

**BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2026

TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION

**FROM: COLLEEN CARDENUTO, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND ADMIN
SERVICES**

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ACCEPT GRANT

COMMENTS:

Title of Grant: No Child Left Inside

Type of Grant: Minnesota DNR

Grant Preparer: Mike Gunkel

Amount of Grant: \$5,000

Purpose: In the past, the Science Nature Adventure Program (SNAP) at Bemidji Middle School (BMS) primarily used the school forest and connected wetlands for simple observation activities such as bird and turtle watching. While providing students with time outdoors is valuable, the new instructor wants to intentionally move SNAP toward a more structured, science-based program that builds environmental literacy and outdoor skills. The goal is to develop a hands-on curriculum that allows students, many of whom have limited access to outdoor recreation, to actively engage with Minnesota's natural resources. Initial priorities include purchasing supplies that will advance learning on the middle school grounds and the adjoining school forest. Digital microscopes would allow students to study water quality, identify invasive species, and explore pollution impacts, while binoculars would support participation in citizen science efforts such as state bird inventories. Additional compasses would ensure all students can learn and practice orienteering. Finally, we hope to expand off-campus experiences so students can apply their learning in real-world settings. Opportunities such as ice fishing on nearby lakes, snowshoeing on local trails, and visiting the Chippewa National Forest would increase access to outdoor recreation while reinforcing science concepts, safety, and stewardship.

District Responsibility: ISD 31 must initially cover costs associated with the grant and submit for reimbursement.