership development, public speaking and social emotional skills
Program Provider: YMCA Center for Youth Voice
Fees and Deadlines: Workshop fees are determined by the number of teacher participants.
Website: www.ymcamn.org/kid__teen_activities/center_youth_voice/programs
Email: amy.anderson@ymcamn.org
Phone: (612) 330-3045
Contact: Amy Anderson
YMCA STUDENT ELECTION JUDGE NETWORK
Ages 16+
Program Category: Leadership Development, Out of School Time Enrichment
Academic Content: General, Social Studies

The YMCA Center for Youth Voice works with Minnesota cities, counties and high schools to help recruit and coordinate student election judges.

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, research, teamwork and civic awareness
Program Provider: YMCA Center for Youth Voice
Fees and Deadlines: No fees. Students get paid by the election offices for both training and for working as an election judge.
Website: www.ymcamn.org/kid__teen_activities/center_youth_voice/programs
Email: amy.anderson@ymcamn.org
Phone: (612) 330-3045
Contact: Amy Anderson

YMCA STUDENTS VOTING MINNESOTA
Grades K–12
Program Category: Classroom Enrichment
Academic Content: General, Social Studies

The YMCA and the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State work together to help students statewide discover the importance of elections and the power of their voice — and their vote — in our democracy. Students Voting gives teachers at all grade levels the tools and resources to expose their students to a realistic voting experience that includes learning about candidates and issues, voter registration, and casting a ballot on or before Election day.

Registration opens in spring 2022 for the Gubernatorial Election!

Academic Skills: Critical thinking, global citizenship, research, teamwork and civic awareness
Program Provider: YMCA Center for Youth Voice and Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State
Fees and Deadlines: Free. Registration opens in spring 2022 for the gubernatorial election.
Website: www.ymcamn.org/kid__teen_activities/center_youth_voice/programs
Email: amy.anderson@ymcamn.org
Phone: (612) 330-3045
Contact: Amy Anderson

YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT
Grades 8–12
Program Category: Conferences & Institutions, 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 a 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, leadership development, public speaking, teamwork and verbal reasoning
Program Provider: YMCA Center for Youth Voice
Fees and Deadlines: Approximately $450 (includes lodging) plus minimal local expenses. Registration is in early October via local school or YMCA group. State conference: Jan. 6–9, 2022.
Website: www.ymcamn.org/kid__teen_activities/center_youth_voice/programs
Email: yig@ymcamn.org
Phone: (612) 823-1381
Contact: Orville Lindquist
### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (grades K–5)
- BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game
- Calendar in the Classroom
- Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
- Classroom Connection
- CoderZ Program
- Concordia Language Villages
- Continental Mathematics League
- Crazy 8s Math Club
- Destination Imagination
- Engineering Machine Design Contest
- FIRST LEGO League Challenge
- FIRST LEGO League Explore
- Gathering of Champions
- Girls Who Code Clubs
- H2O for Life
- Jostens Renaissance Education
- Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
- Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
- Kids Philosophy Slam
- Math Masters
- MathCEP – Saturday Morning Math Enrichment
- Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
- Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
- Minnesota ArcGIS Online Student Competition
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
- Minnesota Mathematics League
- Minnesota PTA Reflections
- Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division A)
- MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
- National Current Events League
- National Geography Challenge
- National Language Arts League
- National Science League
- National Social Studies League
- Noetic Learning Math Contest
- Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search
- Perennial Math Online Math Competition
- School Chess Association
- Spelling Bee
- Sumdog
- Technovation[MN]
- Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
- Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards
- U.S. Academic Triathlon
- University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program
- Unsung Hero Projects
- Walker Art Center Art Today Tours
- WordMasters Challenge
- YMCA Students Voting Minnesota

### MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 6–8)
- Academic Pentathlon
- American Mathematics Competitions – 8
- Being the Change
- BestPrep’s Classroom Plus
- BestPrep’s Financial Matters
- BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game
- Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
- Classroom Connection
- Close Up Washington D.C.
- CoderZ Program
- Concordia Language Villages
- Continental Mathematics League
- CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition
- Destination Imagination
- Engineering Machine Design Contest
- FIRST LEGO League Challenge
- FIRST Tech Challenge
- Gathering of Champions
- Genes in Space
- German Language and Culture Festival
- Girls Who Code Clubs
- H2O for Life
- Jostens Renaissance Education
- Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
- Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
- Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
- Kids Philosophy Slam
- Knowledge Bowl Competitions – Jr. and Sr. High
- MAAP STARS
- Math Masters
- MathCEP – Saturday Morning Math Enrichment
- Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
- Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
- Minnesota Academy of Science – Middle School and High School
- Science Bowl
- Minnesota Academy of Science – State Science & Engineering Fair
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
- Minnesota ArcGIS Online Student Competition
- Minnesota Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
- Minnesota FFA
- Minnesota Future City Competition
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
- Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
- Minnesota Junior High Math League
- Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
- Minnesota Mathematics League
- Minnesota PTA Reflections
- Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards
- Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division A)
- Minnesota Science Olympiad (Division B)
LISTING OF PROGRAMS BY ACADEMIC CONTENT

ARTS
Academic Decathlon
Academic Pentathlon
Calendar in the Classroom
Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
Engineering Machine Design Contest
Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
MAAP STARS
Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
Minnesota Future City Competition
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
Minnesota PTA Reflections
Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards
Mock Trial Program
MSHSL Music, One Act Play, Visual Arts
Poetry Out Loud
Student Television Network
U.S. Academic Triathlon
Unsung Hero Projects

BUSINESS/CAREER EDUCATION
Academic WorldQuest
BestPrep’s Classroom Plus
BestPrep’s eMentors
BestPrep’s Financial Matters
BestPrep’s Minnesota Business Venture
BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game
Engineering Machine Design Contest
Girls Who Code Clubs
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
LifeSmarts
MAAP STARS
Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
Minnesota Business Professionals of America
Minnesota DECA
Minnesota Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota SkillsUSA
MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
Mock Trial Program
Personal Finance Decathlon
Student Television Network
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival

**GENERAL**
BestPrep’s eMentors
BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game
Calendar in the Classroom
Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
Classroom Connection
College Dollars & Sense
Gathering of Champions
Girls Who Code Clubs
H2O for Life
Jostens Renaissance Education
Knowledge Bowl Competitions – Jr. and Sr. High
LifeSmarts
MAAP STARS
Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
Minnesota FFA
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
Minnesota Youth Institute
Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search
Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
U.S. Academic Triathlon
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
YMCA Respectful Conversations in Schools
YMCA Student Election Judge Network
YMCA Students Voting Minnesota

**LANGUAGE ARTS**
Academic Decathlon
Academic Pentathlon
Being the Change
BestPrep’s eMentors
Calendar in the Classroom
Cancer Unwrapped Teen Writing Contest
Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
Classroom Connection
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
MAAP STARS
Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
Minnesota Future City Competition
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie
Essay Contest
Minnesota Youth Institute
Mock Trial Program
MSHSL Debate, Speech
National Language Arts League
NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing
NCTE Promising Young Writers Program
Poetry Out Loud
Spelling Bee
Sumdog
U.S. Academic Triathlon
Unsung Hero Projects
WordMasters Challenge
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
YMCA Model United Nations
YMCA Respectful Conversations in Schools
YMCA Youth in Government

**SOCIAL STUDIES**
Academic Decathlon
Academic Pentathlon
Academic WorldQuest
American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
American Legion Boys State
Being the Change
BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game
Classroom Connection
Close Up Washington D.C.
Economics Challenge
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Essay Contest
Global Food Challenge
HBOY Youth Leadership Seminar
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
Kids Philosophy Slam
MAAP STARS
Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
Minnesota ArcGIS Online Student Competition
Minnesota Future City Competition
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie
Essay Contest
Minnesota Youth Institute
Mock Trial Program
National Current Events League
National Geography Challenge
National History Day in Minnesota
National Social Studies League
Personal Finance Decathlon
U.S. Academic Triathlon
United States Senate Youth Program
Unsung Hero Projects
We the Students Essay Contest
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
YMCA Model United Nations
YMCA Student Election Judge Network
YMCA Students Voting Minnesota
YMCA Youth in Government
STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH)
Academic Decathlon
Academic Pentathlon
American Mathematics Competitions – 8
American Mathematics Competitions – 10 & 12
BestPrep’s eMentors
BestPrep’s Minnesota Business Venture
BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game
Calendar in the Classroom
Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
CoderZ Program
Continental Mathematics League
Crazy 8s Math Club
CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition
Destination Imagination
Engineering Machine Design Contest
FIRST LEGO League Challenge
FIRST LEGO League Explore
FIRST Tech Challenge
Genes in Space
Girls Who Code Clubs
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
LifeSmarts
MAAP STARS
Math Masters
MathCEP – Saturday Morning Math Enrichment
Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
MathWorks Math Modeling Challenge
Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
Minnesota Academy of Science – Junior Science & Humanities Symposium
Minnesota Academy of Science – Middle School and High School Science Bowl
Minnesota Academy of Science – State Science & Engineering Fair
Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
Minnesota ArcGIS Online Student Competition
Minnesota Envirothon
Minnesota Future City Competition
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
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 SkillsUSA
Minnesota State High School Mathematics League
Minnesota Youth Institute
MSHSL/FIRST Robotics
MTEEA Super Mileage Competition

National Science League
Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College
Noetic Learning Math Contest
Perennial Math Online Math Competition
Real World Design Challenge
School Chess Association
Sumdog
TEAMS
Technovation[MN]
Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards
U.S. Academic Triathlon
U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad
University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
YES! (Youth Eco Solutions)

WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES
Academic WorldQuest
Classroom Connection
Concordia Language Villages
German Language and Culture Festival
Minnesota Youth Institute
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
LISTING OF PROGRAMS BY CATEGORY

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS
FIRST LEGO League Challenge
FIRST LEGO League Explore
FIRST Tech Challenge
Gathering of Champions
Jostens Renaissance Education
Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
MAAP STARS
Minnesota Academy of Science – Junior Science & Humanities Symposium
Minnesota Academy of Science – State Science & Engineering Fair
Minnesota PTA Reflections
Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards
Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing
NCTE Promising Young Writers Program
United States Senate Youth Program
Unsung Hero Projects

CHALLENGES & COMPETITIONS
Academic Decathlon
Academic Pentathlon
Academic WorldQuest
American Mathematics Competitions – 8
American Mathematics Competitions – 10 & 12
BestPrep’s Minnesota Business Venture
BestPrep’s The Stock Market Game
Cancer Unwrapped Teen Writing Contest
CoderZ Program
Continental Mathematics League
CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition
Destination Imagination
Economics Challenge
Engineering Machine Design Contest
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Essay Contest
FIRST LEGO League Challenge
FIRST Tech Challenge
Genes in Space
German Language and Culture Festival
Global Food Challenge
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
Kids Philosophy Slam
Knowledge Bowl Competitions – Jr. and Sr. High
LifeSmarts
MAAP STARS
Math Masters
Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
MathWorks Math Modeling Challenge
Minnesota Academy of Science – Junior Science & Humanities Symposium
Minnesota Academy of Science – Middle School and High School Science Bowl
Minnesota Academy of Science – State Science & Engineering Fair
Minnesota ArcGIS Online Student Competition
Minnesota Business Professionals of America
Minnesota DECA
Minnesota Envirothon
Minnesota 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 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 SkillsUSA
Minnesota State High School Mathematics League
Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society Mondale-Quie Essay Contest
Minnesota Youth Institute
MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
Mock Trial Program
MSHSL Debate, Speech
MSHSL Music, One Act Play, Visual Arts
MSHSL/FIRST Robotics
MTEEA Super Mileage Competition
National Current Events League
National Geography Challenge
National History Day in Minnesota
National Language Arts League
National Science League
National Social Studies League
Noetic Learning Math Contest
Perennial Math Online Math Competition
Personal Finance Decathlon
Poetry Out Loud
School Chess Association
Spelling Bee
Student Television Network
TEAMS
Technovation[MN]
Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards
U.S. Academic Triathlon
U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad
We the Students Essay Contest
WordMasters Challenge
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
YES! (Youth Eco Solutions)
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 at Northwestern University
Classroom Connection
Close Up Washington D.C.
CoderZ Program
Continental Mathematics League
Engineering Machine Design Contest
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Essay Contest
FIRST LEGO League Explore
H2O for Life
Junior Achievement Capstone Programs
Junior Achievement K–12 Classroom Programs
Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program
LifeSmarts
Math Masters
MathCEP – Saturday Morning Math Enrichment
Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
Minnesota ArcGIS Online Student Competition
Minnesota Future City Competition
Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
Minnesota MATHCOUNTS
Minnesota Youth Institute
Mock Trial Program
National History Day in Minnesota
Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search
Perennial Math Online Math Competition
Poetry Out Loud
Student Television Network
Sumdog
TEAMS
Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl
University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program
Unsung Hero Projects
Walker Art Center Art Today Tours
WordMasters Challenge
YMCA Respectful Conversations in Schools
YMCA Students Voting Minnesota

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
American Legion Boys State
Being the Change
BestPrep’s eMentors
BestPrep’s Minnesota Business Venture
Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University
HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar
Jostens Renaissance Education
Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
Minnesota Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
Minnesota FFA
Minnesota Future Problem Solving Program
Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
Minnesota SkillsUSA
United States Senate Youth Program
World Savvy Classrooms & Festival
YMCA Model United Nations
YMCA Student Election Judge Network
YMCA Youth in Government

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME ENRICHMENT
College Dollars & Sense
Concordia Language Villages
Crazy 8s Math Club
German Language and Culture Festival
Girls Who Code Clubs
H2O for Life
MathCEP – Saturday Morning Math Enrichment
Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary & Middle Schools
Minnesota 4-H Youth Development
Minnesota Academy of Science – Middle School and High School
Science Bowl
Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth
Minnesota PTA Reflections
MN Cup Competition – Youth Division
Sumdog
Technovation[MN]
U.S. Academic Triathlon
University of Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program

CONFERENCES & INSTITUTES
American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
American Legion Boys State
HOBY Youth Leadership Seminar
Minnesota Business Professionals of America
Minnesota DECA
Minnesota Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College
YMCA Model United Nations
YMCA Youth in Government
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 120 academic enrichment programs and activities that have been approved by the Minnesota Academic League Council. It is created, published and distributed as a public service by Synergy & Leadership Exchange with support from The Minnesota Service Cooperatives 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.

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS PROGRAM
Synergy administers the Outstanding Educator Award 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.
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