

Gathering of Champions FAQs

Why was my student chosen as an Academic All-Star?

Minnesota students in grades K-12 are nominated by their teachers, principals and academic coaches with the suggested criteria:

- Students who are consistent top academic performers
- Students who have shown significant improvement in achievement or have overcome barriers to academic achievement
- Students who are local, regional or state champions in a Minnesota Academic League Council endorsed event. The names of endorsed programs are found in the *Reach for the Stars* catalogue, which is available online at www.synergyexchange.org – click on “Reach for the Stars” under the Educate tab.

Do I need to register for one of the 10 ceremony times?

Registration is not required but it is highly recommended because it ensures enough space in the ceremony of your choice for the All-Star and his/her guests. Having a guaranteed space in a ceremony allows your group to plan your day at the Mall of America. A separate walk-in registration table will be set up for those who are not registered. Only those with Gathering of Champions wristbands will be admitted into the ceremonies. Please note, ceremonies do fill, so pre-registering today will help you attend the ceremony of your choice. **Also, only those Academic All-Stars that are registered by July 15 will have their names printed in the program.**

I want to register for the Gathering of Champions and I have more than one All-Star. How do I make sure they receive their All-Star recognition?

When pre-registering for the Gathering of Champions online, register in the name of one of the All-Stars. Make sure to select “Academic All-Star” from the title drop-down menu. On the second page, where you will enter all the people in your group, fill in the name of the All-Star (from page one) and any other All-Stars and select “Academic All-Star” from the title menu. **Only use the “Academic All-Star” designation for nominated All-Stars.** This will tell us the number of All-Stars in your group.

How do I ensure my Academic All-Star’s name appears in the printed program?

To have your All-Star’s name printed in the program, you must register online by July 15. You must select “Academic All-Star” for the title on page one and page two of the registration process, the contact information and the attendee information. **Only those registered online by July 15 with the properly selected “Academic All-Star” title will be printed in the program. Names will appear as entered in the online registration.** If you have other students who are not All-Stars, but are attending in your group, you may select “student” for the title. Do not use “student” for the Academic All-Star.

How do I get my All-Star’s photo included in the slide show?

This year we will be featuring a slide show of student, teacher and parent/guardian submitted photos prior to the start of each ceremony. To have your photo included, please complete the enclosed photo submission form and email it with your photo to goc@synergyexchange.org by July 28. Only photos submitted by the deadline will be included.

What type of photo can I submit for the slideshow?

Photos should show the Academic All-Star(s) in an academic setting, such as receiving an academic award, participating in an academic competition or event (Spelling Bee, Math Masters, Knowledge Bowl, Speech, etc.), or with their Academic All-Star nomination certificate or letter. Our focus is on academic achievement, so please no family, yearbook (class photo) or sports photos. Synergy reserves the right to omit any photo it deems inappropriate.

What grade should I list for my All-Star?

The registration system will ask for your All-Star’s grade with options of 1 through 12. Please enter the grade your student just completed. If your student has just completed Kindergarten, please enter grade 1. Grade levels will not be printed in the program or on certificates.

I didn’t receive an email confirmation of my pre-registration, what do I do?

If you do not receive an email confirmation, please contact us: goc@synergyexchange.org or 507-389-5115.

Is there seating before the ceremony in the waiting area?

There is no seating in the waiting area before the ceremony time. It is standing room only. If long periods of standing are difficult for someone in your party, we ask that you wait until closer to ceremony time before entering the waiting area. Once inside the ceremony space there will be seats available.

I need to change my ceremony time, how do I do this?

If you need to change your time, check to see if there is space available and then register for the new ceremony you wish to attend. Contact us immediately to let us know of your change in time. We will then delete your reservation from the time you no longer wish to attend – this will open up space in that ceremony for other All-Stars and their families. **All changes must be made by July 28. No changes will be accepted after this date.**

I would like to register for a ceremony, but I'm not sure of the exact number of people and/or names of people attending. What should I do?

If you are not sure of the exact number of people who will be attending with your group, reserve enough space for all who might attend. Fill in the names of the people you know will be attending with your group. Fill in "TBA" in all spaces that you still need to confirm – this will tell us that you may need these spots and haven't mistakenly reserved too much space. If you no longer need all of the space you reserved, please let us know right away. We can then make that space available to other All-Stars and their families.

I have registered for the Gathering of Champions and need to make changes to our group, what do I do?

Please contact us and let us know what changes need to be made. If you wish to add more attendees to your group, please note that additional space may not be available as shows fill up quickly. **All changes must be made by July 28.** Changes after this date will be addressed at check-in on the day of the event.

Who should I bring to the Gathering of Champions with my All-Star?

Who you wish to bring with your group is completely up to you. There are no restrictions. People typically bring parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends and teachers.

Where is Parkview located?

Parkview is located in the Southwest corner of the Nickelodeon Universe between Flyover America and Hard Rock Cafe.

Where is the closest parking?

Enter West Parking Ramp between Nordstrom & Macy's, accessible from Killebrew Drive. Park on street level 1. Enter main mall entrance, proceed straight ahead into Nickelodeon Universe and take a right past the Peeps store. Parkview, is located in the Southwest corner of the Nickelodeon Universe between Flyover America and Hard Rock Cafe.

What time do I need to arrive at the Mall of America on Aug. 4?

We recommend that you arrive 20-30 minutes prior to your ceremony time. If you are attending the 10 a.m. show, you may wish to arrive 30-45 minutes prior, as check-in will be busiest during this time. When you arrive, you will need to check-in and receive the designated wristbands for your ceremony. People will begin to line up outside the ceremony as soon as the attendees from the previous show have entered at the top of each hour. Seats are available on a first come, first served basis once inside. You may check-in at any time after 9 a.m. to receive your ceremony wristbands and All-Star gift bag with discount coupons. This will allow you to plan your day and enjoy the many features of the Mall of America and Nickelodeon Universe® before your scheduled ceremony.

I have a baby/infant. Is there space for a stroller?

There is not room inside the venue for strollers. We will have a designated stroller parking area outside of the venue space. Please plan accordingly. You must reserve a space for the infant in your registration count.

Is the ceremony space wheelchair accessible? Do I need to request special seating arrangements?

The ceremony space is wheelchair accessible. Special seating is not required. All chairs are moveable and can be placed wherever is convenient for your guests.

My All-Star is in a wheelchair, will he/she be able to cross the stage with the other All-Stars?

Students unable to use the stairs to the stage will cross in front of the stage to receive their certificates. Please notify us when you check-in so we can make appropriate accommodations. All-Stars will remain with their guests until the end of the ceremony when students line up to receive their certificates.

Is there a dress code for the ceremony?

No, there is no dress code for the Gathering of Champions. Most All-Stars and guests dress casual to business casual, as they plan to enjoy the Mall of America and Nickelodeon Universe® before and/or after the show.

I am unable to attend the Gathering of Champions on Aug. 4. Can my All-Star still receive his/her certificate?

Yes. If you are unable to attend the Gathering of Champions, please contact us. We will mail the certificate of achievement and other memorabilia after the event. T-shirts may be purchased online at www.synergyexchange.org – click on “Gathering of Champions” under the Celebrate tab.

If I have questions the day of the event, whom do I contact?

Please know that our entire staff will be working at the event and may not be reachable by phone. If you have an immediate concern, do not email us as we will not have access to email during the day. If you are calling for additional seats or cancellations, we appreciate your call, however we will be unable to process any phone or email requests the day of the event. All changes can be addressed at check-in. Walk-in registrations may be available for sessions that are not filled. Please visit the check-in desk for assistance and walk-in registrations.