



DaVinci Connection

DATES TO REMEMBER

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES BEGIN**
September 9

PICTURE RETAKE DAY
September 13

SCHOOL BOARD
September 16
6:00 p.m.

PICTURE FORMS DUE
September 20

PTO
September 24
6:00 p.m.

Find more upcoming events
on the DaVinci Academy
home page, or go to the
"Calendar" page for future
important dates.

[http://davinciarterschool.org/
Calendar.aspx](http://davinciarterschool.org/Calendar.aspx)

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www.davinciarterschool.org

MESSAGE FROM DOUG HIATT, SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT

A little over a month ago, the DaVinci Academy School Board began updating the strategic plan for the school and evaluating the organization structure of its committees. In the next two months, the Board will continue to review information related to some of the strategic plan items and will adopt an updated strategic plan. I want to provide an update on some of the main issues DaVinci Academy will address during the 2013-14 school year.

The Board will decide when to restart high school and begin the process of planning for it. Some of the large issues related to this are: facility, which grades to restart high school with, marketing to draw students to fill the grades, and ensuring the curriculum and staff are at the high standards expected by the Board, Administration, staff, parents, and students. We will talk to other schools that have had the same experience (tried starting high school, took a pause, and restarted high school), and also charter schools that started as a high school only from day one, to help determine the best plan for restarting.

Closely tied to this will be considering the space we need for high school and to create the correct elementary and middle school space to fill middle and high school grades long term. One of the primary issues related to this is whether or not a second site for DaVinci Academy is temporary (until a larger space is available where DaVinci Academy can come back together as one campus), or if this is a long-term vision. We will visit K-12 charter schools that have done it both ways in order to help inform this decision.

As a charter school, DaVinci Academy exists based on a contract with its Authorizer, Friends of Education. State law requires that the contracts have a maximum term of five years, but each contract could be for less time. DaVinci Academy's original contract was renewed in 2011 for a three-year term. That means

we are in the last year of our current contract. We filed a renewal application with our Authorizer at the end of August. Our Authorizer will review the application, and we believe will decide to renew our contract for additional years. This process will result in negotiating key provisions of our new contract related to various academic, financial, and other goals. We anticipate that those discussions will begin at the end of 2013 or the beginning of 2014, and they must be complete prior to June 30, 2014.

These are just a few examples of the many issues the Board and Administration of DaVinci Academy are confronted with each year. One unique feature of a charter school is that parents, teachers, and community members are eligible, under Minnesota's Charter School Law, to be on the Board and make these decisions. In addition, parents, community members, and all staff can participate in committees to help provide information and make recommendations to the Board for it to make decisions. In the last three months, we have lost three Board members (one parent, one teacher, and one community member), because they moved away from the Twin Cities area and/or took employment at other places.

The Board is seeking applications for the three open Board positions. Two of the members who resigned had experience in other school districts, and we seek to add one or more people with this experience when filling the three openings. All Board members are expected to attend all monthly Board meetings, participate in four strategic planning sessions each year, participate in at least two committees, and must attend trainings related to Corporate Governance, Employment, and Finance each year. Please consider whether you or someone you know is a good candidate for any of these positions.

The Board has also reorganized its committees, and the current committees are:

- ♦ Finance, Budget, and Audit
- ♦ HR/Compensation
- ♦ Curriculum/Technology
- ♦ Policies
- ♦ School Development

The regular meeting schedule for these committees will be posted on the Board calendar after the next regular Board meeting. All of our committees are always looking for more members in order to share the work and provide for additional points of view. Please consider whether you or someone you know has experience that might benefit our committees. Too many fail to take advantage of this unique opportunity to help make decisions related to DaVinci Academy and leave the work to a small number of individuals. At the end of the day, this is not healthy for those who become over-burdened by volunteering so much of their time and energy, their families, or DaVinci Academy. I urge everyone to volunteer for whatever they can, and consider participating with the Board (applying for one of the open positions or attending the regular monthly meeting) and its committees.

P.S. Every year, three of the Board positions are up for election and the election occurs in February. Please consider whether you or someone you know could submit an application to be placed on the ballot. Information about the election process and the open positions will be provided in December.

MORNING DROP OFF

(by Caroline Carritt, SPED Dir./ Business Mgr)

The morning drop off routine is going smoothly! Thank you for helping to create a safe traffic flow. Please remember to have your child exit the vehicle on the passenger side. By doing so, they will remain away from moving vehicles. Please take a few moments to read the SPARK signs in the front and back of the building to find more ways to help while dropping off and picking up your child.

NEW STAFF – WELCOME MS. VLAMINCK

My name is Trisha Vlaminc, and I teach 4th and 5th grade Social Studies this year at DaVinci Academy. I am a 2011 graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. I hold a MN teaching license in K-6 Elementary Education and 5-8 Social Studies Education. I taught last year in southern Minnesota and am excited to be in the metro area! I am originally from Kandiyohi, MN, which is near Willmar. I love spending my spare time with my friends and large family! I also enjoy traveling, shopping, and music. I look forward to a great year at DaVinci Academy!

PBIS and SPARK

(by Gregg Eldred, Student Development Coord.)

This past summer, eight members of our staff went through training on initiating Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in our school. PBIS refers to a systems change process for an entire school or district. The underlying theme is teaching behavioral expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject. As a school, we have embraced our SPARK Program to help teach expected behaviors for our students.

SPARK stands for Success, Positive Attitude, Responsibility and Kindness. These are key values that we have for our students which are aligned with our mission and vision at DaVinci Academy. The key areas of the school, beyond the classroom, in which we are using the SPARK Program and teaching behavioral expectations include:

- ♦ Hallways
- ♦ Cafeteria
- ♦ Playground
- ♦ School Assemblies
- ♦ Library
- ♦ School Bus

Students can earn SPARK Tickets by displaying SPARK in the areas mentioned above. We have a weekly SPARK drawing on Fridays where one student from each grade is drawn and can choose from a variety of prizes. In the month of August, over 1,000 SPARK Tickets were awarded! We want our students to "Show SPARK" everyday!

ART CORNER - ARTIST OF THE WEEK

(by Amy Gibault, Art Teacher)

Artist of the Week is an "art extra" that allows motivated artists to show us what they like to create when they are not in art class. New artwork is selected every Friday. Any DaVinci Academy student may submit artwork and as many pieces as they would like. The only rules are that they cannot trace, submit an art project they did in class, or create Artist of the Week drawings during their art class. Students whose artwork is selected receive a special certificate and are recognized during their art class. Their artwork is displayed for a week and then laminated before it is returned to the artist.





EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

(by Terry Moffatt, Academic Director)

Extra-curricular activities start this week. Most of the activities will run for five weeks, and then we will have a new session. However, activities run by outside organizations follow a different timetable, so be sure to double-check dates as you are registering. All of the activities with the outside organizations have their own online registration and payment plan.

Given the large number of activities and students involved, we ask that parents pick up their children in the back of the school. The teachers leading the activities will bring the students to the back and wait on the sidewalk. Please remember that students need to be picked up by 4:15 pm. The exception to this is students who are in soccer. Students in K-3 soccer will be at Carrara Park (13129 Eldorado St. NE) and should be picked up at 4:30 pm. This will allow parents to pick up any siblings at the school and then go to the park. Students in soccer will not come back to school to be picked up. However, students in the YMCA after-school program will walk back with the staff and be returned to the YMCA staff.

Siblings not enrolled in an after school activity must leave at the normal end of the day at 3:00 pm.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

(by Lee Swearingen, Volunteer Coordinator)

Now that school is in full swing, there are many volunteer opportunities available for families. If you are interested in any of the following one-time or ongoing opportunities, please email [Lee Swearingen](mailto:Lee.Swearingen@dalv.academy) or the contact person listed.

- ♦ **Costume Design** – Are you a sewer? Are you creative? We need someone to design and sew an adult-sized costume of our DaVinci Dynamite mascot. For more details, contact [Stephanie Hunter](mailto:Stephanie.Hunter@dalv.academy).
- ♦ **Office Volunteer Pool** – If you are interested in helping in the office on a regular basis, join the Office Volunteer Pool. This volunteer will help with anything from copying, laminating, organizing, and basic "housekeeping." Just pick your day of the week and the number of times per month you want to come in, and we will get you started.
- ♦ **Communications Advisory Group** – We are seeking one more parent volunteer who is interested in working alongside administrators and teachers to come up with recommendations for

streamlining school-wide communications. This group will meet two Tuesdays a month immediately after school until December 3. If you are interested, contact [Lee Swearingen](mailto:Lee.Swearingen@dalv.academy).

- ♦ **Poster Production** – Stephanie Severson is looking for someone to help her make some custom "Read" posters depicting students and staff reading their favorite books. This person must be able to come to school to take photos of people and use them to produce the posters. Photo editing skills are a must. This is a great and ongoing project for the right person. Check out this link for a sample poster: <http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=4070> or contact [Stephanie Severson](mailto:Stephanie.Severson@dalv.academy).
- ♦ **Book Fair** – The Scholastic Book Fair will again be open during the week of Parent/Teacher conferences. We need several individuals to help set up and/or work at the book fair. Please contact [Miranda TenNapel](mailto:Miranda.TenNapel@dalv.academy) with questions. The book fair will be open at the following times:
 - * Thursday, October 10, 8:00 am-3:30 pm
 - * Friday, October 11, 8:00 am-3:30 pm
 - * Monday, October 14, 12:00 pm-8:00 pm
 - * Tuesday, October 15, 8:00 am-4:00 pm
- ♦ **Outside Maintenance**
 - * Clean all windows and sills before winter
 - * Sweep sidewalks and along the curbs
 - * Remove white plastic mesh from the playground
- ♦ **Inside Maintenance**
 - * Regular dusting
 - * Spot clean walls;
 - * Clean all inside windows and sills
- ♦ **Grant Writing** – Do you have grant writing experience? We have a few grants we would like to apply for, and this is a great volunteer opportunity for the right person.
- ♦ **Small Group Math Help** – Assist the 6th grade class from 10:30-11:10 am any day of the week during small group math time.

If you have questions about any of these opportunities, please contact [Lee Swearingen](mailto:Lee.Swearingen@dalv.academy). Every minute you spend volunteering for our school is greatly appreciated by all of our students and staff. Thank you for your consideration.



DAVINCI DAYS

