



*Inspire. Educate. Connect.*



**2024**  
**IMPACT REPORT**



**Dear Friends,**

We are delighted to present BestPrep's 2023-2024 Impact Report.

It was a fast-paced year with excellent results across our programs. Humboldt High School in St. Paul became the eighth Cloud Coach partner school, with the entire 9th grade student population receiving online mentoring. Student enrollment for our summer program, Minnesota Business Venture, increased by 30%, returning to pre-Covid levels. Demand from educators continues to increase for mock interviews, and during the past year more than 2,000 students participated and are now better prepared to enter the workforce.



We continue to focus on financial literacy education as we prepare for the 2025-2026 school year, when new legislation will require a personal finance course for high school graduation. Through special funding, BestPrep added a new classroom presentation to its offerings: Money Personalities, which empowers students to understand how their unique attitude towards money can impact their financial decisions.

Over the past year, a team of board members and staff finalized BestPrep's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan. The plan focuses on key opportunities for growth, including volunteer engagement, organizational efficiency, board effectiveness, and elevation of the BestPrep brand. We are confident that the future of our organization is very bright.

Thank you for all of the ways you continue to support BestPrep's mission to equip students with the tools to be successful in school, work, and life.

Sincerely,

**Marc Olson**  
VP Operations  
Allianz Life  
BestPrep Board Chair

**Robert Kaitz**  
President & CEO  
BestPrep

# BestPrep Is On A Mission

*To prepare students with business, career, and financial literacy skills through hands-on experiences that inspire success in work and life.*

**BestPrep envisions a community in which every Minnesota student is work-ready and career-bound.**

**Our mission is achieved through relationship building, student-centered decision-making, adaptability, and inclusivity.**

**Our team members are committed to open communication, collaboration, reliability, and spirit of service.**





# Our Organization

## WHO WE SERVE

### Students

BestPrep provides Minnesota students with resources and skills to get ready for higher education, their future career, and adult life through our school-year programs and summer camp called Minnesota Business Venture.

### Educators

Our programs enhance curriculums and can be seamlessly incorporated in the classroom. This offers students a variety of opportunities to build business, career, and financial literacy skills.

### Volunteers

We specialize in offering volunteer roles with a low-time commitment so that even the busiest professionals can make a meaningful difference in their community.

## ANNUAL IMPACT



**34K**  
STUDENTS



**454**  
SCHOOLS



**474**  
TEACHERS



**5K**  
VOLUNTEERS





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# School-Year Programs

## CLASSROOM PLUS

*Inspiring students to create a vision for their future through career exploration.*

**About the Program:** Classroom Plus offers classroom presentations, mock interviews, workplace tours, and career days at local companies.

### Highlights from the year:

- 33% increase in Mock Interview requests.
- Sent 18 different career speakers to Richfield High School in one academic year.
- 160 students from multiple high schools attended career day at Cargill.



## FINANCIAL MATTERS

*Motivating students to make sound money management decisions and become financially savvy.*

**About the Program:** Financial Matters offers classroom presentations focused on money management, budgeting, credit, insurance, and taxes.

### Highlights from the year:

- Provided a speaker for almost every month of the year at Spring Lake Park High School - impacting more than 1,000 students.
- Added new classroom presentation, Money Personalities, that fulfills the new personal finance requirement for high school students.



## THE STOCK MARKET GAME (SMG)

*Teaching students about the global economy, business, and the power of investing.*

**About the Program:** Students in grades 4-12 work in teams to invest a virtual \$100,000 in the stock market, which teaches business, economics, investing, teamwork, decision-making, and critical thinking skills.

### Highlights from the year:

- Overall registration across the state for the Fall session has seen steady growth since 2020, with a 12% increase from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023.
- Increased student participation by 12% at Title 1 schools in high-need, lower-income Minnesota communities.





# School-Year Programs

## eMENTORS

*Empowering students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in school, career, and life.*

**About the Program:** eMentors is an online mentoring program that pairs business volunteers with high school classes to participate in an eight-week online mentorship.

### Highlights from the year:

- Partnered with 3 new companies this year - Delta Airlines, NParallel, and Novation Credit Union.
- Tennant supported 3 connections; 1 for trade students with a manufacturing tour, 1 for business students with a HQ tour and 1 for STEM students who were paired with engineers.
- Johnson High School teacher, Liz Ormsby, has participated in eMentors for 11 years.



## CLOUD COACH

*Strengthening student motivation to succeed in school and beyond.*

**About the Program:** Cloud Coach is an online mentoring program that inspires students to develop career aspirations and understand the importance of high school graduation. The program is provided to the entire ninth grade class of participating Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools.

### Highlights from the year:

- All participating students were given the opportunity to meet their mentor at their work site or a college campus to gain insight into who they were connecting with.
- MN Twins donated tickets to three schools.
- MN Timberwolves Ticket Incentive showed 27% increase in messaging since Fall 2023.



**BestPrep provides schools with connections outside of the classroom that would otherwise be unavailable.**

**This organization is exceptional.**

**- Michael, Teacher at New City School in Minneapolis**



# Summer Program

## MINNESOTA BUSINESS VENTURE

*Igniting students' passion to achieve success and develop career aspirations for the future.*

**About the Program:** MBV has two week-long residential camps providing Minnesota high school students with business, career, and financial literacy skills.

### Highlights from the year:

- Increased the number of students by approximately 30% this summer.
- New business plan prompt asked students to use technology to improve one or more dimensions of customer's wellness using the eight dimensions of wellness.
- Nonprofit founder and disability advocate, Shamus O'Meara of Highland Popcorn, was a first-time speaker at camp, bringing along popcorn samples which were a hit with students.



**My time at MBV has been an eye-opening experience,  
I was able to get out of my comfort zone and grow as a person.  
– Leslye, Harding Senior High School Student**



# Events

## EDUCATIONAL FORUM

BestPrep hosted the Educational Forum in February 2024, which featured nationally renowned nonprofit leader and best-selling author, John Hope Bryant. Guests also enjoyed live music from local music group NUNNABOVE.

Keynote John Hope Bryant spoke on financial inclusion and how generational wealth starts with understanding the basics of financial management. Business panelists from U.S. Bank and Delta Air Lines joined him on stage to speak on financial literacy, followed by high school panelists giving their perspective of how teenagers view money management and its importance today.

The program also featured the Student Spotlight Competition which prompted students to reflect on how Bryant's 5 pillars of success would be key to their personal success. First place winner, Akshika Kandeepan, was the recipient of the Kristie Award and a \$2,500 scholarship was provided by the Kristie Greve family.

**Join us at the next BestPrep  
Educational Forum on  
February 12, 2025**

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The 2024 Annual Luncheon was held in May and featured Minnesota United FC's Chief Executive Officer, Shari Ballard. She and WCCO Radio host, Jordana Green, held a Q&A panel where guests were able to submit questions.

Inspiring performances by local high schoolers, VocalEssence Singers of this Age, were also enjoyed throughout the event.

The luncheon recognized our most outstanding students, teachers, and volunteers; which included 4 top honorees, 16 teachers, and 33 volunteers.

Award Highlights:

- **Bunzel Volunteer of the Year**  
Paul Langlois, Ecolab
- **Carpenter Educator of the Year**  
Andrea Kemink, Brooklyn Center Secondary
- **Don Friborg Student of the Year**  
Vardaan Gupta, Washington State University
- **Board Member of Distinction**  
Maggie Snetting, Thrivent

**Join us at the next BestPrep  
Annual Luncheon on  
Wednesday, May 12, 2025**





# BestPrep Donors

*BestPrep wishes to thank the corporations, foundations, and individuals for their generous financial support during BestPrep's 2023-2024 fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2023 - Aug. 31, 2024.)*

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Barbara & Darren Utech in honor of Elysia Utech



# Ways to Make a Difference at BestPrep



## MOBILIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

Advocate for business, career, and financial literacy skills for Minnesota students by sharing our programs in your community, whether it's within your organization, schools, social network, friends or family. Together, we can equip students with the knowledge they need to succeed. Let's empower the next generation to thrive in today's world!

## VOLUNTEER

Volunteering with BestPrep is a great way to make a difference in Minnesota students' futures. Our volunteer opportunities are high impact, low time commitment, and take place in the Twin Cities and throughout the state of Minnesota. All six of our programs rely on volunteers to accomplish our mission, with opportunities that include being a virtual or classroom speaker, mock interviewer, online mentor, Resident Business Leader, and a judge for business plans, essays, or our Student Spotlight Competition.

## BECOME A SPONSOR

Partner with BestPrep and make an impact at any of our two events - the Educational Forum and Annual Luncheon. All sponsors get a table at the event with the opportunity to have your company's logo displayed on the BestPrep website, various marketing materials, MSP Business Journal Ad, and WCCO Radio promotional announcement in higher sponsorship tiers. The next Educational Forum will take place at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 and the next Annual Luncheon will take place at the Saint Paul RiverCentre on Monday, May 12, 2025.

## DONATE

Every contribution helps provide valuable resources and opportunities for young minds to thrive. Shape a brighter future for Minnesota students with either a one-time, recurring, matching gift, volunteer time match or workplace donation. Make a contribution today at [bestprep.org/give](https://bestprep.org/give).

## CONNECT WITH BESTPREP

See what's happening at BestPrep by subscribing to our newsletter and following us on our socials! We currently have Facebook, LinkedIn, and X.







THANK YOU FOR  
MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE FOR  
MINNESOTA  
STUDENTS



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