

New Banners, Murals - Part of PBIS Initiative in Windom

By Dave Fjeld, Windom News (Reprinted with permission)

There was a new look greeting students when they walked through the Windom Area Middle School Commons on the first day of school. Rather than seeing only the six brick columns that dot the commons area, three of the four sides of each of those columns are now adorned with blue-and-gold, vertical banners. Each of the banners carries a message of pride, respect, responsibility or school spirit.

Venture just beyond the commons area, at the junction of the lunch room, middle school and high school commons areas and students found another message — “EAGLE PRIDE” — also painted in school colors. The decorative makeovers are part of a Positive Behaviors



Intervention System (PBIS) initiative taken on by a team of a dozen faculty members. Over the summer, the PBIS team made the banners and did the painting.

“School districts throughout the United States are trying to deliver and recognize students for doing the right thing and that’s what we’re trying to do (with the banners and murals),” said Middle/High School Principal Lance Northey. “We want students to be respectful, to be responsible and to have that

class and pride, not only with the school, but with themselves and others. That’s the message we’re trying to remind students of and it’s been very successful with the staff and the kids.”

The team’s “coach” is Kylie Nielsen. Her team members are faculty Megan Knipps, Eric Hanson, Mark Nass, Jonathan Smith, Jackie Turner, Jane Moldaschel, Jenny Squires, Sharlla Maras and administrators Northey and Sheryl Hanefeld. And what has been the response from students, staff and guests? “It’s the colors. We’ve heard from parents and other students that it’s nice to see the colors, the school pride — that character counts,” Northey said. “All those things have been beneficial.”

Each of the banners not only features the Windom “W,” but also these one- or two-word phrases: Respect For Yourself. Respect For Environment. Respect For Others. Be Responsible. Be Proud. Eagle Pride. Eagles Soar Higher. Northey said that at the very least, the messages on the banners are constant reminders. “A hockey coach at Bemidji State told me, ‘It’s not so much that we have to be taught, but we have to be reminded.’ It’s that constant reminder of what we’re about and how we want to portray ourselves,” he said.

Soon, students and guests will be greeted by another message just after stepping inside the east doors to the middle high school. On a space just below the ceiling will read this: At Windom Area Schools, learning is first. We take pride in our safe and positive environment. Be proud. Be respectful. Be responsible. You are an EAGLE!

Jenny Squires, middle high school counselor, said the team is taking small steps with PBIS, bringing these messages to middle school students now and within three to four years incorporating that pride and respect school-wide through other PBIS initiatives.

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Cliff Carmody
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News from the Executive Director

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director

The mission of the SW/WC Service Cooperative is to “meet the needs of our members by providing high quality programs through partnership, innovation, leadership and service”. Simple, to-the-point, and challenging! But, how do we demonstrate that we are working toward achieving this mission?

We listen....we pay attention, both formally and informally, to what our members tell us they need. We call this “active listening”! Through formal surveys, meetings, and conversations, our staff listens to and develops an understanding of the challenges our members face; the issues they are trying to resolve; and, most importantly, determine how we can align our programs and services to meet their needs.

This year, we implemented two initiatives that show how we have listened and reacted to meeting the needs of our members. The first service that was developed centers around technology and the integration of technology into our classrooms. Seth Godin argues that we should not be asking “how does technology help our business (classrooms)” but “how does this technology undermine our current business model (classroom) and what does it require us/enable us to do to build a new model (classroom)?” To that end, we added Stacy Olson to our staff this fall as an Instructional Technologist. Stacy is working to help some of our school districts integrate technology and curriculum – to build a new classroom using technology from the 21st century.

The second initiative is a new service we are providing through the Division of Special Education. Our members face huge issues with student behaviors and how to best meet the educational needs of students with challenging behaviors. In addition, our schools have seen tremendous costs related to the planning and implementation of behavioral plans for their students. To assist them, Ryan Groeneweg, Behavioral Analyst, was hired to provide leadership and support to our members as they work to appropriately educate and address challenging student behaviors.

“Meeting the needs of our members”....we are committed to our mission; we will continue to listen and implement programs and services that move us close to achieving this mission!



Have Cash Flow Issues?

The MNTAAB program began in 1993 and is sponsored by MSBA and the regional service cooperatives. Springsted, as the financial advisor to the MNTAAB program, assists school districts to achieve a cost-effective alternative to stand-alone cash flow borrowing. Over the last 18 years, MNTAAB has been successful in keeping upfront costs reasonable by selling a large pooled issue, resulting in economies of scale and low interest rates. The summer 2011 pool achieved an outstanding true interest rate of 0.365%. Visit www.swsc.org/mntaab for more information.



Division of Risk Management Services

By Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services

Informational Meeting: SW/WC SC Wellness Institute

The SWWC School Pool Advisory Committee approved an informational meeting for all school pool members on November 21, 2011, at the SW/WC SC offices to review new wellness incentives (including premium reductions and savings account contributions). The Health Care Reform rules allow employers to allocate premium dollars into wellness incentives for employees that meet required healthy living strategies. The major objective of the new wellness incentives programs are to engage employees, encourage healthy living strategies, help improve employees health and create financial incentives to reward employee's participation. District representatives will learn about: what the financial wellness incentives are; how employees may qualify for incentives; model personnel and bargaining language will be provided; tentative timelines for implementation will be reviewed; and an outline of SW/WC SC and district roles and responsibilities will be available.

For questions, call either Kari Bailey at 507-537-2292 or Doug Deragisch at 507-537-2295

Health Cost Management

By Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator

In 2008, a recommendation by the School Pool Advisory Committee allowed groups in the Pool the opportunity to receive financial reimbursement for their employee Wellness initiatives. Since then, the program has expanded to allow for additional financial reimbursements for schools to offer on-site screenings such as cholesterol, glucose, and blood pressure. For the 2011-2012 school year, districts are eligible to receive \$20/contract reimbursement for approved wellness activities, as well as an additional \$20/contract reimbursement for approved screenings.



Wellness Coordinators receive weekly WELCOA Health Bulletins, quarterly Culture of Health newsletters, as well as additional assistance as needed in the development/implementation of a site-based program. In addition, the Division of Risk Management held its annual Health Conference in September. This year's conference was held on Wednesday, September 21st. Attendees gained insight as to why it is important to brand a wellness program and were offered assistance in developing a mission statement for their district. A panel of both School Pool and CCOGA (cities, counties and other governmental agencies) members provided examples of wellness programs they have done in their districts and all attendees were able to provide feedback.

If you are interested in participating in a site-based Health Cost Management Program, please contact Kari Bailey, Health Cost

Management Coordinator at:
kari.bailey@swsc.org,
or 507-537-2292.



Day of Excellence

Thanks to ALL who have supported the Day of Excellence Conference over the past 27 years. Due to declining attendance and the need for more specific professional development, the Day of Excellence will no longer be held. Please contact your special education director or coordinator for your professional development needs.....and visit our website often to check for updated professional development offerings.



Division of Special Education Services

By Dr. Mary Palmer, Senior Director of Special Education Services

Cultural Diversity and the School Environment

By the year 2020, almost half of the United States school population will consist of students of non-Caucasian cultural groups according to Rob Merlino, Helium, Inc. 2007. This diversity will have a profound impact on how we go about educating our young people to prepare them for a global, economic world. Within our member districts of the SW/WC Service Cooperative, it is becoming more and more commonplace to see students of diverse cultural backgrounds even in the smaller districts. This diversity will require us to implement a more culturally responsive system of education.

In the September/October 2011 issue of "Teaching Exceptional Children", Barbara Dray and Debora Wisneski talk about educators needing to better understand the cultural diversity within our schools so as to reduce inappropriate referrals to special education for students of color. They speak about a cultural disconnect that can occur when teachers do not understand how diversity affects the way they are interpreting a student's actions and their interactions with the student. Dray and Wisneski state that an important concept to be cognizant of is that diversity is never problematic in and of itself, but rather the response of individuals to the diversity is what can create problems.

In order for educators to be sensitive to diversity, Dray and Wisneski state that teachers must look inward at their own personal assumptions and biases. This can be a scary thing to do as most people like to believe they do not hold any particular biases, but that often times, we may harbor such biases without intentionally trying to do so. Inward reflection of our beliefs is a first and necessary step to becoming more aware of cultural diversity.

Dray and Wisneski report that in addition to reflecting about one's personal beliefs, educators need to consider how they communicate with students. Intercultural communication theories state that a person needs to reframe or reinterpret another person's unfamiliar behavior or ways of communicating. This will help understanding to occur rather than judgment. One needs to move away from an automatic response based on one's own cultural frame of reference and instead be more cognizant of the other per-

son's frame of reference.

They suggest a six step process one can use to become a better communicator in a diverse culture. These include:

1. Explain the attributes that you have about the student. This can include such things as describing how the student reacted to your actions or comments.
2. Reflect on your feelings when working with the student. Think about how the student makes you feel and what your assumptions are.
3. Consider alternative explanations for a student's behavior.
4. Check out your assumptions with others such as a colleague, parent or community members. Seek to understand rather than judge.
5. Make a plan on how to respond differently.
6. Continually revisit the process to make sure you are not over generalizing, making false assumptions or behaving in a manner that could be prejudicial towards the student.

By being willing to reflect on one's own assumptions and belief systems about people, we can develop a more supportive learning environment for all students. A person who is a more thoughtful examiner of his/her own behavior and beliefs is someone who can be in a better position to engage in meaningful communication and relationship building with students from diverse backgrounds. This will help create a learning environment that embraces differences and sees differences as a strength of its organization.

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Ask The PI Guy!

By Darwin Dyce, Physical and Health Disability Consultant

Dear PI Guy, (formerly POHI Guy):

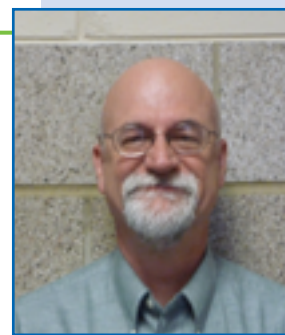
My wife is constantly asking me yes/no questions about her “to do” lists, which are many. I tend to respond with, “well, that depends”. She does not appreciate that answer and says most 7 year olds can come up with an answer. Do you think she is being overly insistent?

Signed: It Just Depends...

Dear It Just Depends:

I too have experienced that very dilemma with my highly task oriented wife. It seems there is no end to the proverbial “to do” list and seemingly endless evaluations of a guy’s progress. There are some folks that think it is a developmental issue for the male. Clearly it is the wife that is stuck in what I call the Obsessive Management Stage (OMS). Click on this QR Code to read a post on a related topic that may be of interest to those working with children with low communication skills. It turns out that yes/no questions can actually be too cognitively demanding.

Signed: The PI Guy



WEM Outstanding Educator Winners

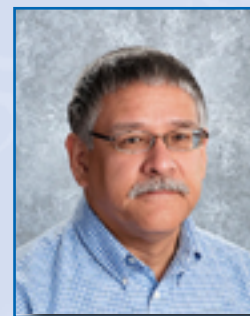
By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

This year, our region was home to three WEM Outstanding Educator winners—one statewide winner and two regional winners. Tom Appel, agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor at Mountain Lake, won a 2011 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Academic Challenge Coach, an honor accompanied by a \$10,000 award. Appel has taught ag education and been the FFA advisor at MLHS for the past 30 years.



Although ag classes were originally established for those students interested in farming, today’s ag programs integrate science, natural resources, horticulture, leadership development, business management, public speaking, food science and other topics reflective of current trends. All of his ag students are members of FFA and participate in chapter activities. As FFA Advisor, Appel has had 80 teams participate at state and 16 teams advance to the national competition (including 11 events in the past eight years).

Winning regional awards were Patrick Hiltner from Glencoe-Silver Lake and Rick Purrington from Marshall. Hiltner was honored in the Academic Challenge Coach category, which recognizes coaches of student teams who compete in academic challenge or enrichment programs. He has been teaching for 14 years and an academic challenge coach for nine years. He currently teaches eighth grade English and coaches One-Act Play for students in grades 7-12. Purrington was honored in the Teacher Achievement category, which recognizes exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning, as evidenced by student achievement. Purrington has been teaching for 13 years, and currently teaches Advanced Placement (AP) European history, U.S. history, and world history to students in grades 10/11. He has also been a speech coach for 12 years, compiling impressive state/national records.



Tom Appel



Patrick Hiltner



Rick Purrington

Division of Teaching & Learning Services

By Bob Braun, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services

MDE Applies for NCLB Waiver

The MN Dept of Education applied to the US Dept of Education for a waiver from certain provisions of NCLB. The request was not to give schools and districts a pass on accountability but to provide greater flexibility to schools and districts to create and implement their locally developed accountability plan without the disruptive impacts of the sanctions tied to NCLB. The US Dept of Education informed MDE in September that they were not going to rule on what they term as “small waivers” at this time. MDE communicated to stateholders any waivers that the State receives from this point forward would not affect this current school year. In other words, the AYP determination process will remain the same for this school year. MDE released AYP reports on September 30th showing index rates, index targets, AYP status, and In Need of Improvement Implementation Status. It is the State’s hope that in the future Minnesota will be granted regulatory flexibility in a school accountability system.

Math and Science Teacher Partnership Update

By Christy Hemp, Math and School Improvement Specialist

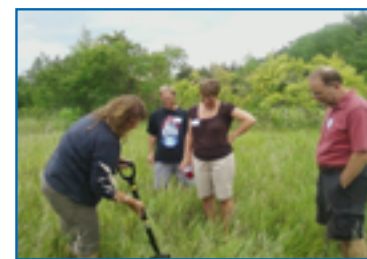
The Math and Science Teacher Partnership (MSTP) Grant is funded by the Math and Science Partnership (MSP) Grant. This grant is a partnership between the SW/WC Service Cooperative, Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), and the Minnesota River Valley Education District (MRVED). The 2011-2012 Math and Science Teacher Partnership (MSTP) project will work specifically with:

- Grades 3-8 math teachers on rational numbers, specifically fractions, through Rational Number Exploration—Fractions! workshops held at SMSU and presented by Dr. Carl Olimb, Assistant Professor of Mathematics at SMSU, and Christy Hemp, Math/School Improvement Specialist at the SW/WC SC. The dates are: October 11, 2011; November 8, 2011; February 7, 2012; and March 13, 2012.
- Grades 7-12 life science teachers on Life Science and Engineering through the Life Science workshops held at SMSU and presented by Dr. Betsy Desy, Professor of Biology at SMSU, Dr. Tom Dille, Professor of Environmental Sciences at SMSU, Dr. Tony Greenfield, Associate Professor of Biology, and Holly Knudson, Marshall High School Science Teacher. The dates are: October 28, 2011; December 2, 2011; January 27, 2012; and March 23, 2012. A Science Launch was held on August 8-9, 2011, and several participating teachers attended.

Teachers in both programs will gain a stronger understanding of the MN Standards. Math teachers will be working specifically with the 2007 MN Math Standards and will increase their content knowledge of the Number and Operation Strand, specifically benchmarks on rational numbers. Science teachers will be working specifically with the 2009 MN Science Standards and will increase their content knowledge of the Life Science Strand and how it interacts with The Nature of Science and Engineering Strand. Both groups will also gain a stronger understanding of the 2010 MN English Language Arts Standards on Science and Technical Courses.

Teachers will also support their research from these workshops with an online PLC (Professional Learning Community) model to allow participating teachers from around the region to meet and discuss their content area in a professional capacity. The MSTP PLC Training was held at SW/WC SC on October 3-4, 2011, and was presented by Karen Jacobson, Director of the MN River Valley Education District (MRVED).

Math Participating Schools (7 Schools/23 Teachers): Brewster, Ivanhoe, Lake Benton, Luverne, Murray County Central, Red Rock Central, and Round Lake. Science Participating Schools (10 Schools/18 Teachers): Ivanhoe, Lac qui Parle Valley, Luverne, MACCRAY, Murray County Central, Pipestone, Red Rock Central, Round Lake, Springfield, and Windom.



Life Skills - Independent Living

By Cathy Schlagel, Career Accommodation Specialist

Leaving high school can be a challenging time for students with special needs. There are a myriad of questions and sometimes few answers.

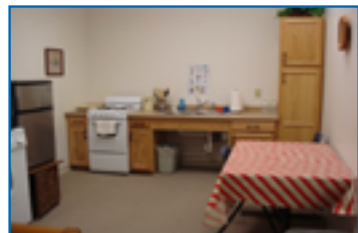
Where will they live? What will they do for work?

Do they want to participate in post secondary education? What will their day look like?

Project Discovery helps provide answers to these questions. For over 25 years, Project Discovery has provided hands-on career exploration assessments to help students broaden their exposure to available careers and identify work strengths, preferences, and needs. And now Project Discovery offers high school students with special needs an independent living skills assessment.



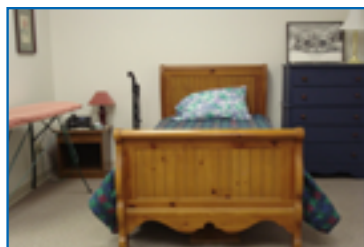
The Independent Living Skills Assessment assesses thirteen skill areas needed to be self sufficient in an individual assessment. The assessment was developed by Independent Living Choices, (ILC) of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. ILC was founded in 1982, with the purpose of "opening doors for people with disabilities" and has extensive experience with independent skill assessment and training.



The purpose of the assessment is to gather information from the student, teachers, and parents and then assist educational program teams translate that information into programming so students can make a successful transition into adult living. Project Discovery has constructed an apartment to provide a hands-on assessment of student skills.

Project Discovery looks forward to working with a variety of students with handicapping conditions. To determine

if this assessment is right for your students or to set up an appointment call Cathy Schlagel, Career Accommodation Specialist at 507-537-2254 or by email at cathy.schlagel@swsc.org.



AYP Update

By Lisa Gregoire, School Improvement Specialist

The SW/WC School Improvement Team hosted two online meetings on August 19, that were very well attended, to share the components of the MN NCLB waiver, answer any questions and review the requirements of the school improvement process, and discuss what support we can provide to schools and districts in AYP stages 1.1 or higher.

The School Improvement Team will continue to move forward by communicating with schools and districts, as well as develop resources and tools in order to help build effective Leadership Teams and assist in the improvement process.

Shared Services Update

By Jen Mahan-Deitte, School Improvement Specialist

We have expanded! Two new schools have joined the original 5 districts that have participated in Shared Services for the past 3 years. Hendricks and RTR are the most recent districts to sign up for Curriculum Coordination through the SW/WC SC. They are now part of the consortium which includes Lake Benton, Lynd, Luverne, Minneota, and Pipestone.

Each district is unique with regard to its need for resources, progress toward making adequate yearly progress, and curriculum development. Through Shared Services, each district receives differentiated assistance with developing curriculum maps, aligning their curriculum to the state standards, piloting and reviewing resources for possible purchase, proctoring for the Para Pro Test, coordination and/or participation with staff development, analysis of their MCA & NWEA data, and online networking across district lines. This year a new feature is being added - online mini sessions tailored to one grade level or content area. Shared Services will be focusing on what schools need most to make improvements - focused, data-based collaboration on a specific content area.

Cognos Data Warehouse

The Division of Teaching & Learning will be using data to determine professional development priorities for this school year. Eighteen school districts have granted us permission to analyze the aggregated data housed in the Cognos Data Warehouse. The findings will be compiled in an anonymous format (no school or student names), and be used to identify trends and guide PD offerings.



Scan this QR Code to
read more about ALL of
our Student Activities



S-p-e-l-l It!

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Hopefully you've already registered with Scripps National Spelling Bee (www.spellingbee.com) as their registration deadline was October 17. They usually add a late deadline but I haven't seen any information on that yet. You need to register with both Scripps and the SW/WC Service Cooperative to participate in the Spelling Bee Program. Registrations are due soon: Early Bird Registration Deadline is November 4 with the Final Registration Deadline on November 11. A registration form is available on our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities, then click on Spelling Bee to pull up that page.

The purpose behind Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts, and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives.

The Regional Spelling Bee will be held on February 14 in Redwood Falls (snow date - February 15). The four winning students at our regional event will advance to the Multi-Region State Spelling Bee on March 1 in Fergus Falls (snow date - March 2). The winner from that event will win a trip to participate in Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. in late May/early June.

If you have questions, contact Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258 or Andrea at andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257.

Knowledge Bowl Season Begins

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

If you don't presently participate in Knowledge Bowl, you might want to consider starting a program in your district - either Junior or Senior High. Students enjoy the challenge of quickly coming up with the correct answer during this fast-paced competition. A brochure with more details about the program is available on our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities.

Schools practice locally and also attend invitations hosted by local school districts before participating in sub-regional and regional events coordinated by the Student Activities Program of the SW/WC Service Cooperative. The three winning teams at each Senior High regional event - Region 6 and Region 8 - advance to the state competition in April. The registration deadlines are listed below:

Junior High Knowledge Bowl

November 18, 2011 - Early Bird Registration Deadline

November 28, 2011 - Final Registration Deadline

Senior High Knowledge Bowl

January 30, 2012 - Early Bird Registration Deadline

February 6, 2012 - Final Registration Deadline

Register early for the reduced fee. Registration forms are available on our website. If you have questions, contact Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258.



Register to Bring an Author to Your School

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Through this program, students in local elementary classrooms meet professional authors and illustrators who share their personal adventures of creating and publishing books. Energized students learn that having a book published is more than just a dream. Over 3500 students from eighteen school districts participated in the Children's Author & Illustrator Program last school year. Some comments that were received from schools after the residencies are listed below:

"It is always good to introduce students to authors and the writing process. The kids feel like they have met a celebrity that day! It also recognizes that profession and often authors share how they chose that profession and students can see the importance of setting goals and having dreams."

"The presentation was very age appropriate, engaging, and in control. Several students told me they wanted to write down stories or story ideas when we returned to class. Students 'enjoyed' writing."



Jill Kalz

Since we received such great evaluations on last year's presenters – Ryan Jacobson, Jill Kalz and Sheryl Peterson – we asked them back for this year! They will be assigned to different schools from last year.

Register now to be a part of this program! November 1 – Early Bird Deadline November 8 – Final Registration Deadline For more information, check out our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities or contact Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258 or Andrea at andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257.



Ryan Jacobson



Sheryl Peterson

Discovering Various Types of Writing

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Brochures for the 20th Annual Conference for Young Writers were distributed in mid-October and each school should have received multiple copies. The conference is scheduled for January 5, 2012 (snow date – January 6). Register before the Early Bird Deadline of November 22 for a reduced fee; the Final Registration Deadline is November 29. The brochure and registration forms are available on our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities, then click on Young Writers.

Check out the twenty different classes! The wide variety of topics include journaling a funny book, creating graphic comics, writing between the lines, building a fantastical world, writing a praise poem, coming up with a new extreme sport, hints and tricks to make your writing come alive, using your imagination to write funny things and cartoons, and much more.



Rebecca Fjelland Davis, from Good Thunder, is the keynote speaker. She will discuss how to turn ordinary real-life non-adventures into extraordinary adventures in a story. Davis will also talk about where

stories come from and what it takes to create a story.

If you have questions, contact Andrea at andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257 or Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258.



Rebecca Fjelland Davis



2011 Career Expo Gets “Liked”

By Tom Hoff, Career and Technical Project Manager

Did you know that a quarter of a BILLION people are now using FaceBook to connect with friends, family and customers! The 2011 Southwest Minnesota Career Expo harnessed the power of the social media giant to engage students at one of the state’s largest career development events for high school students. On October 27th and 28th 1,562 students from 31 regional high schools attended expo events at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall and Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Worthington. The expo has four objectives.

For high school sophomores and juniors to:

1. gain information about careers and educational options by visiting interactive exhibits and a career game show.
2. investigate career options that align with their skills and interests.
3. improve job seeking skills and understanding of what employers need.
4. become more aware of career opportunities right here in southwest Minnesota.

This year all students watched a “Good and Bad” interview skit that was performed by the Southwest Minnesota State University Theater Club, competed against other schools in a fast-paced game show called “The Career is Right” and spent one hour in a career exhibit area. There were over 70 businesses, industry, agency and college exhibitors this year! Each exhibitor provided an engaging activity for the students to complete that provided them an opportunity to “experience” the career. The “FaceBook Photo Booth” was a new (and extremely popular) addition to the expo. Exhibitors brought uniforms, equipment, and other items that represented their career area and students used the props to “ham it up” in the photo booth. This new feature brought a lot of energy to the event and made for a fun and memorable day.

The partnership that plans the event includes: Minnesota West Community and Technical College; SW/WC SC, Southwest Minnesota State University; Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium; Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council; Job Service; ISEEK; Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce; Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce; City of Marshall; Marshall, Montevideo, and Worthington Workforce Centers; Department of Employment and Economic Development; and many regional businesses and service agencies. For more information about the event go to: www.lifetimeoflearning.com and be sure to view the FaceBook Photo Booth pictures and “like” our page at: <http://www.swsc.org/swsc/site/default.asp>. Planning will soon be underway for the 2012 Southwest Minnesota Career Expo.



Business is Changing

By Gail Polejewski, Career Development Coordinator

The business world is changing. Teachers of Business programs are seeing this in how business runs and how it’s taught. There are changes in Minnesota laws that affect their classroom. There are changes to how teachers relay information to their students. There are changes to the types of jobs students will find upon graduation. Business instructors from the Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium gathered at Southwest Minnesota State University on October 4 to share ideas and help each other navigate these changes.

There will be more graduates leaving the United State to find jobs than there will be graduates entering the United States to find jobs. Despite the recession, trade between countries will exceed trade within countries in 2012 and that change will be permanent. These are just a few of the facts presented by Dr. John Gochenouer, Professor of Business at SMSU, as he shared his perspectives on the globalization of business.

Jean Kyle, Program Specialist from the Minnesota Department of Education, discussed changes to Minnesota law and gave updates to the group about how they can keep their programs strong. Dr. Matt Walker, Chair of the Business Department at SMSU, spoke about Ethics and Social Responsibility in the Finance Profession which seemed fitting as tales of corporate greed permeate the news.

As our teachers prepare their students for careers in business, they are working to stay on top of the tough issues that will affect their classrooms so their students are best prepared to face the changing business world.

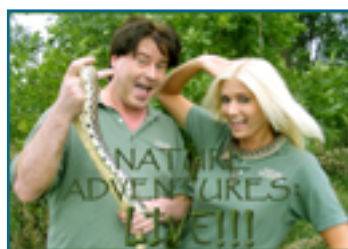
Circle **May 11th** on your Calendar

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Consider sending a class of students, or classes, to our 18th Annual Science & Nature Conference on May 11, 2012 at SMSU in Marshall in place of an end of school year field trip! This is one of the largest and most popular science conferences for students in the country! Approximately 1200 students from twenty-five school districts attended last year's conference. The largest group from one school was 162 participants, the next largest group was 96 participants! Students explore the world around them through hands-on classes that include archeology, minerals, motion control, engineering, reptiles, DNA, cryogenics, rockets, GPS, and much more. This event is for students in grades K-8 with strands for K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. The topics are correlated to the 2009 MN Science Standards.

Todd Magnuson and Terri Lawrenz, hosts of Nature Adventures on SDBP TV (South Dakota Public Broadcasting) will present the keynote. The show's hosts, Magnuson and Lawrenz, appeal to the wonder all of us feel for the world around us. This educational and fun show is for all ages!

Watch for the brochure in your mail or on our website (www.swsc.org/studentactivities) in late February. Registration Deadlines: March 27 - Early Bird Registration Deadline and April 3 - Final Registration Deadline. If you have questions, contact Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258 or Andrea at andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257.



Looking for a Unique Gift Idea?

Consider taking that special child in your life to the Conference for Young Writers (grades 3-8) on January 5 or to the Science & Nature Conference (grades K-8) on May 11. It will be a great learning experience for the child as well as an awesome way to spend quality time with them. If you can't attend with them, you might pay their registration fee and see if they can come with a parent or through their school.

Latino Success at Willmar High School

By Rob Anderson, Willmar High School Principal

Schools in Minnesota got their graduation data from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) on Friday, September 30. The data reveals the best one year Hispanic graduation rate at Willmar Senior High since the current building opened in 1994. The data further reveals impressive growth over time at WHS amongst Latino graduates.

Hispanic graduation rate in 2010 (latest official data) was 12.7% higher than the previous year. Most recent MDE data shows most Hispanic graduates (35) and the highest percentage in one year (77.8) in the history of current Willmar High School. Best single year on record is very impressive.

Further analysis of our data reveals impressive growth over time with our Hispanic students. For example, if you compare 1995-1999 to aggregate results for 2006-2010, you see quite a contrast and tremendous growth. 1995-1999 combined Hispanic graduation rate was 32% (57 students) with 68% (120 students) dropping out. In comparison, 2006-2010 reveals a Hispanic graduation rate of 71.3 % (152 students) with 28.7% (61 students) dropping out.

We are very proud of the one year results, the recent trend, and the impressive growth since 1994-1995. We are also very proud of our Latino students and our Latino families for the hard work and great results. Let's keep the trend going for the future at Willmar Senior High.

Other Willmar News

- *New Principal at Roosevelt: Nate Cox
- *New Program called Discover Kennedy at Kennedy Elementary
- *Added another Chinese Teacher: Tang Beiyi, from the city of Chengdu in southwestern China (Chengdu is the in Sichuan Province, home of the panda bear).
- *Teachers participated in training at NASA this summer
- *Developed a process for iPad implementation that is heavy on staff development and PLCs.

WWG Connect Z Program and After School Science Academy

By Paul Olson, WWG Elementary Principal

The Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary is expanding its after school programs to also include an after-school science program and Connect Z, a Girl Scout program.

Mr. Pat Merrick, High School science teacher, works with nineteen first through third graders. They meet from 3:30-5:30 PM each Monday. Mr. Merrick is no stranger to working with the younger grades. He also helps with summer recreation and summer school classes.



Mr. Merrick's After-School Science Academy is funded through our gifted and talented program. Science lessons include: matter, chemistry, Newton's law, water, weather, ecology/recycling, sound, astronomy, air/flight, and a field trip.

The Westbrook Walnut Grove fifth and sixth grade girls have Angela Kummrow as their new Girl Scout leader. Angela has just started an After-School Girl Scout Program, "Connect Z", through the Promise Fellow of Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties. The Connect Z Program does not replace traditional troop activities. The Connect Z Girl Scout Program promotes lessons that develop healthy relations and self-esteem, career and financial literacy for college readiness, leadership development, and community service. The WWG 5th and 6th grade participating girls meet every Monday and Wednesday from 3:30-5:30 PM. Anyone seeking more information about this program is asked to call Angie Deegan-Herrmann at 507-327-7467.



All students receive a snack and milk through the MDE After-School Snack Program.

Passport Days at Murray County Central

By Summer Schultz, Superintendent/Elementary Principal

Murray County Central Elementary had its first annual Passport Day. This day correlated with PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support) and is one of the many activities being held throughout the school year to promote a safe learning environment.

Students in grades K-6 were given a "Rebel Pride Passport". The inside of the passport had a list of school areas along with a checkbox. Students then visited each area of the school and listened to an adult discuss the expectations for appropriate, positive behavior in those areas. Once the child had participated in the training, they were able to check off that particular area on their passport.



Throughout passport days students visited a variety of locations. Some of the scheduled stops included the bathrooms, school bus, computer lab, and playground. The kids had fun interacting with the adults at each stop and they now have been trained on the expectations for every area of the school.

Student passports will stay with each child as representation that they are able to travel safely throughout the District. Should any behavior problems arise, the passports will be used as a reminder that MCC students should always be Respectful, Responsible and Ready to Learn.

Division of Administrative Services

Wide Area Network Improvements & Expansion Underway

By Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology

The SW/WC Service Cooperative Wide Area Network added three new members on July 1, 2011, with the Redwood Valley and Wabasso School districts and the E.C.H.O. Charter School joining the consortium. Our total district membership now stands at 34 school districts. Apart from the growth of adding new school districts, the Wide Area Network is also undergoing some capacity upgrades. On July 1, 2011, we transitioned our Internet Services to SDN Communications and went from 90 Mbps of Internet Capacity to 400 Mbps of Internet Capacity. This upgrade has left us room for additional demand, but as of the end of September we are already seeing peak usage approaching 300 Mbps during the school day, but average usage is standing at just over 50% capacity at this time.

Our next stages are upgrades to the Wide Area Network infrastructure itself. Trillion Partners has begun the process of upgrading equipment at a number of our sites. Upon completing the build-out of our new sites, Trillion will begin to build out infrastructure to allow for additional capacity to be added to our current sites. The complete build-out of all of the Wide Area Network upgrades will be complete by June 30, 2012.

In the midst of all of our capacity upgrades to the Wide Area Network we are also working on implementing equipment through our RUS Distance Learning Grant. This process is underway and will bring high-quality video conferencing and collaboration capabilities to those school districts that participated in the RUS Grant. After all of the delays at the federal level it is great to see this equipment starting to come in and get installed and ultimately provide a better distance learning environment and more academic options for students in the 17 participating school districts.

IT Department Builds Relationship with Aerohive Networks

By Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology

The SW/WC Service Cooperative's IT Department has formed a relationship with Aerohive Networks to design and implement WiFi networks for our members. A number of member school districts have already taken advantage of this relationship and have deployed Aerohive through SW/WC SC. The Aerohive Wireless Networking architecture brings commercial grade infrastructure to our schools at a very attractive price-point. Additionally SW/WC SC is hosting and managing virtual Wireless Controllers for our members at a very minimal cost.

Our relationship with Aerohive was formed after years of research and evaluation of several wireless networking providers. A recent independent comparison conducted by SW/WC SC IT Staff found a savings of nearly \$20,000 by implementing an Aerohive wireless network as compared to another well-known leading manufacturer of wireless networking solutions for one of our small member districts. A large portion of the savings comes from the shared architecture of the Aerohive controller, but additional cost savings are realized in the overall costs for Wireless Access Points and the infrastructure within the school district required to support them.

If your district is considering implementing or upgrading your wireless network be sure to contact Josh Sumption, Manager of IT for information on our offerings for equipment and our complete service offering. Contact: Josh Sumption at josh.sumption@swsc.org or 507-537-2265

Save the Dates!

6th Annual Technology Conference – Thursday Evening, March 8, 2012 to be held at SW/WC Service Cooperative and Friday, March 9, 2012 to be held at Southwest MN State University, Marshall.

29th Annual School Business Staff Conference – Tuesday, March 20, 2012 to be held at Southwest MN State University, Marshall.

Cooperative Purchasing Update

By Shareen Neumann, Sales & Marketing/Cooperative Purchasing

Attention all SMART Board Users: SW/WC Service Cooperative is pleased to announce the first meeting of the school year for the SMART Board Users' Networking Group was held on October 26, 2011.

The SMART Users' Networking Group meetings are a chance for SMART Board Users to meet their peers, share their ideas, expertise and enthusiasm. Attendees often find the information they are looking for, including helpful websites, recent research, best practices, and success stories.

Meetings are open to anyone in K-12 education. The primary goal of the group is to help members use their SMART Board and SMART Notebook software more effectively in order to improve student achievement. We strive to provide a place for users to learn new materials, share ideas, and collaborate with other SMART Board users.

There is a structured meeting from 9 a.m. until noon. Lunch is provided at noon and the afternoons are an optional time to collaborate and work on lesson design and/or plans with assistance of the SW/WC Service Cooperative SMART Certified trainer(s).

First time attendees receive a USB Bracelet Flash Drive. The cost is only \$25 per person. The next meeting will be held early January. Registration will be available online at www.swsc.org – choose Workshops/Online Registration – SMART Users' Networking Group Meeting.



You Talked.....We Listened

By Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services

Thanks to all who completed the Customer Satisfaction Needs Assessment survey last fall. Here is what we are doing as a result of your feedback:

- Cooperative Purchasing released an article on “what” the CP program is and “how” contracts come to be. The article also contained information on the “intangible” savings, including time required to bid, etc.
- Cooperative Purchasing will continue to utilize its monthly newsletter to address “Fact versus Fiction” as it relates to the program.
- The RMIC will continue to look at holding additional trainings via webinar to allow for less drive time, and will look to offer more opportunities for workshops/trainings in the northern area when appropriate.
- Our IT Department will also look for opportunities to provide trainings in the northern part of our region, as well as offering some of the instructional technology trainings at districts throughout the region (Moodle, iPad, etc.)
- Our IT Department will be working to implement a help desk over the next year that will be available to member districts.

The only reconditioned company in the Education marketplace who has earned the Dell Registered Partner designation as well as Microsoft's AER, MAR, and Gold Certified Partner designations



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If you have questions about the various programs and services offered through the Division of Administrative Services, please contact Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services at darin.jensen@swsc.org or by phone at 507-537-2280.

Fulda FCCLA Wins Award!

By Marcine Elder, Fulda FCCLA Chapter Advisor

This special recognition was won by a hand-washing project completed by two 7th grade FCCLA Members. Their 'Have U Washed UR Hands' was conducted last fall. It involved working with elementary students, grades Pre-school through 6th grade. They taught correct hand washing techniques and demonstrated how germs were spread. A coloring contest followed with the lower grades while the upper grades conducted role-plays. The girls partnered with the Mayo Clinic Education Dept. and were able to give all the elementary students a free bottle of anti-bacterial soap. After completion of the project, the girls filled out the SNAP application and were hopeful to receive a certificate for their efforts. Little did they know that they would be the National Winner!

In mid-June, Taylor Schletter and Siera Steiner along with their FCCLA Adviser Marcine Elder traveled to Washington, DC on an all expense paid trip for three days and two nights. The girls were presented their national award at the annual board meeting of the American Cleaning Association. They also presented information about their project and showed off their storyboard. Their trip also included a visit to the National Zoo, a limo tour of the monuments, a visit to the National Archives and one of the Smithsonian museums. What a wonderful experience for two 7th grade students.

An additional award was presented to the Fulda FCCLA members who attended the National Meeting in Anaheim, CA in July. During the opening general session, the seven attendees were presented a check for \$5000 from the American Cleaning Association. As a follow-up for the project, Taylor and Siera will be presenting their project at the National FCCLA Cluster Meeting in Minneapolis in early November.

Congratulations, Fulda FCCLA, for an outstanding year!

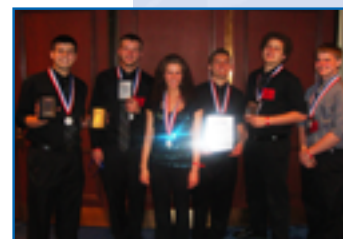


Ortonville BPA Wins at Nationals!

By Julie Kunde, Ortonville BPA Advisor

Washington, DC was host to the 2011 Business Professionals of America National Leadership Conference on May 7th. Ortonville's Computer Animation team (Colin Plathe, Tate Messmer, Dan Berdan and Charlie Taffe) took **FIRST PLACE!** The Computer Animation topic this year was to design a super hero character and an animation that depicts his/her heroism. The team used 3ds- Max software to develop their project, along with Premiere Pro, chroma-key technology, After Effects, and Audition.

Other Ortonville students placing as finalists in their events were Rachel Berger in Digital Media - 4th place (just missing the winners' tier) and Shane Maas in Payroll Accounting. Other OHS students attending were Isaac Knutson, competing in Basic Office Systems, and Bonnie Sue Stolpman, Region 8 President. In Berger's competition, to create a one to two minute promotional piece for the 2012 BPA NLC in Chicago, she used Premiere Pro, Audition, chroma key technology, and Digital Juice products. In Maas' competition, students had to process payroll data using manual payroll procedures. Knutson was tested on knowledge of office procedures, records and file management, and office technologies. Congratulations to all student winners!



Upcoming Professional Development

To register for any of these workshops, visit our website at www.swsc.org and click on Workshops. Please check back often as workshops are frequently added. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Christensen at dawn.christensen@swsc.org or 507-537-2278.

November 2011

- 11/1 Learning & Leading with iPad
- 11/1 OHD Module I, II, III & Policy Training
- 11/2 OHD Module I, II, III & Policy Training - Olivia
- 11/3 PECS Basic Training
- 11/3 Student Validation Website Training
- 11/3 PECS Basic Training - Redwood Falls
- 11/3 CASLLS - ITV Marshall
- 11/4 CASLLS - ITV Marshall
- 11/4 CPI Autism Refresher - Worthington
- 11/7 Improvement Plan Workday
- 11/8 Technology Coordinator Workshop
- 11/8 MSTP Rational Number Explorations - Fractions!
- 11/10 Improvement Plan Workday - Maynard
- 11/10 MN BOT Proposed SpEd Licensure Rules - Lamberton
- 11/11 ECSE Updates & Best Practice Workshop - Olivia
- 11/11 Power of ICU
- 11/15 Standards-Based IEPs - Redwood Falls
- 11/15 The Evaluation of Minnesota School Principals
- 11/16 SMART Board Level I Training
- 11/16 ADOS Review
- 11/17 2011 Fall DCD Networking - Lamberton
- 11/18 2011 Fall DCD Networking - Willmar
- 11/18 School-Wide PBIS Mtg
- 11/18 ECSE Updates & Best Practice Workshop
- 11/18 CPI Full Training - Worthington
- 11/21 School Insurance Pool Wellness Incentives Pilot Mtg
- 11/28 SMART Board Level II Training
- 11/28 OHD Module IV & V and Policy Training
- 11/29 OHD Module IV & V and Policy Training - Olivia
- 11/30 Behavior Interventions Workshop

Keep current on
workshops and meetings!
Scan this QR Code
to visit our website.



December 2011

- 12/8 Transition 101
- 12/14 Standards-Based IEPs: The Basics - Westbrook
- 12/20 Standards-Based IEPs: The Basics - Olivia
- 12/31 Type III Bus Driver Training

** All workshops held in Marshall unless otherwise noted

Our Mission

*The SW/WC Service Cooperative
is a public agency dedicated
to meeting the needs of our
members by providing high
quality programs through
partnership, innovation,
leadership, and service.*

Our Priorities for 2011-2012

- We will continuously gather, analyze, and incorporate data into our decision making process regarding programs and services for our members.
- We will develop and maintain partnerships that enhance our mission and vision.
- We will engage our members by providing open, on-going, and timely communications.
- We will administer strong fiscal policies and procedures that support our mission and vision.
- We will embrace and utilize technologies that support our ability to provide high quality programs and services.
- We will develop and implement human resource policies and procedures that value and engage our workforce.