Friends of Education Board of Directors hosts a meet-and-greet with school founders, leaders and board members in Wayzata.
Friends of Education schools are demonstrating that a great education is indeed possible for all children:

**Our students are excelling.** Our schools continue to receive national and state recognition for consistent academic excellence.

**Our schools are efficient.** Friends of Education schools provide a superior education at an average of 65% of traditional district cost – a cost savings of more than $5,800 per student.

**Our schools are expanding.** This year, we served more than 8,800 children, and we’re poised to serve even more:

- **DaVinci Academy**, recognized by the Department of Education five consecutive years as being in the top 15% in the state, broke ground on a larger facility and will eventually more than double in size to serve 1,000 students.

- **Eagle Ridge Academy**, recognized by the Department of Education three consecutive years as being in the top 15% in the state, is moving to a larger facility and will eventually double in size serving 1,500 students.

- **Seven Hills Preparatory Academy**, recognized by the Department of Education as being in the top 40% of all public schools in the state, added a second location this year and is on pace to more than double in size to serve more than 1,000 students.

Because quality teachers and leaders are key to student success, we continue to provide training and resources to maximize their effectiveness. And we continue our high standards: we closed a school that was not meeting performance expectations.

Friends of Education is proud of its schools’ successes: it means more children are getting a great education. But until all children have access to quality education, our work is not done.

Very truly yours,

William A. Cooper

“Thanks for your continued service to the charter school environment. We are all indebted to you.”

St. Croix Preparatory Academy
Mission

Friends of Education’s mission is to improve the education of children. Improving K-12 education since 1999, Friends supports programs which emphasize content and critical thinking with demonstrated evidence of increasing student achievement and post-secondary readiness.

History

Friends of Education started in 1999, under the name “Saving Children Through Education.” The initial focus of Saving Children Through Education was an under-performing grade school in North Minneapolis. Saving Children Through Education assisted this school in implementing the Core Knowledge Sequence developed by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., and the Core Knowledge Foundation, as well as the math program developed by Saxon. The organization then decided to expand its reach, while maintaining its stated mission to improve the education of children and authorize quality charter schools.

In 2009, the organization changed its name to “Friends of Education” to reflect Friends’ broad-based interest in improving the education of children. Friends of Education is not a religious organization, nor does it promote any religious activity or teaching.

Friends of Education is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Minnesota corporation, incorporated in 1999. Friends of Education is a member of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and is registered with the Minnesota Office of the Attorney General.
“We appreciate your commitment to continuous improvement and authorizing excellence.”

Kevin McHenry, Assistant Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Education
# Table of Contents

1. **In the News**  
   *Friends of Education schools are making an impact*

2. **Spotlight School**  
   *DaVinci Academy*

3. **Closing the Achievement Gap**  
   *Poor students in our schools significantly outperform the state average*

4. **Performance at a Glance**  
   *Grade by grade, how much better we do than the state average in testing results*

5. **State of Minnesota Ratings**  
   *Overall school ratings calculated by the state*

6. **Reward Schools**  
   *The top 15% of schools in the state*

7. **Celebration-Eligible Schools**  
   *The top 40% of schools in the state*

8. **High-Quality Schools**  
   *State names 35 schools as High-Quality; 9 are Friends Schools*

9. **Cost Per Student**  
   *Friends schools spend significantly less than traditional districts*

10. **Friends of Education Schools**  
    *Friends of Education schools and grades served*

11. **Our Generous Donors 2015**  
    *Thank you for your generosity*
In the News

Star Tribune
Beating the Odds

Hennepin Elementary School

Hennepin Elementary was recognized this year on the annual Beating the Odds list published by the Star Tribune. This list recognizes the top ten schools with the highest poverty rates whose students score at grade level or better on both the Math and Reading tests. Poverty has a high correlation to low student achievement.

The Washington Post
America’s Most Challenging High Schools

St. Croix Preparatory Academy

The Washington Post recognized St. Croix Preparatory Academy as the Most Challenging High School in Minnesota and 95th nationally. The rankings are determined using the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Cambridge tests taken by seniors divided by the number of seniors who graduated.

Yinghua Academy

U.S. Education Secretary named Yinghua Academy a National Blue Ribbon School based on overall academic excellence. In 2015, the Department of Education awarded this honor to 335 schools, seven of which are in Minnesota. Noteworthy is that Yinghua is one of only 15 charter schools nationwide to receive the award this year, and one of only a handful of immersion schools to ever receive the award.

“You represent excellence – in vision, in implementation, and in results – and we want to learn as much as we can from you.”

U.S. Secretary of Education
In the 2016 U.S. News Best High Schools rankings, all three of Friends’ qualifying schools were recognized. The awards are based on four criteria: students’ overall performance is better than the state average, disadvantaged students perform better than state average, student graduation rates meet or exceed a national standard, and students are prepared for college-level coursework determined by the schools AP or IB offerings.

**Nova Classical Academy**

*Gold Award*

- Ranked 1st in Minnesota
- Ranked 16th nationally
- Ranked 4th among all charter schools nationally

**Eagle Ridge Academy**

*Silver Award*

- Ranked 14th in Minnesota
- Ranked 745th nationally
- Ranked 137th among all charter schools nationally

**St Croix Preparatory Academy**

*Bronze Award*
DaVinci Academy utilizes a board that holds an individual card for every student in the school. The card contains assessment data and other information about the student. Team meetings are held at least weekly to discuss students who are struggling academically or behaviorally. The constant updating of this "student snapshot" board allows staff to readily identify students needing intervention.
“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela
Closing the Achievement Gap

Friends of Education Schools’ students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch significantly outperform all of Minnesota students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch and, in many cases, surpass all Minnesota students.
Friends of Education
Performance at a Glance

Friends of Education Students Percent Passing 2015 State Tests

Friends of Education outperforms the state average in all grades and in all subjects on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments.
“Thanks for all you do to ensure high quality charter schools continue to grow and thrive in Minnesota!”

Dan DeBruyn, Spectrum High School
A Volunteers of America School
Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) 2015

The State of Minnesota Measures Each Public School’s
- Pass Rate on State Tests
- Student Growth
- Achievement Gap Closure
- Graduation Rate

Achievement Gap: Focus Rating (FR) 2015

The State of Minnesota Measures Each Public School’s Contribution to the Achievement Gap.

The measurement is based on proficiency and growth of students of color and students receiving special services. Schools with the lowest focus rating make the highest contribution to the achievement gap.
Reward Schools

Reward Schools are the top 15 percent of schools in Minnesota.

Reward schools are Minnesota’s highest performing schools. These schools have demonstrated exceptional student outcomes and success in closing achievement gaps. Reward schools are recognized annually. In addition, some Reward schools have shown sustained success and have been recognized multiple years.
Celebration-Eligible Schools

Celebration-Eligible Schools are recognized for being ranked in the top 16%-40% in the State. Celebration Eligible schools are identified annually based on proficiency, growth, achievement gap, reduction, and graduation rate (for high schools).

Celebration-Eligible Schools are the top 40 percent of schools in Minnesota.
High-Quality Charter Schools exceed state averages in 12 academic measures in reading, math and science and meet financial and compliance measures established by the State.

Friends Schools had 9 of the 35 High-Quality Charter Schools in Minnesota.

2016 Friends of Education High-Quality Charter Schools

- ASPEN ACADEMY
- COLOGNE ACADEMY
- DAVINCI ACADEMY
- EAGLE RIDGE ACADEMY
- HENNEPIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- SEVEN HILLS PREPARATORY ACADEMY
- ST. CROIX PREPARATORY ACADEMY
- STRIDE ACADEMY
- YINGHUA ACADEMY
“[Friends of Education] understands the challenges we face being a small school located in a rural area with limited resources.”

Clarkfield Area Charter School
## Cost-per-Student 2015

Friends School average cost per student: **$10,924**

Traditional district average cost per student: **$16,737**

Friends Schools spend on average **$5,813** – 35% less per student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friends School per Student Cost</th>
<th>Traditional District in which Charter is Located</th>
<th>Traditional District per Student Cost</th>
<th>Friends School per Student Cost as % of District Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspen</td>
<td>Prior Lake Savage</td>
<td>$14,889</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarkfield</td>
<td>Yellow Medicine</td>
<td>$14,206</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>$15,341</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DaVinci</td>
<td>Anoka</td>
<td>$13,637</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle Ridge</td>
<td>Eden Prairie</td>
<td>$14,879</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennepin</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>$20,763</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Millennium</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>$20,763</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova</td>
<td>St Paul</td>
<td>$18,033</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parnassus</td>
<td>Osseo Maple Grove</td>
<td>$15,252</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Hills</td>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>$20,195</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Croix Prep</td>
<td>Stillwater</td>
<td>$13,880</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stride</td>
<td>St Cloud</td>
<td>$14,978</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yinhua</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>$20,763</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average cost per Friends student: **$10,924**

Average cost per Traditional Dist. student: **$16,737**

Friends School per Student Cost as % of District Cost: **65%**
# Friends of Education Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>2016 Enrollment</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspen Academy</td>
<td>Savage</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>aspenacademymn.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarkfield Area Charter School</td>
<td>Clarkfield</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>clarkfieldareacharter.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cologne Academy</td>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>cologneacademy.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DaVinci Academy</td>
<td>Blaine</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>davincicharterschool.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle Ridge Academy</td>
<td>Eden Prairie</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>eagleridgeacademy.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennepin Elementary School</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>hennepinelementaryschool.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Millennium Academy</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>newmillenniumacademy.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Classical Academy</td>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>novaclassical.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parnassus Preparatory School</td>
<td>Maple Grove</td>
<td>K-10</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>parnassusprep.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Hills Preparatory Academy</td>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>sevenhillspreparatoryacademy.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Croix Preparatory Academy</td>
<td>Stillwater</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>stcroixprep.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stride Academy</td>
<td>St. Cloud</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>strideacademy.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yinghua Academy</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>yinghuoaacademy.org</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Enrollment**

8,387

“Friends of Education is exceptional.”

Cologne Academy
Thank you to Our Generous Donors

Bell Family Foundation
Bieber Family Foundation
Bigos Management, Inc.
Brian & Betty Falk
Catalyst Exhibits
CITI
Craig Dahl
Credit Suisse
Cutting Edge
Property Maintenance
D & H
Darin Opperman
Deloitte
Dolan Printing
Dougherty & Company
Dykema Gossett
Edward Flaherty
EFT Source, Inc.
Elizabeth Topoluk
Epson America, Inc.
Express Scripts
Faegre Baker Daniels LLP
Flaherty Family Foundation
Gary Nystedt & Jill Nystedt
Goldberg Kohn Foundation
Gregory Pulles
Harland Clarke
Infor
International Decision Systems, Inc.
James Kopp
Jason Korstange
John B. Goodman
Jose Peris & Diana Gulden
Joseph Green & Trudi Anderson
JP Morgan
KPMG LLP
Law Offices of David T. Cohen
Linedata Capitalstream
Mark Burton
MasterCard
Mercer
Michael Frey
Michael Jones
Modis
Morgan Stanley
Motivaction
National Christian Foundation
OGGI, LLC
Opus Foundation
Oracle
PadillaCRT
Paynet, Inc.
Periscope
Peter Bell
Peter Eckerline-Merrill Lynch
Polsinelli
Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP
Protiviti
Ralph Strangis
Ricoh
Robert Half International
Shea, Inc.
Sit Investments
Steven Scott
TCF
Thomas Cusick
U of M
United Health Care
US Bank
VGM Group, Inc.
Vicki Wyard & Gary Wyard
VISA®
Wells Fargo Foundation
Wildamere Properties
William A. Cooper
Winthrop & Weinstine P.A.