

Shared Services Teachers are Curriculum Mapping

By Jen Mahan-Deitte, Shared Services Coordinator

Over the past year and a half, teachers in Lake Benton, Luverne, Lynd, Minneota, and Pipestone (part of the Shared Services cohort) have been developing curriculum maps. We need to overhaul, update, and inject life into our curriculum and dramatically alter the format of what schools look like to match the times in which we live.

(Heidi Hayes Jacobs, 2010) The work of curriculum mapping can do this.



The purpose of mapping is comprehensive and multifaceted. On the surface, it allows teachers to take an objective and scrutinizing look at the content they cover, the skills they expect their students to demonstrate, and the assessments they're using. This first step many times reveals to teachers truths, about the curriculum they have developed, of which they were not aware. "Completing this work with

curriculum maps has shown me that I was assessing my students in the same manner every time." (Luverne Teacher, 2010)

The web-based system that all 5 districts are currently using is Curriculum Mapper. Inside this online tool, teachers are able to select and attach Minnesota benchmarks and standards that they cover during each unit. A search feature inside the site allows teachers to conduct an individual analysis of which standards are being covered repeatedly, perhaps too often, and which are being missed or gleaned over. This functional component of Mapper gives everyone a quick and honest view of where to begin. Teachers can collaborate across grade levels, vertically, to decide the following: What content should be kept? What content should be cut? What content should be created?

Education requires us all to build curriculum that supports global understanding. Past practices are no longer 'good enough.' It's time to upgrade and modernize the curriculum, not only for our students but for our society as well.



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News from the Executive Director....

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director

The Minnesota Budget Problem: Myth or Reality
We spend a lot of time talking about the budget shortfall and the problems associated with the state deficit, but just how serious is the problem?

The Minnesota Department of Education's finance guru, Tom Melcher, says it is starting to dawn on people that the deficit for the next biennium is very real and problematic! According to the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), this year is not like last year; or any other year for that matter. The Minnesota Office of Management and Budget projects a \$6.2 billion deficit in 2011. According to Tom Melcher, "the use of tax shifts and payment delays that have been used have gone further than they ever have and they really reduce options going into the next budget cycle".

In addition, there is no federal stimulus money on the horizon to lower the \$6.2 billion estimate. In fact, if interest is added into the deficit, the state budget problem grows to \$7.7 billion.

In an MSBA article, Greg Abbott writes: "This should worry school boards. It should worry counties and cities. It should worry everyone. So to help school board members explain to people just how big of a problem this is, MSBA took every revenue option, budget-cutting option, budget-shift option and tax-increase option to see what it would do to decrease the deficit."

The findings.....If the legislature enacted every revenue enhancement (yes, increased taxes) and every expenditure cut that has been proposed in the last two years, we would still be \$1.5 billion dollars short of balancing the budget!

In addition, according to the MSBA analysis, if half of the amount that remained (\$750 million) came from health and human services and the other half (\$750 million) came from education, we would have to cut \$400 per pupil, each year, for the next two years to reach the \$750 million dollar budget cut to education and balance the budget!

Gloom and doom, no. The reality is that the budget deficit is a huge problem with very real implications. We need to challenge the legislature and governor to recognize and address the serious structural issues in the budget. We need to work diligently with them to find solutions, not polarizing political rhetoric, to address this problem. There is so much at stake for every Minnesotan; it is important that we all recognize and understand the seriousness of this issue.



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News from Risk Management Services....

By Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services

Prescription Drugs: How much does it really cost?

Ever wonder about the different prices you see printed on your prescription drug receipt? You pay one amount and our health plan covers the balance. But how much we pay for prescription drugs is increasing rapidly. In fact, national health care expenditures are expected to continue outpacing overall economic growth, reaching \$3.4 trillion by 2013. That's largely due to increased use and cost of prescription drugs, advances in medical technology and treatments, and the increased use of those medical treatments.

Fortunately, there is often an FDA-approved generic drug available instead of a more expensive name brand. Ask your doctor. Generics use the same active ingredient as brand-name drugs, and are just as effective and just as safe. But they cost much less. In fact, the average cost of a 30-day prescription of one name-brand prescription drug is \$83 compared to \$30 for the generic equivalent. Knowing what you're spending, and keeping an eye on health care costs, is an important part of keeping health care affordable for everyone in our plan.

We all have a role to play in keeping health care affordable. Make sure you're getting the right treatment, and ask your doctor if you have any questions about your treatments and care. Review all medical bills for accuracy, and ask for clarification about any costs that you don't recognize or understand. Paying attention to cost as we make our own individual health decisions will help keep insurance premiums from rising so quickly.

myBlueCross member center

You know the myBlueCross online member center as your convenient source for helpful information about your health, health plan and costs, including:

- credible health information from medical experts
- wellness center with online coaching, tools and trackers and e-newsletter subscription
- personal health record with conditions, shots history, appointment reminders
- claims and any spending account status, including how a claim was paid
- account contributions, withdrawals and investment information

MyBlueCross access

Sign in to myBlueCross at members.bluecrossmn.com to find this new information.

Not registered yet? Forgot your sign-in info?

It's quick and easy to register for access to myBlueCross. Go to members.bluecrossmn.com and have your member ID card handy. You'll enter information from your member ID card, answer a few security questions, provide your e-mail address and then have access to all of your personal information.

If you already registered but don't have your user name or password, you can request that info online, using the link in the sign-in area.

If you registered since last October, sign in with your user name and password, then answer personalized security questions to verify your identity, and provide your e-mail address. This is a one-time identity verification step.

Finally, if you want to learn more about how myBlueCross can help you, watch the newly updated tour found on members.bluecrossmn.com.

24 Hour Nurse Advice Line

When it comes to your health or the health of a family member, you want quick access to health professionals who can answer your questions, like when a family member is sick late at night or you're not sure whether to take your child to the emergency room. When you need professional medical advice, the 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line gives reassurance anytime, day or night. It's part of your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota health plan through the Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative Pool.

Help when you're not sure what to do next

When you face a difficult medical situation, the toll-free nurse advice line is ready to help. In fact, it's like having a nurse in your family. After all, a trip to the emergency room is expensive and inconvenient. In fact, more than half of all ER visits are not emergencies.

When you use the 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line, specially trained registered nurses help you get the right care at the right time. If the situation can be safely resolved at home, the nurses will tell you how — step by step. If you

Nurse Line continues on page 4

News From Special Education Services....

By Tammy Stahl, Director of Special Education Services

Many Changes in the Pipestone Office

The SW/WC Service Cooperative moved its Pipestone office in August, relocating to the Pipestone Area High School and Middle School. Visitors to the Pipestone Office must check in at the main school office and sign in to receive a visitor's badge.

Along with the new office location, there are a few new faces! Sandy Karels is the new Office Assistant replacing Traci Nissen.

Tish Rops is the new Coordinator of Educational Programs and replaces Carol Svingen. She provides support to the following school districts: Adrian, Edgerton, Ellsworth, Fulda, Hills-Beaver Creek, Luverne, Murray County Central, and Pipestone Area.

Tammy Stahl is the new Special Education Director and replaces Dave Lammers. She works with the following school districts: Adrian, Canby, Edgerton, Ellsworth, Hendricks, Hills-Beaver Creek, Ivanhoe, Jackson, Lake Benton,



Marshall, Milroy, Minneota, Murray County Central, Luverne, Lynd, Pipestone Area, Redwood Area, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, and Tracy.

Tonia Czech continues to provide office support in Pipestone and third party billing support to member districts.

The address for the Pipestone Office is:
1401 7th St SW, Pipestone, MN 56164
Phone: (507)825-5858; Fax: (507)825-4035

Retirement News

By Mary Palmer, Senior Director of Special Education Services

Erv Marquardt, Director of Special Education will be retiring on February 3, 2011. He is a long time employee of SW/WC SC where he has worked as a School Psychologist and most recently as Director of Special Education. Over his years of service, he has touched the lives of many cooperative and district staff members in a positive manner. Erv will be missed. We wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors.



Thank you, Erv, for your service!
Good luck in your retirement!

Effective February 3, 2011, Dianne McCarron has been named interim Director of Special Education to replace Erv for the remainder of the 2010-2011 school year.

Nurse Line *(continued from page 3)*

need medical attention, the nurses can help you choose when and where to be treated.

In an emergency you shouldn't hesitate to call 911 or go to the ER, but if your condition isn't urgent, call the 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line. They're ready to help and it can save you money.

For you and your family

The 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line is always there. Call anytime, day or night, when you have symptoms or health questions and take advantage of its many benefits.

- Safe, professional health care information and advice
- No waiting for callbacks from your doctor or clinic
- Help deciding the kind of care you need
- Step-by-step support for home treatment and self-care

Referrals to other services offered through the your health plan



27th Annual Day of Excellence

Technology in Education—the Integration of Special Education & General Education

Monday March 7, 2011
8:15 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.
Southwest Minnesota State University

This year's focus will be on New Visions in Technology Relating to Education. The Keynote Speaker will be KEVIN HONEYCUTT from ESSDACK.

The conference is sponsored by SW/WC SC's Low Incidence Project and the Division of Teaching & Learning Services, Minnesota Department of Education and R-CSPD. Watch for registration info at www.swsc.org.



Knowledge Delivery Systems (KDS)

SW/WC Service Cooperative has partnered with Knowledge Delivery Systems (KDS) to assist educators working on clock hours towards the 125-Hour State License Recertification Requirement. Using KDS's eLearning Classroom Platform, teachers can instantly access online, self-paced courses in a diverse assortment of educational topics produced by nationally acclaimed educators, including Carol Ann Tomlinson, Jay McTighe, Susan Winebrenner, Todd Whitaker, Clifton Taulbert, Debbie Silver, and many other renowned lecturers. Learn more about course offerings at www.kdsi.org/SWSC or www.swsc.org/kds.



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News from Teaching & Learning Services....

By Bob Braun, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services

Statewide PBIS Initiative Continues To Grow

In 2008 four schools in the southern region were involved in the School Wide-Positive Behavior Intervention Support (SW-PBIS) initiative. In 2009 SWWC SC, in conjunction with South Central Service Cooperative and Southeast Service Cooperative, applied for a grant through the Minnesota Department of Education to expand the number of schools in the southern part of Minnesota using SW-PBIS—a systems approach in achieving three primary expectations: Academic Skill Competence, Social Skill Competence and Lifestyle Skills Competence. In May of 2009 the proposal was approved and the Southern Regional SW-PBIS Implementation Project was initiated. Since that time 30 new schools in the southern region are in various stages of training and implementation of SW-PBIS. It is anticipated that a minimum of 15 new schools will be added in 2011-2012.

The premise behind SW-PBIS is to shift from a reactive and aversive approach to managing problem behavior to one that is preventive and positive. SW-PBIS is comprised of a broad range of systems and individual strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors with all students. SW-PBIS is the integration of 4 key elements.

**Operationally defined and valued outcomes

**Research-validated practices

**Behavioral and biomedical science

**Systems change to both enhance the broad quality with which all are living/learning and reducing problem behaviors.

For additional information on the project, contact Bob Braun: 507-537-2252 or bob.braun@swsc.org.

Budding Authors

By Jenny Kirk, Marshall Independent, Reprinted with Permission

There were a lot of smiles on the faces and pencil smudges on the hands of students at the 19th annual conference for young writers hosted by Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative Thursday at Southwest Minnesota State University.

SWSC student activities coordinator Sue Gorecki said that approximately 725 students from 25 different schools participated in the writer's conference this year. "We had a good turnout," Gorecki said. "We've heard a lot of good things from people coming out of the sessions. The keynote speaker had a good message, too."

Every student attended John Coy's keynote presentation and then split off to take in three separate sessions of their choice. After reading the narration of 10-year-old Jackson from his book, "Top of the Order," Coy had students experiment with different writing voices. "You're a 5-year-old and are going to your first day of kindergarten," Coy said. "Think about what it felt like. Write about what you remember and the rest you make up."

Byron Higgin, publisher of the Minneota Mascot, taught students to write with their heart instead of just reporting the facts. He used the mother-daughter relationship of Stephanie and Jenna Hennen, who were joined together as coach-player in volleyball, as an example. "They both wanted to win a state championship," Higgin said. "Jenna's dad Eric had died many years ago, but had gone out on top as a state champion. In Jenna's last year at state, they lost to Martin County West, who came back from a 2-1 deficit, so she didn't get to wear the crown." Higgin could have just said that Minneota had lost, but the reader wouldn't have felt anything for the people involved. "You can write like that," he said. "You have it in you to tell the story with your heart."

One presenter - 13-year-old Ben Heckmann - told his peers about his love of music and writing in sessions called "Rockin' Out with Writing and Illustrating." "I love reading, writing and playing my guitar," Heckmann said. "I wrote my first book when I was 11. I chose music for my book because I can talk your



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Budding Authors *(continued from page 6)*

ear off about it, and I didn't think there were enough books about music." Heckmann - who is part of a three-boy band called Vesuvius - read from his book, "Velvet Black," and also performed a number of songs for students. After Heckmann gave a presentation about creating characters, students dressed up into different types of characters and then developed them on paper.

Brittany Molenaar, a fifth-grade student from Marshall Middle School thought Heckmann's presentation was good. "I thought it was pretty cool that he had his own band and wrote his own book in sixth grade," Molenaar said. "I learned that you have to be creative and be yourself when you're writing."

Students learned how to illustrate their stories while in Donald Houseman's session. As the kids sketched various objects, Houseman walked around the classroom and gave suggestions on proper lighting and shading techniques. Devin Bloemendaal, from Edgerton Public School, and Brittany Miersma, from Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, were both drawing a girl. "I like drawing," Miersma said. "It's cool. I actually like both writing and drawing."

Marshall Area Christian School students Philip McNair, Katelyn TenPas and Darian Ross were all excited to talk about their sessions. "I learned that you should use your imagination," Ross said. "You should also write what you know or write about what has happened in your life." McNair had just finished an extreme sports session with presenter Patrick Ryan. "It was awesome," McNair said. "You're supposed to come up with your own sport. I like writing and drawing. I also liked having doughnuts (Thursday)."

TenPas said that she and her brother had already come up with a new sport creation. "It's called scooterball," TenPas said. "It's related to soccer and you have to kick the ball into a goal while on a scooter. We use a skyball." TenPas' favorite session was called "Wishes, Lies and Octopi: all the crazy things you can stick in a poem," presented by Jana Bouma. "I really liked that one," TenPas said. "I'm probably going to go home and write a poem now."

Some students learned how to write "Minnesotan" from Dr. Wendy Claussen. "You're all going to be authors someday," Claussen said. "(Thursday) you get to write your own stories using Minnesotan slang." Students were encouraged to add phrases like "an' stuff" to the end of their sentences or to use "dat dere," "you betcha," or "hafta." "But don't tell your teachers I said you could misspell words," Claussen said jokingly.

Jr Hi Knowledge Bowl Season Completed

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coord.



The weather cooperated so forty-five teams from twenty-five districts competed in the Jr. High Knowledge Bowl Regional Event on January 5 at SMSU in Marshall. The top three teams, listed below, were awarded plaques:

- 1st-Hutch #3, 113 pts
- 2nd - GSL #1 - 111 pts
- 3rd-MCC #4 - 109.5 pts

The competing teams advanced from two sub-regional events held on December 17 and 20.

The December 17 event ran very smoothly but the



Hutch #3

December 20 event was another story altogether! As everyone knows, the weather predictions are not always accurate! None of the schools had late starts so we went ahead with the competition. It sounded as though we might get the event in before the heaviest snow arrived; therefore, the coaches decided to go with one less oral round. A few districts decided not to travel to Marshall. After the written round was completed and scored, the first oral round began. It wasn't long before coaches were receiving calls from administrators informing them that their school was letting out early. The weather



GSL #1

prevailed as the snow arrived earlier and was heavier than predicted. Most schools left after the first oral round was completed. We awarded prizes to the top three teams and instituted our snow policy to determine which teams would advance to the regional event. A few districts had to wait for buses to return so a practice round was held between the teams that remained.

MCC #4

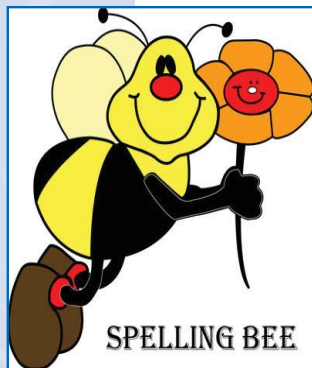
Thanks to all the coaches and students for a great season. A total of ninety teams from thirty-six districts competed in the 2010-2011 JHKB Program.



Students Preparing for Spelling Bees

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Individual students in area schools have been busy studying words in preparation for the local spelling bees (classroom, building, and district). Thirty-two students from twenty-eight districts will compete in the Regional Spelling Bee on February 15 in Redwood Falls. Tension will be mounting as students compete in a written test and preliminary oral rounds in the morning. Scores for the written and preliminary rounds will be added together with the top 15 students participating in the final Spell Down in the afternoon. Participating districts include: ACGC, Adrian, Benson, Canby, Central Minnesota Christian, Dawson-Boyd, ECHO, Edgerton, Fulda, Glencoe-Silver Lake, Holy Redeemer, KMS, Lake Benton, Lakeview, Lester Prairie, Lac qui Parle Valley, MACCRAY, Marshall, Minneota, Murray County Central, New London-Spicer, Ortonville, Redwood, Renville County West, Samuel Lutheran, St. Edward, Wabasso, and Yellow Medicine East. Participating students will receive certificates of achievement. The top four students will be awarded trophies and will advance to the Multi-Region State Spelling Bee on March 8 in Fergus Falls with the winner of that event advancing to the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C..



Scholarship Opportunity Available

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

The 7th Annual Water is Life Art Contest invites Minnesota's 9-12th grade students to create art and videos that represent issues facing our freshwater resources. This year, the theme for the contest is water conservation. Collaborating with Minnesota's Service Cooperatives, the Freshwater Society hopes to inspire and educate Minnesota's youth of the important issues facing our vulnerable freshwater resources.



The 2011 Water is Life Art Contest invites students to create art that symbolizes water conservation. The artwork may illustrate the need for conservation, explore methods of conservation or be created with conservation and reuse in mind. The artwork and accompanying artist statement should convey the importance of protecting and preserving our most important resource.

The contest awards \$500 scholarships to the six top finalists, prizes to each region's semifinalists and recognition to each participant. Important dates and deadlines are listed below:

February 15 - Intent to participate form due

March 25 - Entry forms and artwork due

April 11 - Regional Competition

May 4 - Finalists will be invited to Art Exhibit, Reception & Scholarship Award Ceremony at the Gray Freshwater Center in the Lake Minnetonka area.

For more information, check out the following website: www.freshwater.org and www.swsc.org/studentactivities. Intent forms, entry forms and artwork should be sent to Sue Gorecki, SW/WC Service Cooperative, 1420 East College Drive, Marshall, MN 56258. Questions? Contact Sue: sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258.

Watch for Science and Nature Brochures

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Brochures for the 17th Annual Science & Nature Conference will be distributed to schools and parents in early March. The conference will be held on May 13, 2011 at SMSU in Marshall and is targeted for students in grades K-8. Topics are divided into strands for K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. A wide variety of topics will be offered at the conference. Examples of class topics from last year include: reptiles, wetlands, star watch, geocaching, invention, grossology, organic gardening, crime scene investigation, cryogenics, science magic, rockets, and much more!

Consider bringing students to the conference in place of a traditional field trip. Make your plans, watch for the brochures, and get your registrations in early. Students are scheduled into classes on a first-come, first-served basis.

The brochure and registration form will be available on our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities. If you have questions, please contact Andrea at andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257 or Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258.



Residencies Scheduled

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Residencies have been scheduled in area schools for the Children's Author & Illustrator Program. The residencies will be held April 4-8 and April 26-29. Information about the residencies has been sent out to participating schools. Presenters for the residencies are Ryan Jacobson, Jill Kalz and Sheryl Peterson.

Ryan Jacobson (upper right) uses his love of books and his talent for storytelling to get students excited about reading and writing. Ryan has written 12 wonderful, imaginative adventures – including Nature Squad, Santa Claus: Super Spy and Lost in the Wild.

Residency Schools: Lincoln HI, MACCRAY (East & West), Milroy, Minneota, Redwood, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton and Yellow Medicine East.

Jill Kalz (lower right) grew up in New Ulm, a small German town in southern Minnesota (which explains her fondness for sauerkraut and her unusually high tolerance for polka). Jill has written nearly 50 titles for children including Farmer Cap, Henry Shortbull Swallows the Sun, Galen's Camera and several books about Tuckerbean.

Residency Schools: Cedar Mountain, Edgerton, Marshall – Holy Redeemer, Pipestone, Springfield – St. Raphael and Wabasso Public Library (Public School & St. Anne).

Sheryl Peterson (below) is the author of 21 non-fiction books for kids. She has written about faraway places such as The Egyptian Pyramids and Machu Picchu.

She has also told the story of places closer to home, such as the Empire State Building and our home state of Minnesota! Her newest books have taken her millions of years back in time to the age of the dinosaurs. Sheryl lives up north in International Falls, MN, where she can look out her kitchen window into Canada.



Senior High Knowledge Bowl

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Everything is leading up to an exciting Sr. High Knowledge Bowl season. Schools have been practicing by participating in invitationals hosted by other districts (when weather permits!) and registering teams for the sub-regional events. Please mark your calendars for the appropriate events.

Sub-Regionals--Region 6

Feb. 28 - MACCRAY Public School (snow date - Mar. 5)

Mar. 4 - Canby - MN West (snow date - Mar. 5)

Sub-Regionals--Region 8

Feb. 25 - Jackson - MN West (snow date - Mar. 4)

Mar. 7 - Marshall - SMSU (snow date - Mar. 8)

Regionals--Region 6 - Mar. 9 - Granite Falls - MN West (snow date - Mar. 18)

Regionals--Region 8 - Mar. 10 - Marshall - SMSU (snow date - Mar. 11)

State - April 7-8 - Cragun's - Brainerd (top three teams from each regional event advance to state)



**Best of luck to all
teams as the season advances!!!**



School Business Conference

The 28th Annual School Business Conference will be held on Friday, March 4th in the Conference Center at SMSU in Marshall.

Once again the conference will be a full day of updates and information gathering for School Business Managers, Book-keepers, and Secretaries. Some of the topics include: SERV'S Reporting, Upcoming MARSS Changes, Social Media and Retention of Electronic Data, E-Rate timelines, Microsoft 2010 Overview plus many more!

Registration will open soon at:
www.swsc.org



Wide Area Network--A Foundation for Numerous Services

By Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology

SW/WC Service Cooperative recently released a Request for Proposals, or RFP, for our wide area network consortium. This consortium consists of 31 of the Service Cooperative's member school districts and is, generally stated, how we receive access to the Internet, Internet2 and shared technology resources. Often times when we click on our Internet Explorer or Firefox icons we forget about everything that is happening in the background and also just how fragile our connection to the world really is. Much like a person, these connections can have broken bones, clogged arteries or simply forget how to get somewhere! We're now 25 plus years into operating a wide area network of some form, providing distance learning through interactive television from the very beginning as well as mainframe access. As the Internet became prevalent in schools we quickly learned that dial-up 56-kbps services, if available in our communities, just weren't going to cut it; and so, our wide area networks became the answer to providing this service to our schools.

As the technologies that our schools come to rely on to educate students and conduct the business of operating a school district have advanced, so has the necessity and the complexity of operating the wide area network. The wide area network is now the foundation to a number of the services schools have become reliant on, including distance *WAN continues on page 13*

News from Administrative Services....

By Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services

Employee vs. Independent Contractor Seven Tips for Employers

(Revised using information from the 'IRS Summertime Tax Tip 2010-20)

As a school district you may hire people as an employee or as an independent contractor. There are rules that will help you determine how to classify the people you hire. This will affect how much you pay in taxes, whether you need to withhold from your workers' paychecks and what tax documents you need to file.

Here are seven things every employer should know about hiring people as an employee versus independent contractor.

1. The IRS uses three characteristics to determine the relationship between businesses and workers:
 - o Behavioral Control covers facts that show whether the district has a right to direct or control how the work is done through instructions, training or other means.
 - o Financial Control covers facts that show whether the district has a right to direct or control the financial and business aspects of the worker's job.
 - o Type of Relationship factor relates to how the workers and the school district perceive their relationship.
2. If you have the right to control or direct not only what is to be done, but also how it is to be done, then your workers are most likely employees.
3. If you can direct or control only the result of the work done -- and not the means and methods of accomplishing the result -- then your workers are probably independent contractors.
4. Employers who misclassify workers as independent contractors can end up with substantial tax bills. Additionally, they can face penalties for failing to pay employment taxes and for failing to file required tax forms.
5. Workers can avoid higher tax bills and lost benefits if they know their proper status.
6. Both employers and workers can ask the IRS to make a determination on whether a specific individual is an independent contractor or an employee by filing a Form SS-8, Determination of Worker Status for Purposes of Federal Employment Taxes and Income Tax Withholding, with the IRS.
7. You can learn more about the critical determination of a worker's status as an Independent Contractor or Employee at IRS.gov by selecting the Small Business link.



Additional resources include:

- o Publication 15-A, Employer's Supplemental Tax Guide
- o Publication 1779, Independent Contractor or Employee
- o Publication 1976, Do You Qualify for Relief under Section 530?
- o Form SS-8, Determination of Worker Status for Purposes of Federal Employment Taxes and Income Tax Withholding

Walnut Grove Alumni

By Paul Olson, WWG Elementary Principal

The Walnut Grove Alumni Foundation gave the Westbrook Walnut Grove Little Chargers Program a Christmas present. They donated money for a new Smart Board, computer, camera, and kitchen play set for our preschoolers to learn and play with. Next year the Walnut Grove Alumni Foundation would like to donate money to purchase I-Pads for our Little Chargers Program. Kudos to the Alumni!!



Applications for the
MN Schools of Character
and Promising Practices
Awards are due
March 15.

www.mncae.org

Center for Academic Excellence Update

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

The WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program recognizes teachers and their important role in helping all students achieve academically and seeks to bring recognition to the often “unsung heroes” who meet the challenges of teaching in a variety of settings.

The Center for Academic Excellence, in partnership with the service cooperative members of The Minnesota Service Cooperatives, administers the award program. Parents, students, administrators or colleagues are invited to nominate educators who they believe make a difference in the lives of students. Nominations are accepted until February 15th.

The WEM Outstanding Educator Award program honors educators in four areas: The Teacher Achievement Awards, The Academic Challenge Coach Awards, The Ethics in Education Awards, and Excellence in Education Award. Nominated educators are required to complete an application packet to become eligible for the award. Visit www.mncae.org for more details.

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WAN *(continued from page 10)*

education, now delivered through interactive television and online resources. Interactive television continues to expand in its use, leading to virtual field trips, commute-less meetings and delivering national training broadcasts that once required travel and financial commitments that our schools simply could not justify.

With the expansion of online learning and the ever expanding resources of the Internet, the necessity for robust Internet access continues to grow. When the Internet began to enter our schools in the late 1990's, a little more than just 10 years ago, who would have ever thought we'd need more than a 56-kbps line, or a T-1 line in the early 2000's only to be replaced with measurements in the Mbps?

Then comes in to play the access to Internet2; a high-speed network to even today's modern standards that connects education, research and medical organizations world-wide through a private-access network. Without the Wide Area Network, access to this valuable resource would be impossible for nearly all of our school districts. By connecting to Internet2 the school districts in our wide area network also have a high-speed and reliable connection to the other wide area networks throughout the state. It is this connection that allows course sharing between schools in our wide area network and schools all across Minnesota to take place each day.

In issuing our new RFP a couple key factors were taken into consideration. First, district requirements have significantly increased over the past 5 years and will continue to expand over the next 5 years. Secondly our schools will continue to find value in shared technologies as we have in shared Email hosting, SPAM filtering, Content Filtering and video conferencing. The use of personal telepresence software such as the applications used in our Speech-Language Telepractice will continue to grow and offer even greater opportunities to our students.

Not only will current services continue to expand their reach, but we will also see the introduction of new services

due to mandates or the simple continual dependence on technology to the daily operations and learning in our school districts. Right now SW/WC Service Cooperative's IT Department staff are implementing a Disaster Recovery enabled backup system to complement our data replication system. We are researching the ability for school districts to also purchase this system, allowing us to remotely manage and administer your school or organizations backup system and provide a fully replicated, disaster recovery enabled system. What does this mean? No more tapes to purchase, no more software to purchase and no complex configurations to manage, but above all, the peace of mind that your school's data is being backed up and held

securely off-site from your school district; an issue prevalent in nearly all school districts in which SW/WC Service Cooperative performs Technology Audits statewide. Without the capacity and dependability of our wide area network a service like this simply would not be possible.

Another prime example of a service that has become a necessity for school districts is Email content archiving. From our research we have found that on average, this service would require nearly \$1,100 to \$1,500 in hardware and software for a school with 100 Email accounts to administer per year, before taking into account personnel time and effort. The amount remains unchanged if your school looks at a "free" online service such as Google for Education.

However, by purchasing a shared, large-scale solution as a consortium, schools should be able to achieve a solution that will cost between \$750 to \$1,000 for 100 mailboxes per year and will allow districts to maintain full control of their Email Solution. We have also found that some services that are out there require you to continue to pay for mailboxes for the entire retention period of that mailbox, so you would end up paying for someone's mailbox for up to 5 years after they leave your school or organization. Once again, the sharing of such a resource is feasible through the wide area network.

As we issue the RFP for Wide Area Network Services for our school districts these are just a few of the many services that we look at building the foundation for and anticipate all of the potential the power of this collaboration will continue to bring to our schools.



Gearing Up for 5th Annual Technology Conference

By Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology

Planning is well underway and we're getting ready to get registration materials for the 5th Annual Technology Conference: "Collaborate, Innovate, Empower 21st Century Learners" being held on March 10 and 11, 2011. If you are interested in presenting at the conference, there is still time to submit your proposal, just visit www.swsc.org/techconf2011 and click on the "Request for Proposals: Technology Conference Sessions" link. We will continue to grow in our new location, The Centers at Southwest Minnesota State University, this year with a number of popular returning guest speakers including Kevin Honeycutt (below right) and Aimee Bissonette (right). This year's

keynote session will be led by Adam Garry (below left), Manager of Global Professional Learning at Dell, Inc.



Keep an eye out for registration information in the coming month. We hope to see you on March 10 and 11!

Critical Incident Stress Management--CISM

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

A CISM Team provides immediate assistance to local schools in times of crisis or traumatic events. The team works with crisis teams and the crisis plan already in place by school districts, but team members are specially trained by standards set by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) to respond to school crisis.

A "School Crisis Response" training was held on January 20-21, 2011, at the SW/WC SC in Marshall. A team of 34 people, representative of our 18 county region, was trained by Dr. Dan Casey on School Crisis Response. At this time, team members are primarily school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors. The two-day training covered effects of trauma on student learning, signs and symptoms of distress, interventions, developmental considerations, referral signs, debriefings, and team development.



Team Mission: The CISM Team consists of trained, experienced professionals who will provide support, guidance and resources to schools and their communities in Regions 6 & 8 in a crisis situation.

Team Vision: The CISM Team will

- Provide immediate aid & long-term follow-up
- Connect schools with resources
- Provide a consistent response

The team will meet again soon to finalize details on team structure and process. If you have questions, please contact Jen Mahan-Deitte at 507-537-2291.

More details can be found at www.swsc.org/CISM.



Cooperative Purchasing--PLATO

By Shareen Neumann, Sales & Marketing/Cooperative Purchasing

The Cooperative Purchasing Department is very pleased to announce that in cooperation with the SW/WC Service Cooperative Technology Department, we will be bringing a new vendor contract to our members. Through a Preferred Vendor Agreement with PLATO Learning, our members will soon be able to receive substantial savings on the PLATO courseware with additional discounts for multiple year contracts.

For those who are not familiar with PLATO Learning, PLATO Learning products cover a broad range of teaching and learning needs—from intervention and credit recovery and innovative and teacher-facilitated solutions for traditional classroom instruction to trend-forward distance learning options. PLATO Learning's elementary, secondary, and post-secondary customers have come to expect that each of our product lines will be developed with our signature passion for education and the unparalleled expertise and precision achieved after more than 40 years of experience in the educational technology market. For more information about PLATO Learning, visit www.plato.com



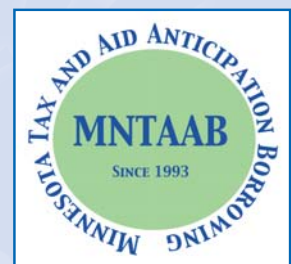
If you have questions about our upcoming contract with PLATO Learning, contact either:

- Shareen Neumann, SW/WC SC Cooperative Purchasing
(507)537-2279; Shareen.Neumann@swsc.org
- Josh Sumption, SW/WC SC Manager of Information Technology
(507)537-2265; Josh.Sumption@swsc.org
- Scott Mader, PLATO Learning
717-816-8767 cell; 952-832-1599 office; 952-229-0355 fax; smader@plato.com.

MNTAAB Borrowing Pool – Working to Save School Districts Money

By Patty Heminover, Vice President/Client Representative

The huge looming state deficit, payment delays and failed referendums are factors that have forced a record number of school districts to rely on cash flow borrowing to solve their budget shortfalls. In 1993, MSBA in cooperation with the regional service cooperatives and Springsted Incorporated, created the statewide cash-flow borrowing pool that is known as MNTAAB. The program is designed to create economies of scale for school districts, low issuance costs and lower net borrowing costs for the vast majority of districts. Historically, the bond markets have responded very favorably to MNTAAB's large, AAA rated pool resulting in very attractive interest rates for participants. The MNTAAB pool provides school districts with a cost-effective and administrative-friendly alternative to stand-alone cash flow borrowing. When compared to an individual borrowing issuance, costs are lower for in most cases due to economies of scale given the size of the pool and the number of both large and small districts that are participating. The program is also responsible for the legal fees, printing costs, trustee/paying agents fees, County Auditor certificates, the transaction costs to issue the Certificates and the underwriter's commissions to remarket the Certificates.



www.swsc.org/mntaab

The next MNTAAB pool will be offered in the summer of 2011 for the 2011-12 fiscal year. Springsted Incorporated will email application packets to all districts in early May.

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.

February 2011

February 1	Intro to Supplemental Ed Services
February 2	TACSEI - Challenging Behaviors for EC
February 3	Budgeting & Staffing Issues, Supt Wksp
February 8	Building Behaviors -EBD conference
February 8	Administrator Forum
February 8	SMART Response System (Senteo)
February 10	SMART Board Lesson Development
February 15	SMART Board Level I Workshop
February 16	Exploring the iPad: Set-up to Practical Apps
February 17	Using the SMART Board- SpEd Classroom
February 23	SMART Table Training
February 24	Technology Integration Training

March 2011

March 1	Movie Maker Training
March 2	Thinkfinity Training
March 3	Law Seminar for School Administrators
March 4	Annual School Business Conference
March 7	Annual Day of Excellence Conference
March 8	SMART Board Level 2 Workshop
March 10-11	Annual Technology Conference
March 14	Signs of Spring-Regional ASL Parent Class
March 14	Para Workshop-Luverne
March 14	Para Workshop-Redwood Falls
March 14	Para Workshop-Windom
March 15	Podcasting/Vodcasting
March 16	TACSEI - Challenging Behaviors for EC
March 17	Exploring the iPod Touch: Set-up to Apps
March 22	SMART Board Level I Workshop
March 23	PowerPoint 2007 Training
March 25	Regional DAPE Workshop
March 29	Digital Storytelling
March 30	Marzano Lesson Creation Strategies- SMART Board

April and May 2011

April 5	SMART Board Lesson Development
April 6	Collaborative Web 2.0 Tools
April 6-7	Facilitation Methods Training
April 12	SMART Board Level I Workshop
April 13	Using the SMART Board in the Elementary
April 13	Administrator Forum
April 26	SMART Board Level 2 Workshop
May 3	SMARTBoard Level I Workshop

Important Summer Dates

Administrator Forum June 8
Summer Superintendents Conference June 21-23



Our Mission

Through partnership, innovation, and exceptional leadership, our programs and services will meet the diverse needs of our members.