

Virtual Public School in Minnesota Graduates First Group of High School Seniors

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MTS Minnesota Connections Academy, ConnectionsAcademy.com, a virtual public school that provides personalized K-12 education, will graduate its first group of 12th graders on Saturday, June 20, 2009. The school's 43 seniors and their families will travel from across the state of Minnesota to attend the commencement ceremony and celebrate not only the students' educational success, but also their numerous individual successes made possible by Connections Academy's commitment to personalized education.

Among the graduating seniors are Seth and Bethany Olive of Woodbury, siblings who looked to Connections Academy as a unique education option. "Connections Academy's flexible programming provided experiences I would have otherwise missed in a traditional school, said Bethany Olive. "With time to enter art contests and teach preschool gymnastics I've been able to foster my extra-curricular passions without sacrificing my educational success."

Olive, who will also give a speech during the ceremony, is just one of many in MTS Minnesota Connections Academy's first graduating class of future doctors, nurses and musicians, that looked to the school for its rigorous academic program, flexibility, personalized curriculum and leading-edge technology resources. However, it may be the words of MTS Minnesota Connections Academy principal, Melissa Nelson, which speak to the underlying emotion and importance of the day.

"This year's group of graduating seniors is not only a reflection of how far Connections Academy has come, but also how much more we have to offer students across the state of Minnesota," said Melissa Nelson, principal of MTS Minnesota Connections Academy. "Thanks to their hard-work and the school's educational commitment, our seniors are headed to colleges and universities across the country. We look forward to providing our world class education for years to come."

MTS Minnesota Connections Academy began in 2005 with eight students and one teacher, and currently enrolls more than 800 students. With its headquarters in Minneapolis, Minn., Minnesota Connections Academy combines the expertise of state-certified teachers, high quality curriculum, unique technology tools, and a vast assortment of electives, clubs and community experiences to create an individualized alternative to the brick-and-mortar classroom. Students enrolled in Connections Academy participate in state standardized testing, and the curriculum is aligned to meet or exceed Minnesota academic standards.

Connections Academy is designed to meet the needs of students and their families who are looking for a unique public school option—those who need a flexible schedule, gifted students and those who learn at a different pace from their peers, students that need more individualized attention or live in isolated rural settings. Homebound and previously home-schooled students can also thrive in the program. Connections academy operates its full-time Internet school program in Minnesota through a partnership with Minnesota Transitions Charter School.

Families interested in free online school, with some similarities to home schooling, but with the support of state-certified teachers and the accountability of public education are encouraged to learn more by calling 800-382-6010, or visiting ConnectionsAcademy.com.

Connections Academy is a leading national provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual public schools in fourteen states operated in partnership with charter schools, school districts, and state departments of education. Connections Academy schools deliver top quality, personalized education for students that combines certified teachers, a proven curriculum, technology tools, and community experiences to create a supportive and successful environment for children who want an individualized approach to education. In Connections Academy's Personalized Performance Learning® approach, students use daily lesson plans and curriculum materials provided by Connections Academy. Teachers develop a learning plan for each student, utilizing a proprietary, web-based Learning Management System to deliver, track and administer the learning. In 2008-09 Connections Academy serves students in Arizona, California (Southern and Central), Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri (through the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program), Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. Connections Academy offers grades K through 12, though some schools do not offer all grades. For more information, call 800-382-6010 or visit www.ConnectionsAcademy.com.

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