

2015-16



Annual Report to our Partners

SWWC is dedicated to providing unparalleled education and administrative services, innovative solutions, and uncompromising support to our members and the communities we serve with integrity, respect and responsive action.

SOUTHWEST WEST CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

SWWC

Education & Administrative Resources

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From the Executive Director Cliff Carmody



Dear Friends of SWWC:

The SWWC Board of Directors, Administration and Staff focus on providing programs and services that meet the needs of our members!

This past year marks our 50th year of providing high quality, affordable programs and services to schools, cities, counties and other governmental agencies in our region. This report highlights the mission, vision and core values of our agency. As you read this report, I hope you will see how our programs and services are critical to the work of the members we serve.

Our shared services model of delivering programs and services is the basis for a number of new and existing initiatives from this past year. Entrepreneurial in spirit, we invest in the development of new programs that meet the needs of our members. As a membership driven organization, the SWWC Board and Administration work collaboratively with our members to offer programs and services that support, enhance and meet their needs.

Our values of service, integrity and respect form the foundation for the work we do and are embedded in the benefits we provide our members! At the center of these values is service - we believe service is a commitment to serve our members, potential members, co-workers and others. We care about them, listen to them and work to address their needs. Satisfying those we serve is a priority for everyone in the agency.

As we plan for 2016-17, we continue to recognize the needs of our members. We are grounded and committed to our service approach and will continue to find ways to be innovative in our practice of administering high quality, affordable programs and services.

Thank you for all that you do in supporting our work together! I look forward to working with you in the coming year as we continue to find ways to meet your needs.

From the Board Chair Maydra Maas

Today, I picture my grandson while sitting at the Westbrook-Walnut Grove School's "Little Charger" table. I want the absolute best for him. I want him to feel loved, stay healthy as he grows, and be ready for a lifetime of learning. I want this for ALL children in the SWWC area.

SWWC doesn't do anything alone. Setting our children up for success is no different. It takes people in the rural communities across our region -- family, friends, neighbors, volunteers and our entire SWWC membership of cities, counties, governmental agencies and schools -- to raise a child.

I hope you will consider what you can do for each and every child. Gather with the excellent SWWC administration and staff. Push each other to think outside the box. Think big about what can be tackled together. Thank you, one and all, for being part of SWWC. There's always an open seat in true collaboration.



About Us

MISSION

We support and enhance the work of our members by providing programs and services that meet their needs.

VISION

By striving to be innovative, collaborative and responsive, we will be the premiere service agency for our members.

VALUES

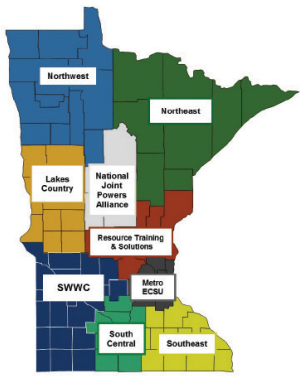
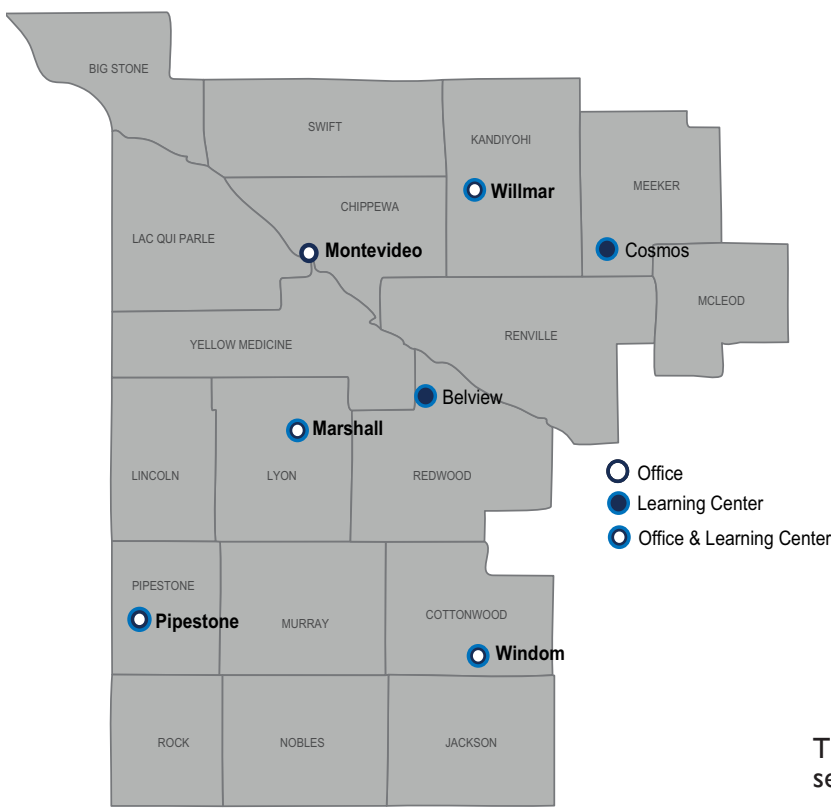
Service: We believe service is a commitment to serve our members, potential members, coworkers and others. We care about them, listen to them, and work to address their issues. Satisfying those we serve is a priority for everyone in the agency.

Integrity: We believe integrity is the foundation of our actions. We are honest, trustworthy, respectful and ethical. We are committed to always do the right thing.

Respect: We believe respect is treating everyone with courtesy, politeness and kindness. Respect encourages open and honest communication and recognizes the contributions, opinions and ideas of all. In essence, respect is treating others as you wish to be treated.

SERVICE AREA

Our geographic boundaries cover the 18 counties of southwest and west central Minnesota, but our programs and services span beyond those boundaries. Our main office is located in Marshall, with other office locations and school locations throughout the region.



There are nine educational service agencies in Minnesota.

Governance

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Members of the SWWC Board of Directors are elected from our membership.

Front row, l-r:

- Maggie Kluver, Montevideo Schools
- Jody Bauer, Tracy Area Schools
- Maydra Maas-Chair, WWG Schools
- Kathi Thymian-Vice-Chair, Ortonville Schools
- Kathryn Kelly-Treasurer, Renville County
- Donald Brugman-Clerk, Windom Schools

Back row, l-r:

- Steve Schnieder, Worthington Schools
- Matt Coleman, Marshall Schools
- Tom Walsh, KMS Schools
- David Kilpatrick, New London-Spicer Schools
- Darin Balken, Prairie Lakes Youth Programs
- Michael Zins, Fulda Schools



SUPERINTENDENTS' EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Chair: Chris Sonju, Glencoe-Silver Lake
Vice Chair: Dr. Chad Anderson, Tracy Area
Past Chair: Jim Lentz, Pipestone Area
Dan Deitte, Minneota & Ivanhoe
John Dotson, BOLD
Rick Ellingworth, Redwood Area
Chris Fenske, Lakeview
Ray Hassing, Round Lake-Brewster
Dr. Luther Heller, Montevideo
Dr. Jeff Holm, Willmar
John Landgaard, Worthington
Dennis Laumeyer, Benson
Scott Monson, Marshall
Michelle Mortensen, Renville County West
Ryan Nielsen, Lake Benton
Bruce Olson, Red Rock Central
Luther Onken, Fulda & Murray County Central
Laura Schuster, Canby
Wayne Wormstadt, Windom
Michael James, Mountain Lake Christian
Sharon Kabes, Southwest Minnesota State
Dr. Terry Gaalswyk, Minnesota West

The Superintendents' Executive Council provides advice and support to SWWC Administration and the Board of Directors.

Leadership

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Cliff Carmody, Executive Director
Deecy Jesse, Executive Assistant
Annette Miller, Director of Finance
Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services
Tammy Stahl, Director of Human Resources
Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services
Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services
Dr. Mary Palmer, Senior Director of Special Education Services
Lisa Gregoire, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services

Educational Services

The Division of Special Education Services, led by Dr. Mary Palmer, is comprised of special education direct student services, the alternative learning programs/settings, the regional low incidence program, outreach clinics and professional development opportunities.

The Division of Teaching and Learning Services, led by Lisa Gregoire, includes school improvement services, student enrichment activities, curriculum/assessment/instruction services, the MN West Carl Perkins Consortium, the math and science teacher partnership, Response to Intervention (Rtl), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), the Southwest Prairie Regional Center of Excellence and professional development opportunities.

COLLABORATING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

2015-16 was a great year for the schools who are part of the North Collaborative - ACGC, BBE, BOLD, BLHS, Cedar Mountain, KMS, Lester Prairie and MACCRAY.

The collaborative structure provides districts the opportunity to collaborate with other districts that have similar demographics and are geographically located in the same part of the region. A Teaching and Learning Coordinator is assigned to the collaborative and provides data mining and analysis, cross-district facilitation of content area best practices meetings, content area standards work, monthly principal meetings, leadership team development and multi-district common staff development days.



HELPING STUDENTS FIND THEIR PASSION IN LIFE

The goal of SWWC’s Student Enrichment programs is to provide unique and affordable enrichment opportunities for K-12 students so they can explore their interests and abilities. We are all shaped by our life experiences and hope that our enrichment programs will help students determine a course for their future and discover their life’s passions. Without leadership from SWWC and the support of our partners, the conferences and competitions we provide would not be available to students in our region.

The 2015-16 school year was filled with excitement and activity as students explored art, careers, writing, culinary art and science, math, spelling, technology and much more. The year was capped off with the largest one-day conference



in our history - the 22nd Annual Science and Nature Conference held May 11. This conference, which has quickly become our most popular event, topped 1,500 participants! Students enjoyed topics such as Crime Scene Investigation, Exercise Science, Fire Fighting, Robotics, Radiology, Bee Keeping, Astronomy, Solar Power and more. Plans are already underway for a 2016-17 school year that will be bigger and better than ever!



INCREASING BEHAVIOR ANALYTIC SERVICES

During the 2015-16 school year, behavior analytic services were provided to 37 school districts, five SWWC Setting IV programs and 11 school districts in South Dakota. The number of districts served has expanded as well as the scope of services provided. In previous years, direct consultation and training to meet individual student needs was the primary focus of behavior analytic services. This year, however, we have been developing and implementing specific school systems including PBIS and paraprofessional training sequences, providing continuing education opportunities for staff, and setting up classroom behavior management systems.

We hosted the third annual Behavior Conference in two locations - Redwood Falls and Brookings, SD. The conference focused on increasing quality of life of students through teaching functional academic skills, working with students meeting emotional-behavioral criteria, and learning how to preventatively develop a plan utilizing behavior skills training to combat staff performance issues. Vendor booths and sponsorship opportunities were also new this year. In addition to the Behavior Conference, we increased other continuing education opportunities by offering a new series of trainings entitled *Behavior Tools* for paraprofessionals, general education teachers and special education teachers. An intensive paraprofessional training was provided to six districts in South Dakota. This training included teaching a foundational understanding of principals of applied behavior analysis, monthly consults and monthly webinars for on-going training opportunities.



TEACHING THROUGH PROJECT BASED LEARNING



At the Belview Learning Center, the high school students created a business called **Bel-Youth Press**. They researched and put together a proposal to purchase a heat press which enables them to create personalized gifts including t-shirts, mugs and other items. Bel-Youth has customers in the town of Belview and are looking to expand their business. One of the special items students made this year was in honor of our favorite Veteran, Rich Sullivan (pictured at left).



Setting IV high school students at the Red Rock Ridge Learning Center started a school business to raise money for field trips. They brainstormed ideas and voted as a class to design and create class works of art by upcycling various types of bottles. **Glassy Treasures** received start-up monies from SWWC to purchase a Cricut machine, vinyl, etching cream, lights and various embellishments. By Christmas, each student designed their own beautifully crafted lighted bottle to give as a gift to someone in their family. After Christmas break, the business started taking off and students began taking custom orders. They also entered their work in the Remick Student Art Show at the Historical Society in Windom.



Administrative Services

The Division of Administrative Services, led by Darin Jensen, is comprised of the Regional Management Information Center (RMIC), Health and Safety, Cooperative Purchasing, Information Technology, Distance Education, Technology Integration and E-Rate Coordination.

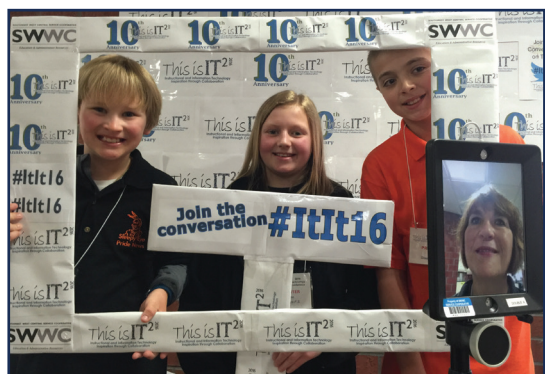
The Division of Risk Management Services is led by Doug Deragisch and includes the school insurance pool, the city/county/other governmental agency (CCOGA) pool, the health cost management program (HCMP) and the Employee Wellness Incentive Program. The School Pool has 51 member schools with 4,122 contracts. The CCOGA Pool has 98 groups with 3,615 contracts. A total of 15,958 lives are covered between both pools. SWWC's renewal success rate is over 95% annually. Through the years, the insurance pools have been successful in serving our members with high quality insurance products as well as educational and support services.

PROVIDING ACCESS WITH DOUBLE ROBOTICS

Cooperative Purchasing Connection at SWWC was proud to bring cutting edge technology to our schools in 2016. We partnered with Double Robotics to bring telepresence robots and equipment to our members. Double Robotics is the simplest way to be somewhere else in the world without physically going there. The minimalist design and intuitive touchscreen controls allow freedom of movement. The Doubles use Apple iPads – and are basically wheels for your iPad. SWWC purchased two Doubles that have been available to our members to rent on a weekly basis.

Here are some of the ways our members used the Doubles:

- To make it possible for a critically ill homebound student to participate with her classmates as her condition allowed;
- To allow a superintendent to wander in and observe classrooms, to have a presence in the hallways between classes, and to monitor lunchroom activity;
- To bring a Global Studies/Geography teacher who is overseas teaching in Kuwait City back into the classroom to interact and catch-up with his former students. This was an amazing opportunity for the teacher and students to share stories and experiences “face to face” as they stood on opposite sides of the planet;
- To provide a way for cast members of a high school musical, in full costume, to walk into elementary classrooms and introduce students to stories, customs and traditions of *Fiddler on the Roof* (in preparation for attending the musical the next week);
- To attend a workshop held in another office location; and
- To allow a student news group to have a roving reporter (pictured at left).



We are excited to see what other great ideas our members come up with for our Doubles.



RESPONDING TO THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

SWWC took the initiative to respond to CCOGA and school district requests for additional learning opportunities surrounding the complicated requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). SWWC staff and Attorney Mark Kinney presented numerous sessions on the ever-changing ACA rules. We worked hard to guide our members through the different types of insurance plans they could offer to be compliant with ACA. These presentations educated our membership about possible ACA penalties that could be assessed if full-time employees weren't offered coverage or what was considered affordable coverage. Six workshops conducted over the past two years for our insurance pool members kept them informed of changes and clarifications. At the same time, SMART Systems was programmed to accommodate the creation and filing of the required forms for ACA reporting. The biggest response to member need occurred in the Fall of 2015 when Sue Skramstad transitioned into the full-time ACA Coordinator position. Her role offered further guidance and assistance to our members about the intent of the law as well as the application of the law utilizing SMART Systems.

2016 was the first year employers were required to report 1094/1095 data to the IRS. To meet member needs, we conducted 48 group trainings and 51 web-based trainings to provide the support and assistance to generate 6,849 1095 B & C forms. Forty-one districts used SMART Software to generate the forms, three used a 3rd party vendor, and six were not required to report. CCOGAs, despite not using SMART Software, generated 90 calls/emails for ACA reporting support services.



ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Health Cost Management Program

The Health Cost Management Program is available to School Districts, Cities, Counties and Other Governmental Agencies in our insurance pool that want to offer wellness initiatives for their staff. Groups are offered monies on a reimbursement basis to help off-set the costs associated with wellness activities and biometric screenings. Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Specialist is available to assist groups in budgeting, planning, and implementing site-based wellness initiatives for their staff.

Wellness Institute Incentive Program


The Wellness Institute Incentive Program allows individuals on their respective group health insurance plan the ability to earn an incentive for participating in wellness-related activities. Employees that registered for ClearCost Health, participated in an online Health Risk Assessment through Wellstream, and knew their cholesterol and blood pressure readings were eligible to receive a \$100 incentive (as premium reduction or a contribution to a VEBA or HSA account) and a Fitbit Alta activity tracker. Employees that earned the incentive will participate in group-sponsored challenges through the Fitbit website using their devices.



Employees

CELEBRATING STAFF AND PROGRAM SUCCESS

We have a highly skilled and talented group of professionals at SWWC who embrace our core values in all they do. We have 304 regular employees who work throughout the 18 counties of southwest and west central Minnesota. Staff are located in our office and school locations, and many are housed right in the school district where they work!





Meet Wendy Woelber, SpEd Paraprofessional

SWWC welcomes Wendy to our team - where she will be a special education paraprofessional at the Blue Mound Learning Center.


Wendy has three children: Tiffany is a junior at MSU, Tarryn is a senior in high school, and Trey is a second grader. She enjoys reading, walking, shopping, and watching sports -- and spends a lot of time watching her children in volleyball, softball, and baseball.

Prior to SWWC, Wendy worked at Pipestone Area Schools for over 12 years and loved being a preschool teacher at two different daycare centers. Wendy has a teaching degree from North Dakota State University.






Congratulations to Lisa Paplow Program Assistant Red Rock Ridge Learning Center



The purpose of the G.R.O.W. program is to recognize employees for their outstanding work in the areas of partnership, innovation, leadership and service. SWWC employees can be nominated by co-workers, supervisors and our members.

Lisa was nominated in November 2015.

"Lisa is the heart of our school! Lisa is always there to assist Staff or Student, and will always go above and beyond to meet their needs! Lisa keeps our school running, and running well!"



We are incredibly proud of our staff and the great work they do! This year we shared that pride via social media. We introduced new staff ... shared information about our current SWWC team members ... and shared accomplishments, such as those receiving the G.R.O.W. award. The response has been phenomenal!



Meet Our Team



Hollie Pater
Early Childhood
Special Education Coordinator

Hollie is an Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator for SWWC. She assists 20 school districts with Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE).

She has the privilege of working with ECSE teachers and related service providers such as occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, and more. Her job responsibilities include providing guidance and knowledge in the area of ECSE.

She loves her job and enjoys working with a variety of people. A highlight of her job is when she hears from teachers sharing student success stories.



Congratulations Melissa!



Melissa Hanson
Coordinator of Special Education

Melissa Hanson, a Coordinator of Special Education at SWWC, has been named a recipient of a MASE Stenswick/Benson Scholarship!

MASE, the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education, is an association whose members are directors of special education and other administrators for special education.

The MASE Stenswick/Benson Scholarship Program awards scholarships annually to graduate students completing exemplary study in the field of special education leadership. The program began in 1991. It recognizes the legacy of leaders within special education as represented by Ellsworth Stenswick from Bloomington and Loren Benson from Hopkins, both considered special education pioneers.

Employee retention is important to us!
The average length of service for current staff:
6.5 years

The number of employees who have worked:
over 20 years: 22
15-19 years: 22
10-14 years: 28

Ongoing Education

Six of our staff have a Ph.D.
100 have a master's degree
42 have a bachelor's degree



Project | SEARCH

Southwest Minnesota



Congratulations to Project SEARCH

2015 MREA Profiles of Excellence Award
Honorable Mention Winner

The Profiles of Excellence Awards annually recognize innovative programs and efforts that serve as an example of educational opportunities for rural students.





FOCUSING ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In January 2016, we conducted the Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement survey with all of our employees in order to gain a better understanding of SWWC employee morale, satisfaction and engagement. Gallup has conducted decades of research on employee engagement with millions of employees, and has found that organizations with engaged employees have better workplace outcomes. Gallup has also found that engaged employees also experience better personal health and happiness. SWWC has started using the survey results as a guide in striving for organizational growth and in order to fulfill our vision of being the premiere agency for our members.

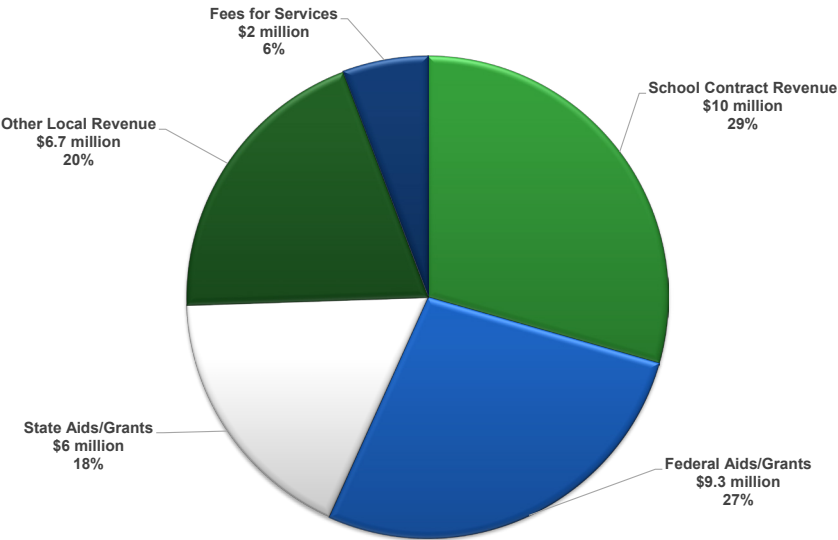
THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT HIERARCHY

Learn & Grow	Q12	GROWTH
Progress	Q11	
Best Friend	Q10	TEAMWORK
Quality	Q09	
Mission/Purpose	Q08	MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
Opinions Count	Q07	
Development	Q06	BASIC NEEDS
Cares About Me	Q05	
Recognition	Q04	
Do Best	Q03	
Materials & Equipment	Q02	
Expectations	Q01	

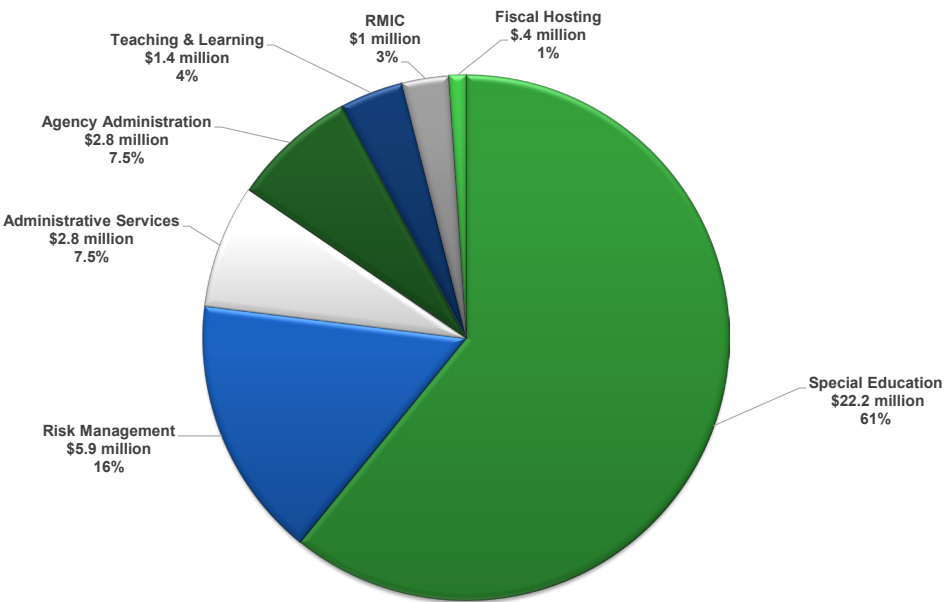
Finances

Our core values of service, integrity and respect are the foundation for all we do, including our efforts to be great financial stewards of the resources we are given to serve our members.

**Budgeted 2015-16 Annual Revenues - \$34 million
(Excluding Insurance Premiums)**



**Budgeted 2015-16 Annual Expenditures - \$36.5 million
(Excluding Insurance Premiums)**



SWWC is a member of the Minnesota Service Cooperatives, an association of nine educational service agencies in Minnesota.



Members

Full membership is open to all public school districts, cities, counties and other governmental agencies within our 18 county region.

Associate membership is open to a) non-public schools and other partnership agencies and organizations within our region and b) public and non-public schools, cities, counties, partnership agencies, non-profit organizations and other governmental agencies outside our region.

PUBLIC, PRIVATE & CHARTER SCHOOLS

Adrian	Holy Redeemer, Marshall	Ortonville
ACGC	Hutchinson	Pipestone Area
BBE	Ivanhoe	Red Rock Central
Benson	Jackson County Central	Redwood Area
BOLD	KMS	Renville County West
Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart	Lac qui Parle Valley	Round Lake-Brewster
Canby	Lake Benton	RTR
Cedar Mountain	Lakeview	St. Edward, Minneota
Central MN Christian, Prinsburg	Lester Prairie	St. Mary's, Bird Island
Clarkfield Area Charter	Luverne	St. James
Comfrey	Lynd	Samuel Lutheran, Marshall
Dawson-Boyd	MACCRAY	Sleepy Eye
E.C.H.O Charter	Marshall Area Christian	Southwest Christian, Edgerton
Eden Valley-Watkins	Marshall	Springfield
Edgerton	Milroy	Tracy Area
Ellsworth	Milroy Area Charter	Wabasso
Fulda	Minneota	Westbrook-Walnut Grove
Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop	Montevideo	Willmar
Glencoe-Silver Lake	Mountain Lake	Windom
Hendricks	Mountain Lake Christian	Worthington
Heron Lake-Okabena	Murray County Central	Yellow Medicine East
Hills-Beaver Creek	New London-Spicer	

HEALTH INSURANCE SUBSCRIBERS

Over 150 schools, cities, counties and other governmental agencies subscribe to health insurance services for their employees through a self-funded member-owned insurance pool through the Division of Risk Management.

SOUTH DAKOTA COOPERATIVE PURCHASING MEMBERS

Over 70 schools and agencies located in South Dakota are members of our Cooperative Purchasing Program, taking advantage of the best pricing available from our vendors.

A New Look

In the fall of 2014, we started a “One Agency Branding” initiative to create an organization with a recognizable brand, logo and service promise. The new logo was just one part of our effort to create “one agency”.

Haven’t we always been one agency? Yes ... but over the past 50 years, there have been a myriad of names used for some or all of the programs under the Southwest West Central Service Cooperative umbrella, such as ECSU, Little Crow Special Education Cooperative, Regional Management Information Center, Crow River Special Education Cooperative and Southwest Telecommunications Cooperative. It was definitely time to build a strong brand for SWWC.

Today, we are SWWC and we are dedicated to providing unparalleled education and administrative services, innovative solutions and uncompromising support to our members and the communities we serve with integrity, respect and responsive action!

LEARNING CENTER LOGO UPDATES

The alternative learning centers also received a new look this year. Maintaining school pride and identity during our “One Agency Branding” initiative was very important to us. In the end, the existing learning centers logos were either refreshed or redesigned. All of their materials, such as webpages, clothing, brochures, forms and handbooks, were co-branded to include the learning center logo as well as the SWWC logo.



SWWC CLOTHING

Over the years, agency-logo clothing was offered in any color and style imaginable. Our rebranding efforts provided the perfect time to evaluate how employees purchase SWWC clothing. We partnered with a local vendor to provide an online store where staff could order clothing options that align with our new color palette. This proved to be a very affordable and streamlined approach for all.



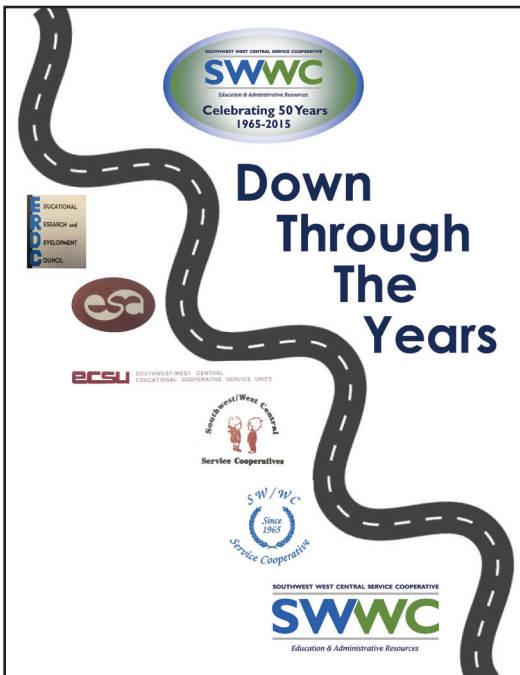
Celebrating 50 Years

SWWC hit a big milestone this year -- 50 years! Our history includes a wide variety of agency and program names, logos, programs and services. Part of the celebration of our history included a 50th anniversary book entitled **Down Through the Years**. Many hours of reading through old annual reports, brochures, files, newsletters and conversations with staff resulted in over 70 pages showcasing our history.

A series of “Did You Know? A Look Back ... ” graphics were created and shared on our social media sites to give a glimpse into our past. Did you know we owned two driver education simulators that were rented out to school districts for their drivers education program? Did you know that the agency was officed at the University of Minnesota - Morris during its first year? Did you know that we held a Conference for Young Musicians in 1996?


SWWC has evolved over the past fifty years ... but one thing remains true: we are dedicated to providing programs and services that meet the needs of our members. We were founded on two basic principles and they continue to drive us each and every day:

- The governance of the organization must be vested in the member school districts themselves, and
- The programs and services offered must be responsive to the requests of the members.



Superintendents who were interested in creating a cooperative program among small schools in the area started meeting in June of 1965 in Morris.


The first annual meeting of the new organization was held on **May 23, 1966**.

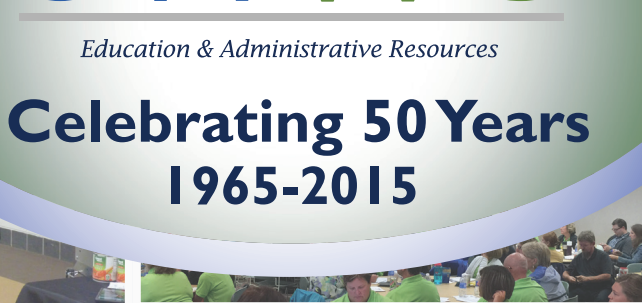


The first year we offered elementary hands-on **Science PACS** through our Media Center was 1989-90. The article at right was in the March 1994 issue of the Review.

P - Project
A - Activity
C - Centered
S - Science

A Look Back ...





SOUTHWEST WEST CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

SWWC

Education & Administrative Resources

Celebrating 50 Years 1965-2015

