

Learning In Style School
June 2025 Board Update
2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

STAFFING. LIS began the year with 3 new teachers and offered sequenced English classes from the pre-lit to advanced levels once again. We also added an office manager, a digital literacy coordinator, and (temporarily) a social worker. Rehiring the social worker position was challenging. In the meantime, supervised students from the University of St. Thomas have provided case management and social work services on site and at UST this year.

LIS STUDENTS. In 2024-25, LIS students represented 40 countries of origin and 25 first languages. (Almost 80% of students cite either Somali or Spanish as their first language.) For the first time in many years, LIS has waiting lists for several class times at several levels.

As of June 1:

- In 24-25, LIS had 230 student “**participants**” (12+ hours), 20% more than the previous year (187).
- LIS saw a 24% YTY increase in student **contact hours**: (from 12,930 to 17,047 for recording year ending April 30, 2025).
- **Level gain** increases: 45% of eligible students made at least one level gain (vs. 38% in 23-24).

VOLUNTEERS. The LIS volunteer cohort grew to 15 from 11 and includes volunteers from the Ignatian Volunteer Corps and Lutheran Social Services Foster Grandparent program. A volunteer led our weekly citizenship class and specially trained volunteers provided substitute teaching this year. In addition, Cretin Derham Hall high school students returned to regularly volunteer again; and De La Salle students began volunteering for the first time.

CHILDCARE PROGRAM. Under the supervision of a new childcare coordinator, the childcare program offered organized, welcoming, safe, and fun attention to young children so that parents could attend English classes. 27 parents of 31 children used this free program.

DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM. A digital literacy coordinator joined the LIS staff in November. First year initiatives included identifying resources and materials to launch a program specific to the LIS student population. New activities include orientations and assessments for students; partnering with teachers to integrate digital literacy skills into English classes; and preparing a structured program to begin in October 2025.

STUDENT SUPPORT. Our students have many needs outside of school, and LIS strives to anticipate and respond to them. This year’s supports for students included:

- A first-ever onsite vaccine/mobile health clinic provided by the Odam Clinic and MDH.

- One Warm Coat, CDH and members of the Minnekahda Club donated coats and cold weather gear; over 100 coats were distributed to LIS students and families.
- The Minnesota Financial Empowerment Initiative (MNFEI) piloted a program to offer monthly financial “capability” classes to LIS students.
- The Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Advice (IPC) program from the University of St. Thomas brought supervised social work students on site. Social work students and their supervisor provided services to LIS students and connected them with resources. Several students received ongoing services at the UST campus.
- Emergency funds were used to support students in need, including following the loss of other previously committed support (e.g., resettlement agencies and other organizations impacted by funding and staffing cuts under the new administration).
- “Know Your Rights” trainings were provided to all staff and students, led by LIS teacher Eva Moline.

COMMUNITY EVENTS. Last fall, LIS held an open house and 30th anniversary celebration, highlighted by remarks from LIS founder Agnes Foley, CSJ, and three LIS students. In February, we came together as a community for our annual global potlucks and student raffles. Spring events included field trips to the MN State Capitol and the Minneapolis Institute of Art. And children from the childcare program prepared a dance and gave a mini-spring performance.

BUILDING PROJECTS. Lighting was retrofitted building-wide, the parking lot was rebuilt, brick and concrete repairs were done on the building exterior, the furnace was replaced, water issues were resolved, extraneous items were removed, and inspections were done to ensure the safety and security of our building. We held lockdown drills, fire drills, and tornado drills for the first time in many years.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR.

- Almost all teaching and admin staff are returning. We'll be hiring one beginning level teacher and are budgeted for a part-time social worker.
- We will be making a comprehensive review of our schedule and class offerings, looking for opportunities to better meet the needs and interests of our language learners and increase capacity around level gains and student contact hours.
- Change to school calendar: following the end of the “regular” school year in June, a single summer session will run in June and July, allowing for a single closing in August.
- We'll continue working to respond to the needs of our students, especially within this uncertain immigration climate. This includes continuing existing partnerships and pursuing new collaborations that improve and enhance the lives of our students and their families.