

## MINNESOTA DANCE ADVOCACY TASK FORCE

### MEETING Notes

Friday, May 22, 2026 – 9-10am- Virtual

#### **In attendance:**

LaTia Childers, Daniel Stark, Mathew Janczewski, Ray Terrill, Linda Lee Soderstrom, Elsie Martin, Molly Olson, and Sally Rouse,

#### **Summary:**

The meeting focused on building a statewide performance calendar and resource database for dance, aligning with DanceMN current tools and a possible semiannual printed calendar contingent on a grant decision expected June 2 (did not secure). Participants confirmed intent to collect August 2026–July 2027 season performance dates and rentable space listings via Google Forms, with Sophia Islam named as the intern contact to enter performance data into DanceMN; the task force will proactively gather listings and share rental/performance space updates with Springboard for the Arts pending contact outreach.

Participants debated inclusion criteria for print and online listings, specifically whether to limit print distribution to companies that pay performers; several attendees questioned the definition of "professional" and recommended the online database include all activity while print scope may depend on submissions and funding. The group agreed to leverage DanceMN's existing submission infrastructure, proposed creating a shared press/publicity toolkit (an ARENA press list) for volunteers or an intern, and added Catch-a-Fire as a free resource for qualified organizations. Potential funding sources and venues cited included McKnight Foundation templates and the Cowles Center.

K–12 dance education and licensure were a major focus: members noted the loss of statewide K–12 dance licensure after retirements and program changes, variability in whether dance counts toward PE, and current state rules requiring schools to offer three arts. Attendees emphasized elevating school-based educators' concerns in transition team priorities and gathering information on existing community and artist-driven education programs.

The group discussed convening an in-state regional conference or retreat to connect educators, share practices, and provide local movement classes; logistics remain unresolved. It was discussed that Mary Harding already hosts educators gatherings- how can we assist in spreading that work? A larger July transition-team community townhall reporting event was clarified as separate and shorter, with a target of publicizing details by mid-June; LaTia is transcribing notes for the transition team. The meeting closed with offers to help locate grants or host events and agreement to continue sharing resources through transition team and resource tools.

#### **Chapters & Topics:**

Introductions and check-ins

## Meeting purpose and statewide calendar collection

The facilitator described monthly meetings and an action phase to collect performance dates and space rental information for the August 2026–July 2027 season via Google Forms to build a statewide database and support resource sharing

\* The task force will collect statewide performance dates and rentable space listings for August 2026–July 2027 via Google Forms to build a public database.

## Definition of "professional" and print vs. online scope

Participants raised concerns about whether unpaid community or educational performances qualify as "professional," prompting discussion that the task force intends to support all dance online while printed calendar inclusion may be limited by grant-funded print space and submission volume.

\* The project aims to support all dance activity online, while printed distribution may be limited by grant funds and submission volume. (Grant not secured at this time).

## Coordination with DanceMN and space listing partnerships

The group decided to leverage DanceMN's submission tool with Sophia volunteering to enter calendar data into DanceMN, and discussed sharing updated rental and performance space listings with Springboard for the Arts pending follow-up conversations.

\* The group intends to use DanceMN's existing tools and proactively gather submissions

## Transition team goals and next steps

The transition team is reviewing previous Wilder Research recommendations to identify actionable items, set community goals, and collect member questions to guide next steps and planned reports back to the larger group.

\* The transition team is reviewing Wilder Research findings and setting actionable community goals guided by collected member questions.

## K–12 dance education and licensure issues

Members discussed restoring dance within school arts requirements and documenting local teaching spaces; LaTia explained that state law mandates three arts but districts decide which arts count and there is variability in whether dance fulfills PE requirements, while Danny noted the loss of a statewide K–12 dance licensure and that some combined licensure options may still exist at specific institutions.

\* There is interest in compiling community-accessible performance and class spaces, including outdoor and nontraditional venues, into a directory.

\* K–12 dance education status is inconsistent across districts; state law mandates three arts options but does not require dance specifically, and statewide K–12 dance licensure has diminished.

## Pillsby workshop logistics and sharing information

The chapter covers the Pillsby dance writing workshop's goal to separate dance as its own licensure and members' agreement to circulate the workshop details. LaTia offered to forward the materials and to post or prepare the information while others requested it in the chat.

\* The Pillsby dance writing workshop aims to separate dance into a distinct licensure and participants will circulate workshop information.

## Representation of K–12 educators and historical community classes

Participants discussed the Wilder report's omission of K–12 educators and urged the transition team to prioritize educators' needs. Linda described past models of mixed-level community classes that built audiences and questioned whether similar approaches are viable now.

\* K–12 educators were identified as underrepresented in the Wilder report and should be prioritized by the transition team.

\* Historical mixed-audience community classes were credited with building audiences, but participants questioned whether that model is feasible today.

## Ideas for a regional conference and educator networking

Members proposed a regional conference or one-day workshop to connect dance educators across the state, including outstate retreats and city-based events; they referenced national NDEO participation and existing K–12 organizers such as Mary Harding. Participants highlighted dancing together, shared teaching responsibilities, and the benefits of in-person gatherings.

\* Participants proposed a regional in-state conference or retreat to connect dance educators and share practices, with Mary Harding and Dance Educators Coalition as existing organizing resources.

## Planning cadence and July community gathering

The group clarified that a shorter July community gathering organized by the transition team will be distinct from a larger regional conference and aims to gather community input, include movement sessions, and be held approximately every six months. They discussed timing, advance publicity, and content for the July event.

\* The July gathering will be a separate, shorter community reporting event organized by the transition team and planned to be publicized about one month ahead.

## Funding logistics and accessibility options for events

LaTia raised whether events should charge fees or seek grant funding, emphasizing the need to compensate artists and avoid gatekeeping; Molly recommended grants and a sliding-scale or sponsorship model as

fallback options to increase access.

\* Funding options for a regional conference include pursuing grants and adopting a sliding-scale registration or sponsored spots to reduce gatekeeping.

Resources, press outreach, and Minnesota Dance Force concept

Mathew described funding templates from McKnight and suggested curating a press list and a shared database (Minnesota Dance Force) for communications and promotion, noting the press list needs updating and could be maintained by an intern or volunteers.

\* Catch-a-Fire (Catchifier) was identified as a free support resource for qualified organizations and will be added to the shared resources list.

\* Mathew proposed a shared press/resource list and a Minnesota Dance Force database to centralize communication and promotion.

Catch-a-Fire resource, assignments, and meeting close

Participants identified Catch-a-Fire as a free advocacy and professional-services resource, agreed to add it to the resource list, confirmed follow-up scheduling for late June, and closed with thanks and holiday well-wishes.

PLEASE SUBMIT the following and share with others in the community!

Performance date form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPWTnqYblux4tTGs1-\\_\\_K5vuNbC3fllbNcHcq\\_k8MzP9c3Xw/viewform?usp=header](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPWTnqYblux4tTGs1-__K5vuNbC3fllbNcHcq_k8MzP9c3Xw/viewform?usp=header)

Rentable space form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfjebXnFUzfbhlmDWKDb3ECHF5Rrwql8QfSZRDL7kZ3kew7qw/viewform?usp=header>

### ***Next steps and meeting close***

**The group confirmed Friday, June 19th at 9am will be the next Virtual meeting.**

**NEXT MEETING -**

**Friday, June 19**

**9:00AM - 10:30AM (8:45am new visitors welcoming)**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82913047723?pwd=0BjNbDdE6aSo7swP7bzzbd9cCFmFN.1>

Meeting chat link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/jc/82913047723>

Meeting ID: 829 1304 7723

Passcode: 909741