



Inspire. Educate. Connect.



2025 IMPACT REPORT

A Message from Our Board President and President & CEO

This past year was one of both reflection and renewal for BestPrep. After more than four decades of visionary leadership, our founder, Bob Kaitz, retired in August 2025. Bob built BestPrep from an idea into a statewide organization that has reached 1.8 million Minnesota students with the skills they need to succeed in work and life. We are deeply grateful for his extraordinary contributions and enduring legacy.



With Bob's retirement came a new chapter for BestPrep as we welcomed Jason Sanders as our new President and CEO. Jason brings a deep commitment to education and a passion for ensuring every student has access to real-world learning experiences. Together with our board, staff, and partners, we remain focused on advancing BestPrep's mission to prepare students with business, career, and financial literacy skills through hands-on experiences with professionals.

This year, we also saw innovation and impact across our programs. In our Financial Matters initiative, we introduced a new presentation called Money Personalities, which helps students understand how their personality, background, and decision-making style influence the way they handle money. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and we look forward to expanding it in the coming year.

Through the Classroom Plus program, we celebrated our 15th Cargill Career Day, where 150 students explored a variety of career paths. This partnership continues to be a powerful example of how businesses can inspire and guide the next generation of Minnesota's workforce.

Our Minnesota Business Venture summer program also had an outstanding year, serving one of the highest student enrollments in camp history. The energy, creativity, and collaboration from students and volunteers alike made for an unforgettable experience that truly reflects the spirit of BestPrep.

As we look ahead, we're excited about the opportunities to build on our strong foundation while continuing to evolve to meet the needs of students and educators. None of this work would be possible without our dedicated supporters, our volunteers, educators, partners, and donors who make this mission a reality every single day.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for believing in the potential of Minnesota's young people.

With gratitude,

Marc Olson
VP Operations
Allianz Life
BestPrep Board Chair

Jason Sanders
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 believes:

- The expertise of educators should influence our work at every level.
- Experiential learning opportunities enhance the educational environment.
- In the power of connecting businesses and education by creating meaningful partnerships with companies, schools, and community groups.
- Utilizing the skills and expertise of volunteers is essential to accomplishing our mission.
- Students should be given the opportunity to show up as their authentic selves and supports the rights and inclusion of BIPOC communities and LGBTQIA+ communities.
- There are many paths to success and students should be empowered to define success for themselves.

WHO WE SERVE

Students

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

Educators

Our programs enhance curriculums and can be seamlessly incorporated in the classroom. These resources are provided at no cost to teachers or schools.

Volunteers

We specialize in offering skill-based volunteer roles that allow busy professionals to make a meaningful difference in their community.

ANNUAL IMPACT



33K
STUDENTS



527
TEACHERS



504
SCHOOLS



5K
VOLUNTEERS

Board of Directors

Chair: Marc Olson

Allianz Life

Vice Chair: Paul Langlois

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KPMG

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Momentum Growth
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Ashley Erickson

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Andy Hennig

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RBC Wealth Management

Dan Hogan

Wealth Enhancement Group

Kim Hultgren

Alerus Financial

Don Johnson

Shapco Printing

Keshia Jones

Comcast

Bob Kaitz

BestPrep

Greta Koehler

Apex Systems

Whitney-Lehr Koenig

Mpls/St. Paul Business
Journal

Mike Kronebusch

Novation Financial

Dan Lear

Affiance Financial

Mike Lebens

Associated Bank

Valerie Littles-Butler

Humboldt High School

Betsy Lulfs

Thomson Reuters

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General Mills

Casey Merkwan

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Scott Morris

The Morris Coaching Edge

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Minnesota Timberwolves/Lynx

Amanda Muñoz

Cargill

James Pate

Deloitte

Bryan Polley

Ascent Private Capital
Management of U.S. Bank

Dawn Pruitt

Faegre Drinker

James Redelsheimer

Foundation for Economic
Education

Chanel Rivers

Optum

Jesse Ross

Mr. Jesse Ross, LLC

Jason Sanders

BestPrep

Tamela Saulsberry

Ameriprise Financial

Liza Sayre

The Huntington Foundation

Casey Schoen

EY

Jared Shasky

Arby's Restaurant Group

Maggie Snetting

Thrivent

Bridget Swenson

Tennant Company

Andy Tate

Cahill Financial Advisors

Roz Tsai

Thrivent

Cole Turnbow

Accenture

Sarah Vandenberg

Piper Sandler Companies

Rashmi Vashisht

Highland Park Senior HS

John Wagner

Wings Credit Union

Steve Weitz

Citizens Independent Bank

Brad Zastoupil

PwC

Updated as of August 2025

Meet Our Team

Dakota Andersen

Program Associate, Mentoring Programs

Julie Anderson

Director, Mentoring Programs

Peaches Avre

Communications & Events Coordinator

Nick Ballin*

Program Associate, eMentors

Karla Bonilla

Senior Mentoring Programs Associate

Gina Brewington*

Program Associate, eMentors

Kurt Diekman*

Program Associate, eMentors

Miriam Feingold

Development Assistant

Samantha Funk*

Program Associate, Classroom Plus &
Financial Matters

Kim Graff

Director of Assessment &
Program Manager, Mentors

Molly Hildreth

Grant Writer

Shana Hoffer

VP, Development

Bob Kaitz

Founder & Sr. Advisor

Michelle Klin*

Program Associate, eMentors

Christina Licari*

Program Associate, eMentors

Brooke Nelson

Director of Training & Program Manager,
Cloud Coach

Janae Olinger

VP, Educational Programs

Pallu Rao*

Program Associate, eMentors

Emma Richards

Program Manager, Classroom Plus &
Financial Matters

Jason Sanders

President & CEO

Tovin Sannes-Venhuizen

Program Manager,
The Stock Market Game

Bree Scales

Program Associate, Classroom Plus
& Financial Matters

John Schulte

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Gemma Sprecher

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Minnesota Business Venture

Brian Taylor*

Program Associate, eMentors

Xavier Thomas

Education Outreach Associate

Bonnie Vagasky

VP, External Relations

Maila Vang

Program Associate,
Mentoring Programs

Irene Yang

Program Assistant,
Mentoring Programs

*Part-time

Updated as of August 2025



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 pairing business volunteers with high school classes to participate in an eight-week online mentorship.

Highlights from the year:

- Three new companies joined eMentors: Bremer Bank, Horizontal and Kinneberg Management Group.
- BestPrep developed a new teacher and coordinator request system that is time efficient for both teachers and staff.
- BestPrep offered virtual Meet & Greet events to 286 students from Dassel-Cokato HS and Johnson HS, ensuring students unable to attend in person could still connect with their mentors.



CLOUD COACH

Strengthening student motivation to succeed in school and beyond.

About the Program: Cloud Coach is an online mentoring program inspiring 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 high schools.

Highlights from the year:

- To support BestPrep's growing volunteer need, Xcel Energy increased their volunteerism by 167%.
- Our partners, the Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Twins, provided game tickets as participation incentives for students, increasing the number of messages written.
- Arby's Restaurants donated 1,000 sandwich coupons as a reward to Cloud Coach students.



Thank you, BestPrep, for creating such a supportive environment that sets the stage for this type of transformational impact."

- Washington Technology Magnet High School teacher

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:

- Mock interviews saw a 28% increase in students reached from the previous year.
- A partnership was formed with Construction Careers Foundation and BestPrep hosted a Career Day for their interns.



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, taxes, and more.

Highlights from the year:

- Introduced a new presentation called Money Personalities that demonstrates to students how their personality, background, and thought process can affect their financial decision-making.
- Partnered with the University of Minnesota to launch RentWise 101, a presentation that prepares students with the information they need to rent an apartment.



THE STOCK MARKET GAME™

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

About the Program: BestPrep is the statewide provider of this national 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:

- Launched a summer session with more than 500 student participants.
- Four Minnesota schools placed nationally in the InvestWrite essay contest.
- Students visited a trade floor during the December awards ceremony at RBC.



Summer Program

MINNESOTA BUSINESS VENTURE

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

About the Program: Two week-long residential camps providing high school students with business, career, and financial literacy skills.

Highlights from the year:

- Student registration reached capacity by mid-March, a new program record!
- A new student leadership role was launched; Operations Associates help facilitate camp activities.
- New partnerships with the Girl Scout Leadership Institute and Metro State University's TRIO program brought in campers.



MBV is only five days, but teaches you lifelong tips that will help you for the rest of your life from budgeting, to investing, to paying for college."

- Cristo Rey Jesuit High School student



Events

EDUCATIONAL FORUM

BestPrep hosted the Educational Forum in February 2025, which featured one of the world's leading authorities on AI and Technology, R. David Edelman.

Guests also enjoyed live music from local music group NUNNABOVE.

Keynote R. David Edelman discussed the evolution of AI and how to make sense of it, leaving guests excited to apply it to their life and work. A discussion panel comprised of a student, educator, and business professional joined him on stage to speak on the future of AI, the challenges that arise from it, and our ethical responsibility to use it appropriately.

The program also featured the Student Spotlight Competition which prompted students to reflect on the pros and cons of using artificial intelligence with an essay or art piece. First place winner, Megan Do, was the recipient of the evening's top prize.

**Join us at the next BestPrep
Educational Forum on
Wednesday, February 11, 2026**

ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The 2025 Annual Luncheon was held in May and featured Reba Dominski, Senior Executive Vice President, Chief Social Responsibility Officer of U.S. Bank and President of the U.S. Bank Foundation. Following Reba's keynote address, she and WCCO Radio host, Jordana Green, held a Q&A panel where guests were able to submit questions. The luncheon recognized our most outstanding students, teachers, and volunteers; which included five top honorees, 15 teachers, and 27 volunteers.

Award Highlights:

- **Bunzel Volunteer of the Year**
Charles R. Bradley Jr., Thomson Reuters
- **Carpenter Educator of the Year**
Sophia Ross, Spring Lake Park HS
- **Don Friborg Student of the Year**
Adia Vang, Woodbury HS
- **Board Member of Distinction**
Rashmi Vashisht, Highland Park Sr. HS
- **Leader of Vision**
Marc Olson, Allianz Life

**Join us at the next BestPrep
Annual Luncheon on
Thursday, May 21, 2026**





Ways to Get Involved with BestPrep



VOLUNTEER

Volunteers - Share your time with BestPrep in skills-based roles with a low time commitment!
Scan the QR code or visit bestprep.org/volunteer for more information.

Scan the QR code:



EDUCATORS

Bring BestPrep into your classroom to help bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace skills, offered at no cost. Visit bestprep.org/programs for more information.

DONATE

Support BestPrep today to equip Minnesota students with the skills they need for success in work and life.
Scan the QR code or visit bestprep.org/give to make a contribution today.

Scan the QR code:



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