



Seven Outstanding Educators Receive Awards Totaling \$70,000

On Oct. 16, seven educators from Minnesota each received a \$10,000 award from the WEM Foundation at the 12th Annual WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Brunch held at the Oak Ridge Conference Center in Chaska.

Educators and academic coaches from Belle Plaine, Columbia Heights, Delano, Mankato, Pipestone and St. Paul school districts and Minnesota History Day were recognized for their outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student achievement. In addition to the presentation of awards, guest speaker Ron Hustvedt, Jr. from the

Elk River School District, KARE-11's "What's Cool In Your School" honoree and the 2010 Teacher of Merit award from National History Day in Minnesota and the Minnesota Historical Society, addressed the honorees and guests.

Two honorees were named in each of three categories: The Teacher Achievement Award recognizes exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement; the Academic Challenge Coach Award recognizes classroom teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council; and the Ethics in Education Award recognizes exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum. In addition, this year the WEM Foundation introduced a new award, the Excellence in Education Award, which recognizes superior contributions of educators whose leadership and dedication inspire a spirit of learning in students of all backgrounds and abilities outside the traditional education system or in settings not requiring licensure.



The 2010 WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Award honorees are:

Teacher Achievement Award:



Kris Haslund teaches 136 diverse, urban learners in fourth grade at Capitol Hill Gifted Magnet School in St. Paul. She has been teaching for 34

years. With more than 100 different home languages spoken in St. Paul Public Schools, Haslund works in a culturally diverse classroom. She works with a variety of students including homeless students, students who suffer from fetal alcohol syndrome, Twice Exceptional (2E) students and students on the Autistic Spectrum, especially those with Asperger's Syndrome. She makes sure all of her students' learning needs are accommodated.

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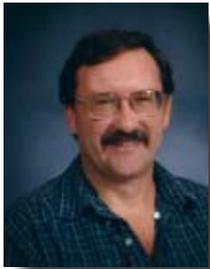
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In Haslund's classroom, students listen to Mozart during Writer's Workshop, kinesthetically act out spelling vocabulary and geometric forms, receive healthy snacks and wellness breaks, and some students even have "pilate-esque" stability balls at their desks in place of chairs. Thanks to technology initiative courses and a Hewlett-Packard grant she received last year, her classroom has a dynamic spectrum of 21st century, hands-on learning resources.



J. Scott Urban teaches Advanced Placement (AP) United States government and politics, as well as United States history to students in grades 10 and

12 at Mankato West High School. He has been teaching for 27 years. After arriving at Mankato West High School in 1998, he initiated a National History Day (NHD) competition in his classroom and encouraged a colleague to join the activity as well. Today Mankato West has more than 300 students involved in the program and its students have represented Minnesota at the national competition in both the individual and group documentary categories. In 1998, Urban's first AP government class contained 17 students. For the last three years, he has maintained a steady enrollment of approximately 100 students in four classes. Over the past 11 years, students at Mankato West High School have maintained an 80% passing rate on the national AP exam. The Minnesota state average is around 65% and the national average is around 50%. Last year 85 students took the exam, with a passing rate of 94%. Fifty-four percent achieved the highest possible score, five out of five. The national average for students earning a five is 16%.

Academic Challenge Coach Award:



Nate Henry teaches English to students in grades 10-11 and coaches the One Act Play at Pipestone High School. He has been teaching for 11

years and coaching for 10 years. As director of the One Act Play, Henry gives students of all backgrounds and abilities the opportunity to participate and excel on stage. He takes tremendous pride in how the One Act Play and theatre offers opportunities for students who have not found their niche elsewhere. In the 49 years prior to Henry's coaching, One Act Play teams from his school advanced to state five times. Under Henry's leadership, Pipestone Area High School has advanced to the state event six times in the past nine years, earning seven subsection championships, six section championships, one section runner up, and two Wells Fargo State Champion Arts Out Front awards or "starred performances" given at the state festival, the highest possible honor a Minnesota high school team can receive.



Jerry Shouts teaches advanced geometry, advanced algebra, advanced math topics and pre-calculus to students in grades 9-12 at Delano High

School. He has been teaching for 33 years and is chairperson for the math department. He has coached the Delano High School Math Team in the Minnesota State High School Mathematics League for 21 years. Of the 21 years that Shouts has been coaching, 14 years resulted in a first or second place finish in the conference, and 2010 marks Delano's

seventh straight state appearance. Shouts has grown the program to include 75 mathletes, which make up about 10 percent of the high school population. The math team is the only other team in the school besides the football team that requires two buses for transportation to meets. At the meets, all students, regardless of ability or standing within the team, participate in two individual events as well as the team event. Events include algebra, geometry, trigonometry, pre-calculus and the team problem-solving exercise. Each meet concludes with a pizza buffet dinner at a local restaurant. The team fills the restaurant, creating great friendships as students share notes, stories, strategies, pizza and pop.

Ethics in Education Award:



Angel McCusker Brown has been teaching for 10 years and currently teaches sixth grade robotics as well as engineering classes to

seventh and eighth graders in the Columbia Heights School District. Central Middle School hosts a diverse student population, with approximately 70% students of color, 72% students living in poverty and 30% students who are English Language Learners (ELL). Because of her leadership and passion, Brown, who began her career as a science teacher, was asked to develop an engineering program with a cooperating math teacher. The two designed a class with assistance from the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Education. It was piloted during the 2008-2009 school year, and as evidenced by the registration for the 2010-2011 school year, it is apparent that Brown has made engineering one of the most popular electives. In her class, Engineering for the Client,

students act as engineers working in a professional environment designing products for their clients.



Megan Merry Gerres is a kindergarten teacher from Chatfield Elementary in Belle Plaine who has been teaching for 13 years. Chatfield's "All-School Morning

Meeting," one of the reasons Gerres was selected, was a 2009 Promising Practice award winner, part of the Minnesota Schools of Character (MNSOC) program. Gerres' involvement in the meetings has been essential to their success. Each meeting begins with a welcome from each classroom. Second grade students then model the character theme for the month and "Terrific Tiger" awards are presented to students who were nominated for practicing the previous month's theme. Gerres leads by example, showing her students that doing little things makes a world of difference. Her class motto is "Let's be good together." In her classroom, similarities and differences are recognized and celebrated. Gerres uses the Responsive Classroom approach in her teaching and classroom management in order to build the social skills needed for success in school and in the world.

Excellence in Education Award:



Tim Hoogland, co-coordinator of History Day in Minnesota and manager of education outreach services at the Minnesota Historical Society, was honored

as the first recipient of the WEM Outstanding Educator Excellence in Education award. He has been with the History Day program for over 20

years. In this time, participation in History Day has increased from 125 students to nearly 30,000 students each year. Nina Archabal, Minnesota Historical Society Director, describes Hoogland as "a grown up version of his History Day kids – full of anticipation and enthusiasm. He is like the Pied Piper of Hamelin – leading kids down a wonderful path!"

The WEM Outstanding Educator Awards program was created by the WEM Foundation, and is administered by the Center for Academic Excellence in partnership with The Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC). The WEM Foundation supports teachers and their important role in helping all children achieve academically. The awards program, now in its 12th year, has helped recognize education's often "unsung heroes" and educators who meet the challenges and opportunities of teaching in a variety of settings.

Educators are nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for review and consideration by the Center for Academic Excellence and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees.

In addition to the seven statewide honorees, 12 additional educators were selected as 2010 regional honorees to receive awards totaling \$12,000:

Academic Challenge Coach

- Thomas Appel – *Mountain Lake High School, Mountain Lake Public Schools*
- Troy Cohrs – *Northfield Public High School, Northfield Public Schools*
- Thomas Kilkelly – *Wayzata High School, Wayzata Public Schools*
- Christopher Lenius – *Chaska High School and Chanhassen High School, Eastern Carver County Schools*
- Susan O'Neill – *GFW High School, Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop Public Schools*

Ethics in Education Award

- Kristina Kofski – *Lakes International Language Academy, St. Paul*
- Tania Lyon – *Mankato West High School, Mankato Area Public Schools*
- Anton Stadler – *GHEC High School, Granada-Huntley-East Chain Public Schools*

Teacher Achievement Award

- Robert Ihrig – *Mankato West High School, Mankato Area Public Schools*
- Eric Koser – *Mankato West High School, Mankato Area Public Schools*
- Rick Purrington – *Marshall High School, Marshall Public Schools*
- Nora Whalen – *Avalon School, St. Paul*

Nominate an Outstanding Educator Today!

Do you know educators who are making a difference in the lives of students? Nominate them for a WEM Outstanding Educator Award. If chosen as a state honoree, they could win \$10,000.

Visit www.mncae.org and click on WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Awards to place your nomination! Nomination deadline for the 2011 awards program is Feb. 11. Nominations are accepted year-round.

Tech Boot Camp – Technology Skills by Educators for Educators.

- Join us for a week of technology sessions for educators at Tech Boot Camp July 18-22. Morning and afternoon sessions are offered a-la-carte. More information will be available on the CAE website in March.

Annual Gathering of Champions Recognizes Academic Achievement in Minnesota's Students

Students were the stars Aug. 6 at the Mall of America during the 19th Annual Gathering of Champions sponsored by the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE). The recognition ceremony honored students nominated as Academic All-Stars by their educators and academic coaches.

More than 4,000 students, friends and family members attended one of 10 45-minute shows, where All-Stars and their guests enjoyed entertainment by Peter Bloedel of Perpetual Vaudeville. This was followed by Minnesota trivia questions where students had the chance to win exciting prizes donated by universities, companies and organizations throughout the state. Each ceremony involved VIPs from education, business and industry, including the Commissioner of Education Alice Seagren, executive directors from educational organizations, MN Academic League Council Affiliates and state award-winning students. More than 50 VIPs congratulated the All-Stars while Ameriprise Financial retirees served as volunteers throughout the day. The afternoon emcee for the event was Walter Bond, former professional basketball player and current motivational speaker.

The ceremonies closed with the All-Stars walking across the stage, shaking hands with the VIPs and receiving a certificate of achievement. As they exited the Great Room, All-Stars signed their names on the giant roster of All-Stars and returning All-Stars enjoyed searching for their names on the banners from previous years.

Before and after attending their recognition ceremony, All-Stars and their guests enjoyed discounts at stores throughout the mall and rides in Nickelodeon Universe®.

Founded in 1990, the annual Gathering of Champions event is designed to recognize and celebrate the academic excellence of K-12 students statewide. Students were selected as Minnesota's Academic All-Stars by their schools or academic challenge coaches based on selection criteria including top academic achievers, as measured by school policy or practice; students who have made a dramatic, positive turnaround in their academic work and achievement; or students who have finished first in a regional, state, national or international academic competition endorsed by the MN Academic League Council.



TO OUR SPONSORS:

★ Arrowwood Resort & Conference Center	★ Nasco
★ Chanhassen Dinner Theaters	★ Office Max
★ Future City Competition	★ School Specialty
★ Grand Slam, Burnsville	★ Science Olympiad
★ Great Clips IMAX Theatre	★ Skateville, Burnsville
★ Gustavus Adolphus College	★ South Central Service Cooperative
★ Hennepin Technical College	★ Southwest Minnesota State University
★ Lakes Country Service Cooperative	★ University of St. Thomas
★ Macalester College	★ Underwater Adventures Aquarium
★ Minnesota Zoo	★ US Academic Triathlon

Thank you!

Cast Your Vote for the 2011 Gathering of Champions Logo Contest

Entries have been submitted by MN students, and now it's your chance to help choose the winning design! The winning entry will become the logo for the 2011 event. It will be featured on programs, t-shirts, magnets, banners, certificates and other promotional materials. Vote today at www.mncae.org.

Nominate Your Students as Academic All-Stars and Join Us at The 2011 Gathering of Champions August 5!

To nominate your students for the 2011 Gathering of Champions, please look for our email broadcast in March or visit www.mncae.org for details.



Would You Like Your Program to Be Part of Reach for the Stars?

The Center for Academic Excellence's MN Academic League Council accepts for endorsement academic challenges and competitions, awards and recognitions, classroom enrichment, conferences and institutes, and leadership development programs available on a statewide basis in Minnesota. To download an endorsement inquiry form, please visit: www.mncae.org/enrich/academic_league.aspx.

The print version of *Reach for the Stars* is distributed directly to every public school district in Minnesota, to our member schools and districts, and to public, private and charter schools through our partnering education associations and service providers. In addition, *Reach for the Stars* is available in an electronic format at our website www.mncae.org.



Thank you to our 2010-2011 Reach for the Stars Affiliates, whose donations help defray the catalogue publication fees.

- Academic Decathlon
- Concordia Language Villages
- Continental Math League
- Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program, Minnesota State Contest
- Gathering of Champions LifeSmarts
- Math Masters
- MATHCOUNTS
- Minnesota Future Problem Solving
- Minnesota High School Music Listening Contest
- Minnesota Regional Future City Competition
- Minnesota Student Inventors Congress
- MN YMCA Model Assembly
- MN YMCA Model United Nations
- MN Academy of Science Middle School and High School Science Bowls
- MN Academy of Science MN State Science & Engineering Fair
- Mock Trial Program
- MTEA Super Mileage Challenge
- National Current Events League
- National Geography Challenge
- National Language Arts League
- National Science League
- National Social Studies League
- School Chess Association
- Water is Life Art Contest
- World Affairs Challenge

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 • **Affiliates:** Don't forget to send us your program news items for future editions of *That's Academic!*
 • Send in your news by March 18 for inclusion in the
 • Spring 2010 newsletter. Photos are welcome -- be
 • sure to include captions.
 •



Visit the Center for Academic Excellence page on Facebook and become a fan!

We Want to Hear From You!

Help us recognize your school, students or educators for their hard work and achievements in the next issue of “That’s Academic!”

“**Stellar Students**” — Educators, help us recognize student achievement at your school! Tell us about a student or group of students who deserves recognition. We want to know about students who:

- *Make a difference in their school*
- *Have made academic gains*
- *Are consistently a top academic performer*
- *Set a positive example for other students*
- *Display positive character traits on a daily basis*
- *Have overcome obstacles*
- *Have performed well in academic challenge events*

“**Making a Difference**” — Parents and students, help us recognize teacher achievements at your school! Tell us about educators who deserve recognition. We want to know about teachers or administrators who:

- *Go out of their way to ensure student learning*
- *Make a difference in their school*
- *Help students overcome obstacles*
- *Go above and beyond on a daily basis*
- *Motivate students to learn and succeed*
- *Set a positive example for students and teachers*

“**Outstanding Character**” — Educators, help us recognize character in your school! In a brief summary, tell us what your school or district is doing to promote this character trait or tell us about a student or group of students who demonstrates the featured character trait. This quarter’s feature trait is:

Responsibility – *Being accountable in word and deed; having a sense of duty to fulfill tasks with reliability, dependability and commitment.*

For more information and article submission forms, please visit the **Members Only** page on our website.

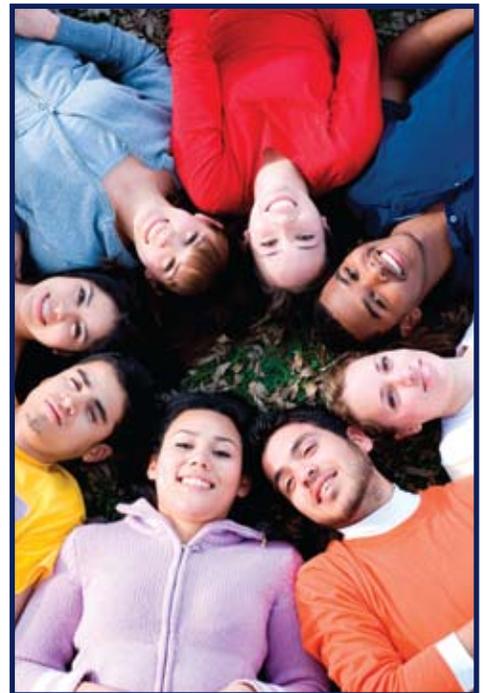
Become a Member of CAE Today!

Great things are happening at the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE). We invite you to be a part of them! Your donation helps foster collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, provide educational resources, and celebrate achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities. Visit our recently updated website, www.mncae.org, for more information.

Your donation helps CAE administer outstanding recognition programs including the Gathering of Champions, the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program, and the Minnesota Schools of Character and Promising Practices awards programs. You also support the Ethical Citizens for Minnesota’s Future ethics initiative, professional development and classroom enhancement opportunities across the state.

With your donation to CAE, you will receive a free one-year membership, which provides access to the “Members Only” page of our website where you will find discounts on CAE endorsed products and services including professional development opportunities, teacher and parent resources and opportunities to highlight educators and students in That’s Academic, our quarterly newsletter. CAE is a qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Please consider donating to the Center for Academic Excellence and help us raise education to new heights – “We can’t put student success on hold!”



Nine Schools Honored at Minnesota State Schools of Character and Promising Practices Award Ceremony

On May 20, the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE), in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), held the third annual Minnesota State Schools of Character and Promising Practices Award Ceremony in the Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda. Special guest speakers included Assistant Commissioner of Education Karen Klinzing, Representative Dean Urdahl, Former Assistant U.S. Attorney Hank Shea, and Nan Peterson, Service Learning Director from The Blake School, a 2009 National School of Character.

Assistant Commissioner Klinzing, Representative Urdahl, Shea and Peterson joined CAE board chair Keith Wenner and CAE director Wanda Sommers Wall to congratulate and distribute recognition awards to schools in Minnesota for the successful implementation of character education programs. A reception followed the ceremony in the Minnesota State Capitol Great Hall.

2010 honorees include:

2010 Minnesota School of Character

- Horace May Elementary School, Bemidji
- Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake
- Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School, St. Paul

2010 Emerging Minnesota School of Character

- Bamber Valley Elementary School, Rochester

2010 Minnesota Promising Practice Awards

- Bamber Valley Elementary School, Rochester
- Concordia Academy, Roseville
- Creek Valley Elementary, Edina
- Horace May Elementary School, Bemidji
- Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake
- Orono Middle School, Long Lake
- Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School, St. Paul
- School for All Seasons, Isanti
- Washington Elementary, Owatonna

In addition, Lakes International Language Academy was selected as a national “Profile in Character” award honoree by the Character Education Partnership (CEP). It is one of eighteen schools recognized nationally for exemplary and unique demonstration of one or more of CEP’s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education.

The Minnesota State Schools of Character Award is modeled after the National Schools of Character (NSOC) program sponsored by CEP and based on their Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education. The program recognizes schools and/or districts that excel in exemplifying the eleven principles and demonstrate outstanding character education initiatives that yield positive results in student behavior, school climate and academic performance. Program requirements mirror those of the national award and state award winners are forwarded for national consideration.

The Minnesota Promising Practices Award recognizes schools in Minnesota that have



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developed and implemented a practice promoting character development in their schools. These practices must be specific, unique and transferable, provide measurable results and impact, and encompass at least one of the eleven principles.

Promising Practice Honorees



Promising Practice Applications Sought

As part of the Minnesota Schools of Character recognition program, CAE is also awarding Promising Practices Awards. These awards recognize schools in Minnesota that have developed and implemented a specific practice that promotes character development in their schools. These practices must be: specific, unique and transferable, provide measurable results and impact, and encompass at least one of the eleven principles.

The Center for Academic Excellence is currently seeking schools and districts to make application for the 2011 Promising Practices awards programs. Share specific practices that promote character development in your school or district by applying for the Promising Practices Award. Applications may be downloaded by visiting www.mncae.org. The Minnesota Promising Practices application deadline is March 15. Applications must be forwarded to CEP first and then to CAE for consideration at the national and state levels. Visit the CAE website for details.

For more information on these programs and the schools and districts honored in 2010 visit: www.mncae.org.



STATE SCHOOLS
OF CHARACTER



Leading a Call to Action – Minnesota Responds!

On Dec. 9, a cross-section of business, education, community and religious leaders met to discuss the development of good citizens and ethical leaders for Minnesota's future.

The Minnesota Department of Education hosted the discussion convened by the Center for Academic Excellence and its partners the Caux Round Table, Character Education Partnership, The Minnesota Service Cooperatives, Brave New Workshop and the Minnesota Department of Education.

Patrick Geraghty, President and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota kicked-off the "Leading the Call to Action" event by citing examples of corporate responsibility, ethical leadership and by challenging participants to step-up and drive change with a vision.

Following Geraghty's presentation, Jenni Lilledahl from Brave New Workshop created an environment for collaboration and set the stage for a spirited panel discussion moderated by Dr. Laura Bloomberg, Executive Director of the Center for Integrative Leadership.

Panel members and community leaders Matt Bostrom, Ph.D., Ramsey County sheriff-elect; Matthew K. Burns, Ph.D., professor of educational psychology at the University of Minnesota; Ann M. Dillard, president of K.I.P. Consulting Services; Senator Steve Dille, (R) District 18, Minnesota State Senate; Karen Rusthoven, Ed.D., executive director of Community of Peace Academy in St. Paul; and Stephen B. Young, global executive director of the Caux Round Table, shared their knowledge and expertise in the five goal areas identified in phase two of the initiative.

After a Q & A session with the panel, attendees broke into small groups to exchange information, discuss actions necessary to advance the initiative goals and establish leadership. The vision of this initiative is to strengthen the ethical, social and emotional development of Minnesota's youth. This work must be a collaborative and networked effort where youth are at the center of three-pronged efforts by families, schools and community partnerships. Youth are not only strengthened by these networked sources but also strengthened through self-advocacy, student-led initiatives, having their voices heard in many venues, and reinforced through self-reflection and internalization of efforts.

Minnesota can do more to guide its future citizens towards high standards of good character. Good citizens first have good character. Good character to choose ethical over unethical behaviors is instilled by families, schools, business, faith and community institutions.

The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities. For more information on Ethical Citizens for Minnesota's Future, please visit the CAE website: www.mncae.org or contact Barb Bergseth – 612-419-3619, Wanda Sommers Wall – 952-873-2691 or Joyce Swenson – 612-578-3377.



President and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Patrick Geraghty kicks off the event with a message of "walking the talk" to attendees.



Panel members discuss the five goal areas and answer questions from the audience.



Steve Young addresses the audience and speaks to the importance and need for this ethics initiative.

Calendar of Events

January 2011

- 7 • Steering Committee Meeting – Ethical Citizens for Minnesota's Future
- 10 • Voting deadline for 2011 GOC logo design
- 24 • MN ALC Meeting at TIES in St. Paul
- 27 • Visit the CAE booth at the MASSP Winter Conference
- Status letter sent to MNSOC applicants

February 2011

- 11 • WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Nomination Deadline

March 2011

- 1 • National Schools of Character Finalists posted on CEP website
- 4 • WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Application Deadline
- 11 • 2010 Academic All-Stars Online Nominations Open
- 15 • Promising Practice applications are due to CEP and CAE
- 17 • PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Strategies) workshops
- 22 • Responsive Classroom Sampler workshop
- 23 • Developmental Design Sampler workshop

April 2011

- 8 • WEM Outstanding Educator Award Blue Ribbon Panel
- 21 • MN ALC Meeting at TIES in St. Paul
- MNSOC honorees announced
- Registration opens for 2011 Gathering of Champions

May 2011

- 9 • NSOC honorees announced
- 19 • MNSOC & Promising Practice Awards Ceremony
- Promising Practice honorees announced
- WEM Outstanding Educator Award State Honorees Announced

June 2011

- 30 • Academic All-Star nomination deadline
- WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Regional Honorees Announced

July 2011

- 18-22 • Tech Boot Camp

August 2011

- 5 • Gathering of Champions

Watch for our email broadcasts or visit our website for more information on these and other programs.

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That's Academic! is a publication of the Center for Academic Excellence. CAE is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities.

To become a member of CAE or to make a donation, please visit our website and click on "Membership & Strategic Partners." CAE is a qualified 501(c)(3). Together we can raise education to new heights! Join or donate today.

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