

DaVinci Connection

DATES TO REMEMBER

Special Education Advisory
Council (SEAC)
Thursday, September 20
6:00-8:00 pm

School Board Meeting
Monday, September 24
6:00 pm

Policies and Procedures
Committee
Monday, October 1
6:00 pm

Technology Committee
Monday, October 1
6:00 pm

Facilities Committee
Monday, October 1
7:30 pm

Communication Committee
Tuesday, October 2
5:00 pm

Find more events on the
DaVinci Academy home
page, or go to the "[Calendar](#)"
page for future important
dates.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

*(by Dale Lieb, School Development
Committee Chair)*

In July 2013, DaVinci Academy will be in operation for five years. At this time, the State of Minnesota will allow the establishment of an Affiliated Building Corporation. An Affiliated Building Corporation is a non-profit corporation established to own and manage the building(s) for a charter school. Any money it receives above its expenses may be allocated to the charter school to use in the general education fund. During the current school year, the biggest project the School Development Committee will work on is planning and having the paperwork ready for establishing an Affiliated Building Corporation.

Lenders in Minnesota understand how Affiliated Building Corporations work, so it is possible to get financing even without a big fund balance or history. To finance, we can either use a bank, other lender, or a bond issuer. Issuing bonds is normally cheaper in the long-term, but has more up-front costs. Nova Academy's Affiliated Building Corporation recently did a bond issue for \$17.5 million.

The School Development Committee will work with the Facilities Committee to anticipate what its plans are regarding facilities for future years and with the Budget Committee to review and recommend a financing option. Depending on a number of factors, the Affiliated Building Corporation may be used to purchase the current building and/or a second site.

Although, it is impossible to accurately calculate the annual contribution we can expect each year without specific numbers (e.g. purchase price, insurance, interest rate, and future maintenance costs), we can give an example based on some assumptions. According to the current DaVinci Academy Treasurer, Doug Hiatt, we

pay around \$660,000 a year to the current landlord. The landlord uses these payments to pay for property taxes, insurance, interest, and principal on the building, and provide a profit. DaVinci Academy currently pays for maintenance and repairs.

An Affiliated Building Corporation will be exempt from property taxes, will most likely get a lower interest rate than the current landlord, and does not need to make a profit. Assuming a reasonable purchase price for the current building, the Affiliated Building Corporation will contribute between \$150,000 and \$200,000 a year to DaVinci Academy in the beginning. As the principal of the loan is paid down, this amount increases depending on maintenance and insurance costs.

Needless to say, it would be difficult to raise funds equivalent to the annual contribution potential of an Affiliated Building Corporation. For that reason, we have made this project a top priority, and it will require a lot of work. If you have talents or experiences that would contribute to this endeavor, please contact [Dale Lieb](#), current Chair of the School Development Committee.

YMCA AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM (by Terry Moffatt, Academic Director)

As mentioned in an email last week, we have the opportunity to partner with the YMCA to provide an after-school program from 3:15-6:00 pm. The cost for the program is \$11 per day per child, and parents need to sign up for at least three sessions per week. We must have a minimum of 25 children per day to make the program feasible, and based on responses thus far, we do have enough interest. More information will come soon on this program, and we look to begin after the October break. If you have any questions regarding the YMCA after-school program, email [Terry Moffatt](#).



SCIENCE CORNER

(by Holly Fischer, Instructional Coordinator, & Holly Maeckelbergh, Middle School Science Teacher)

This week in science, the 9th graders were studying Newton's Laws. Ninth grade students are applying Newton's Laws of force and motion during Physical Science. When a rubber stopper is balancing on a paper ring being held up by an Erlenmeyer flask, how is it possible to get the stopper in the flask if you are only allowed to touch the paper ring? Bella, Anna, and Angelissa are able to solve the problem, but more importantly are able to explain the different forces involved in completing this task and how it relates to Newton's 1st Law of Motion.



DONATE USED TECHNOLOGY

(by Stephanie Severson, Middle School Language Arts)

The technology news over the last couple of weeks has been very exciting! First was the news that Amazon's Kindle was undergoing an upgrade and now featuring a backlit screen for the basic eReaders and also several new sizes for the Kindle Fire. That was followed by last Thursday's announcement regarding the iPhone 5.

So...are you thinking of upgrading? What will you do with your then obsolete technology? Please consider donating it to DaVinci Academy. All iPhones can be used as iPods. The phone service is turned off, but we can use it over the school's wifi and install many of the same apps that we have on the school's iPads. These smaller handheld devices are perfect for practicing math facts or listening to an audio book.

And the eBook devices are so desired by the students! The wonderful thing about the Kindle is that one book can be read by so many students. The book doesn't get dog-eared, the cover is never ripped off, and best yet -- the book has a built-in dictionary! I can't tell you how many times a student is so excited when they figure out they can use this for vocabulary words right in the middle of a story. Last year, I even watched a student use the "translate" tool to figure out the Italian that a character occasionally used in conversation.

Please consider donating your used Kindle, Nook, eReader, iPhone, or iPod as you replace it with the newer generation!

2011-12 YEARBOOKS STILL AVAILABLE

(by Lee Swearingen, Volunteer Coordinator)

Did you miss out on purchasing last year's DaVinci Academy yearbook? Do you just want another one? You can still pick one up for the low, low price of \$5! For that price, you can give yearbooks to family members as gifts! Contact [Denise Young](#) to purchase a yearbook. Make checks payable to DaVinci Academy.

DATA-DRIVEN ASSESSMENTS

(by Terry Moffatt, Academic Director)

All students have now completed the first round of data-driven assessments for this school year. These assessments are conducted three times per year in both reading and math. For students in grades K-2, we use the STEP assessment for the reading data-driven assessment.

The purpose of these assessments is to give teachers an idea of which concepts students are comfortable with and which concepts need more work. With this knowledge, teachers are then able to plan for each student and work to build up the concepts that students may be struggling with. Also, it is helpful for teachers to know where students need to be challenged.

These assessments are not part of a student's grade. They are part of student portfolios in grades K-2 and are kept by the teachers in grades 3-9.

The next round of data-driven assessments will take place in December 2012 and January 2013 .