

Learning In Style School April 2025 Board Update

LIS Attends MN ABE “Day on the Hill”

On Tuesday, April 8, 70 LIS staff and students traveled to the state capitol to represent Minnesota ABE (adult basic education) programs at “Day on the Hill.” The annual event raises awareness of adult education and its impact on our state. Our visit included guided tours of the capitol and plenty of photo opportunities. LIS teacher Eva Moline initiated this very popular opportunity for our students (we needed to order a second bus!) – our first field trip in many years.

New Collaborations and Connections

As funding and staffing are cut at resettlement agencies and other programs that typically provide services to our students, they are turning more and more to LIS for help. A recently laid-off case manager from Arrive Ministries (interviewing at LIS) described how she and her former colleagues predict that their former clients will “look to the English schools” for case management and financial assistance as their former support systems disappear. As already planned, LIS will hire a part-time case manager to begin work later this summer. And our collaboration with the University of St. Thomas’ IPC program led by Amy Nelson, MSW, will continue next school year. (See below.)

We continue to pursue connections with organizations and individuals that can support our students both as English language learners and in their lives outside of school. Recent visits to our program include:

- [Daily Work](#) provides job counseling to people experiencing barriers to employment and can help to connect LIS students with work opportunities.
- [The Center for Victims of Torture](#) provides advocacy and therapeutic support (CVT is a primary partner of Sarah’s as well). LIS students have been referred specifically to the Raahat program, developed to support the needs of Afghan refugees in Minnesota.
- Literacy Minnesota’s [NorthStar digital literacy](#) team visited LIS to observe our growing digital literacy program, part of a statewide effort to better understand how they can support organizations like LIS.
- Staff from Hamline University’s [ATLAS](#) program are visiting LIS in early May to observe and discuss opportunities for collaboration. ATLAS provides professional development and resources for ABE professionals and programs, including mentoring opportunities.

University of St. Thomas IPC Program Partnership

LIS and the University of St. Thomas' IPC program (Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services) are piloting a new program to support LIS students. The IPC is a collaboration between UST's MSW program, the law school, and the psychology department. Supervised Social Work students come to LIS twice a month, seeing up to 8 students each time. Students with more extensive needs – including legal and therapeutic support – can also receive services via virtual appointments and/or in-person appointments at the STU campus nearby. On April 24, LIS will host the IPC's Community Connect group, a weekly drop-in peer support group for new arrivals typically held on the STU campus.

Student Data

We continue to see year-to-year increases in monthly student contact hours (a key measure for state funding). As of February 28 we matched last year's total hours with two more reporting months to go. We've increased our total number of participants (12+ hours) - 216 vs. 164 at this time last year. And student level gain increases are 25% higher than this time last year.