

RTR Elementary is a Blue Ribbon School

By Amy Christensen, Elementary Principal

RTR Elementary has been named a Blue Ribbon School by the US Dept of Education. Elementary Principal Amy Christensen was informed of this announcement on Friday, September 7th. RTR Elementary was one of 282 schools nationwide to receive this recognition. There were seven schools recognized in Minnesota as Blue Ribbon Schools, all named for high performance.

The purpose of the program is to recognize schools performing at high academic levels or schools that are making significant progress in closing the achievement gap. RTR Elementary was selected as a school that is consistently performing at high academic levels as noted on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment tests that our students in grades 3-5 take each spring in both reading and math.

Representatives from the Blue Ribbon Schools will attend a recognition ceremony in Washington, DC on November 12 and 13. There they will be presented with a plaque and a flag to signify the National Blue Ribbon status.

Being recognized as a Blue Ribbon School is a wonderful honor for our communities! "This award reaffirms the dedication and consistently hard work of our students, teachers, parents, and community in reaching and maintaining high levels of student achievement! This recognition as a Blue Ribbon School was achieved through everyone's commitment of working together to provide a quality education for all our students," states Principal Christensen.



Telecommunications Grant Received

By Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology, josh.sumption@swsc.org

The members of the SW/WC Service Cooperative's Wide Area Network will be receiving portable Interactive Television (ITV) systems for each elementary school building through a grant awarded to SW/WC SC from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. In all \$498,328.09 was awarded by the PUC to purchase the equipment and provide for installation and implementation of it at the 36 Elementary Schools that participate in the Wide Area Network Consortium.

The grant will focus specifically on elementary schools on the WAN as previous grant awards have had a focus on High School ITV classrooms and mobile ITV systems for High Schools. As Interactive Video Conferencing usage continues to grow throughout the world, we'll now be able to bring high-quality educational programming such as a virtual field trip, guest speaker or elementary distance learning class directly into each of our elementary schools!

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Cliff Carmody
Executive Director

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News from the Executive Director

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director, cliff.carmody@swsc.org



Welcome to the first edition of “Coffee Isn’t a Nickel Any-more”! I hope to create context for the reader around education technology and the need to focus on how technology is likely to change the way we teach and the way we learn. It is imperative that we begin to better understand that what we knew in our past, is not likely to serve us well in our future – technology is making certain that our world today is not like what our world was when “coffee was a nickel”.

What I mean is, technology is changing rapidly and is creating a future we can hardly imagine! The technology in our world will fundamentally change the way we think, act and behave! Technology will significantly impact the way we teach AND the way we learn. Technology needs to be an important consideration as we design the future of educational programs to best meet the needs of our children. I believe it is time to understand the changes technology is creating and embrace the use of technology to teach our kids what their world will be like in the 21st Century!

Let me share an example. A colleague shared with me an interesting article called “Augmented Reality in a Contact Lens”. The article describes advances in technology that integrates basic electronics into contact lenses. Here is a brief summary:

These visions might seem far-fetched, but a contact lens with simple built-in electronics is already within reach; in fact my students and I are already producing such devices in small numbers in my laboratory at the University of Washington, in Seattle.

Conventional contact lenses are polymers formed in specific shapes to correct faulty vision. To turn such a lens into a functional system, we integrate control circuits, communication circuits, and miniature antennas into the lens using custom-built optoelectronic components. Those components will eventually include hundreds of LEDs, which will form images in front of the eye, such as words, charts, and photographs. Much of the hardware is semitransparent so that wearers can navigate their surroundings without crashing into them or becoming disoriented. In all likelihood, a separate, portable device will relay displayable information to the lens’s control circuit, which will operate the optoelectronics in the lens. (BABAK A. PARVIZ, INSIDE TECHNOLOGY SPECTRUM, SEPTEMBER 2009)

Wow! Does this make your mind wander to how this could be used in a teaching and learning environment? How might this technology be used by students in a 21st Century classroom? If nothing else, think of the frustration an American History teacher might feel when a student wearing a new wave contact lens has all of the answers to the test displayed on an image in front of them; projected by their bionic contact lens! Reminds me of a time (nearly a decade ago) when I asked a group of teachers what we are going to do when kids can text answers to tests on their cell phones and the response was “we will ban cell phones in schools”! Of course, we know that strategy has not been very successful!

There are thousands of examples of new technologies being developed every day. We need to pay attention to these changes in technology; not all will impact how we deliver instruction, but some have the potential to drastically and fundamentally change the way we teach kids. Obviously, we cannot “ban” technology from our schools. In fact, we need to find ways to encourage the use of technology; 21st Century learning is dependent upon it! The world is changing and our schools will need to change with it!

Risk Management Services

Wellness Institute Incentives Program

By Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator, kari.bailey@swsc.org

In 2011-2012, ten school districts piloted a new wellness incentives program. The program was designed to incentivize employees for participation in wellness programs by offering either discounted health insurance premiums or a contribution into a VEBA or HSA account. In the ten groups that participated, we had approximately a 55% participation rate. During the 2012-2013 school year, this program will expand to any group in the School Pool that is interested in participating. There will be an informational meeting held at the SW/WC Service Cooperative Marshall offices on Tuesday, November 20, 2012 from 9:30am-11:30am. Key participants would include Business Manager/Payroll/HR/Wellness Coordinator. Please contact me if you are interested in attending or would like more information.



Health Cost Management Program

By Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator, kari.bailey@swsc.org



The Annual Fall Health Conference was held on Thursday, September 20th with over 60 attendees. The Health Conference was open to all groups in the health insurance pool. Registered Dietitian Katie Wilhelmi presented attendees with menu planning using My Plate. Gloria Sabin (Clinical Director at Western Mental Health) and Nancy Blanchard (Physical Therapist with Big Stone Therapies) presented on stress management during the afternoon sessions.

Attendees also learned more about the Health Cost Management Program and Wellness Institute initiatives going on at the Service Coop. Thank you to all that participated in this event!



Shaving for Stephanie in Worthington

By John Landgaard, Superintendent

The community of Worthington is showing support for one of their own who is facing cancer-Stephanie Romero, a junior at Worthington High School.



Her classmates at Worthington High School set a goal to raise \$1,000 to help with expenses in her cancer fight and ended up raising \$3,400. As a "reward" to the student body for raising the money, High School Principal Paul Karelis shaved off the mustache he's been sporting for 25 years. The before, during and after photos tell the story! Additionally, people donated to Stephanie's support fund during Worthington's recent homecoming football game.



Kudos to Worthington in their support for Stephanie!!

Special Education Services

Sequestration...The New Word of the Moment

By Teresa Ostlie, Director of Special Education Services, teresa.ostlie@swsc.org

The new word of the moment seems to be “Sequestration”. Recently, I attended a Special Education Director’s Forum in St. Paul and George Holt, Finance Guru at MDE indicated that this word simply means an “across the board cut” in all government programs. I decided to find out how this might impact special education and Title 1 programs in Minnesota. I read portions of a July 25, 2012 report by Senator Tom Harkin, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies. This report titled, “Under Threat: Sequestration’s Impact on Nondefense Jobs and Services”, spelled out the following impacts to our state.



Title I is the cornerstone Federal program for helping all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, meet high academic standards. More than 90 percent of the Nation’s local educational agencies (LEAs) receive these funds, which are allocated by formula based largely on LEA family income levels.

FY12 Funding: \$157,485,439 FY13 Sequester Cut: \$12,932,780 Fewer Schools Receiving Grant Funds: 70
Fewer Students Served: 13,698 Education Jobs Lost: 178

The **Special Education Grants to States** program authorized under section 611 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act helps States and local communities meet the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. Most of these funds are provided to LEAs. More than 35 years ago, the Federal Government committed to pay 40 percent of such costs, but now provides only 16 percent. States are required to provide a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities, so decreased Federal revenue means that State and local revenue will need to cover required costs.

FY12 Funding: \$189,532,481 FY13 Sequester Cut: \$14,545,082 Fewer Jobs Supported by Funding: 176

The **Special Education Preschool State Grants** program authorized under section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides formula-based grants to States that support high-quality early childhood education for children with disabilities ages 3-5. Most of these funds are provided to LEAs and education service agencies.

FY12 Funding: \$7,285,511 FY13 Sequester Cut: \$542,441 Few Jobs Supported by Funding: 7

Special Education Grants for Infants and Families support statewide systems of early intervention services for children from birth through age 2 and their families. Funds are provided by formula to each State.

FY12 Funding: \$7,131,880 FY13 Sequester Cut: \$558,148 Fewer Infants and Toddlers Served: 392

Keep My Brain In The Game

By Darwin Dyce, Physical and Health Disability Consultant, darwin.dyce@swsc.org



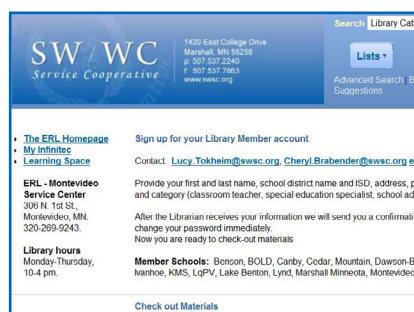
Activity-related concussion is a very real concern among parents and educators. While adults can have a big hand in protecting children from the possibly permanent dangers of concussion, it is frequently up to the kids themselves to determine whether or not they need to “sit it out” and tell their parents, coach or teacher about a potentially serious injury.

To that end, the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance and Hennepin County Medical Center have developed Keep My Brain in the Game, an interactive, creative project designed to raise awareness of the dangers of play-related concussion among youth. It is designed to get kids thinking about their own health and to take ownership of their bodies, by encouraging them to frame their awareness as a creative exercise. Kids take the Keep My Brain in the Game pledge—“If I am hurt, I will sit it out until a medical professional tells me I am OK to play. My brain is more important than a game. It’s the only one I have!”—and then personalize it through an artistic project such as a collage, story, video or drawing. It is free and available to any classroom, team, club or youth-centered organization. The Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance supplies the information; you supply the time. For further information please contact Lee George, Volunteer and Marketing Manager, at leeg@braininjurymn.org.

Introducing the New Resource Library

By Lucy Tokheim, Resource Library Coordinator, lucy.tokheim@swsc.org

Our new KOHA open-source Library System is easy to navigate. (It's the same system that Plum Creek Public Library adopted April 2012.) Members can search many ways to explore the Library catalog.



Classroom materials for reading and math skills, Science Pacs for hands-on classroom units, Special Education Assessment Tools and much more. We are still cataloging our collection into this database, so keep checking back through the year: <http://catalog.swsc.org>

Infinitec, our new online resource for the ERL, stands for infinite potential through technology. The Infinitec website includes on-demand professional develop-

ment, curriculum supports and professional learning opportunities.



Our interactive library web page is called **Learning Space ERL** and is building an excellent filter. Feeling overwhelmed by the Information Deluge? The Learning Space ERL invites collaboration to build filters that help members concentrate on excellent free resources that are becoming available to K-12 educators. We can rank them together!



Visit the new library:
www.swsc.org/erl

(ERL stands for
Educational
Resource Library)



The ERL web page offers linked access to the Library catalog and myInfinitec.org in addition to other selected resources. Learning Space is planned as a collaborative project among SWSC staff and member School districts as well as other expert support. The Atlas of New Librarianship, by R. David Lankes sets out a model for the new kind of library we are envisioning. "Librarians serve community through access, knowledge, a safe environment and motivation."

The Atlas of Science Literacy, Vol 1 & 2 are recent additions to LearningSpace ERL

High quality library and classroom materials
for PK-12 schools: books, ebooks, DVDs,
audiobooks, educational software, and
more.

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The POHI Guy: Transition and Technology

By Darwin Dyce, Physical and Health Disability Consultant, darwin.dyce@swsc.org

*POHI (an older acronym). The current letter combination is P/HD which has reason but no rhyme.



Dear POHI Guy,

I have a certain in-law (you know who you are) who seems to have difficulty transitioning to my family gatherings in a timely manner. He always seems to have an excuse that he was busy or it didn't make it onto his schedule. How will this guy ever learn basic life skills if he doesn't even show up at my house on time? I only write this to help him through a much needed "transitional period".

Signed...Ms. Prompt

Dear "Ms. Prompt"

So you think I don't recognize another attempt to belittle your in-law again and this time through my column? This is not the place to air your dirty laundry (of which you have plenty). I happen to have been on time for your family dinner and watch the football game by the way. The game provided excellent motivation. So there, end of story.

Let's shift the focus to something important like transition and assistive technology for our special needs students. Believe me I know it's life in the fast lane for anyone working in the area of special education. Our schools are providing many experiences for students which will help prepare them to live and work in the community. One of the best ways to help students take their future seriously is to actively engage them in the planning. Your students have likely already participated in activities to identify interests and aptitudes along with related work experiences. Another equally important transition planning activity is to engage the student in communicating how their unique learning style can be supported in high school as well as post-high school learning environments. (Feel free to contact me for a teacher and student friendly list of sentence starters to help students address this topic.) Since the development of individualized education plans are all about the student, their attendance and participation in that process is another important task to help the student advocate for their present and future. Perhaps this is already taking place for your students, if so fantastic, if not give it a try. For our students who struggle with note taking, reading and writing, there are a variety of assistive technology (AT) supports worthy of consideration. We are called to consider AT in the IEP process. To learn more about assistive technology consideration: go to the Coop's on-line professional development site: moodle.swsc.org/pd and look under "Special Education OPD" for "Utilizing the SETT Process".

Assistive technology, when properly identified and implemented, offers the ability to interact more successfully with school curriculum. Providing access to such tools in the school setting increases the likelihood of success and independence in post-secondary educational settings. Having access to AT supports at an early age rather than waiting until graduation is indeed a life changer.

Listed below are several Web resources related to transition and technology. They are quite helpful, but are not however, going to keep "Ms. Prompt" happy. That is another skill set entirely.

*Project C3 <http://www.c3online.org/>

*Self-Determination Project <http://sdsp.uncc.edu/home.asp>

*National Center for Education and Secondary Transition <http://www.ncset.org/>

*MDE's transition site <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SpecEdProg/SecTrans/index.html>

*National Center on Accessible Materials <http://aim.cast.org/>

*SW/WC Service Cooperative <http://moodle.swsc.org/pd/>

Signed...POHI Guy



Teaching and Learning Services

SW MN Workforce Council Career Expo

By Tom Hoff, Career and Technical Project Coordinator, tom.hoff@swsc.org

“Southwest Minnesota Workforce Council” Career Expo Bigger and Better Than Ever!

On September 25th and 26th 1,846 students from 31 high schools participated at Career Expo events at Southwest Minnesota State University and Minnesota West Community and Technical College-Worthington campuses. The Expo is the result of one of the largest public-private collaborations in our region with over 250 business, college, k-12, and agency volunteers coming together to provide career and education awareness experiences for high school sophomores and juniors. This year marked the first year of having a title sponsor for the event and we are grateful to Southwest Minnesota Workforce Council for their commitment to career education for students in the region.

In addition to adding a title sponsor, there were several other significant changes to the 2012 event. Instead of a full-day event with separate morning and afternoon groups, the entire event (both days) was held in the morning for all students. The half-day format used our exhibitor time more efficiently and eased some school bussing conflicts. This year adult participants from Adult Basic Education and the Workforce Center were invited to explore career options by participating in the interactive exhibit area. Campus tours were added to give students (in groups of 30) a glimpse of college life and better familiarity with a college campus. Eighty five percent of students felt the tour was a valuable experience and this new facet will likely be continued next year. Our fourth change to the event was a little controversial; we requested that students BRING their cell phones. That’s right, we didn’t ask them to leave them at home, we encouraged their use as part of an audience participation polling activity during “The Career is Right” game show. Students were asked a variety of questions and then requested to choose a response by texting in their answer. A bar graph, projected on a screen, automatically updated as they submitted their answers to summarize the audience’s responses. In spite of some technical glitches, the students liked the use of this technology and requested that we incorporate similar activities in future events.



“The Career is Right” game show high school team winners at the two events were: Adrian, Canby, Ellsworth, Ivanhoe, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, Westbrook-Walnut Grove, Worthington ALC, and Yellow Medicine East

Career Expo event partners included the Department of Employment and Economic Development, Job Service, Marshall/Montevideo/Worthington Workforce Centers, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium Schools, Regional Businesses and Service Agencies, SW/WC SC, Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Southwest Minnesota State University, and the Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce.

For more event information and pictures go to www.lifetimeoflearning.com or to www.facebook.com/SWWCSC.



Half a Million Questions Correct!

By Tom Hoff, Career and Technical Project Coordinator, tom.hoff@swsc.org

Nearly half a million questions were correctly answered in the first of two regional math contests! From 9/28 to 10/4, 1,461 students from 19 regional schools correctly answered 438,205 questions during an online math contest conducted through a collaboration between SumDog and the SW/WC SC. SumDog is an interactive math game website designed to help students improve their math skills by challenging them to compete against themselves and other students around the world. The winning team for this contest was Sleepy Eye Public with 863 points. MCC Middle School was a close second with 811 points. The next contest will be held from 11/2-11/8. For more information, go to www.sumdog.com.



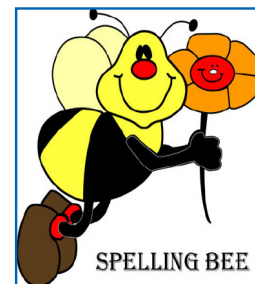


Still Time to Register for Spelling Bee

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator, sue.gorecki@swsc.org

The registration deadlines for Spelling Bee are fast approaching. The early bird deadline is November 5 with the final deadline on November 12. Last year over 4100 students from 24 school districts participated in the various levels of Spelling Bee – from classroom, school, district, regional and the multi-region state Spelling Bee.

Please note that you need to register with the SW/WC Service Cooperative and with Scripps in order to participate in the Spelling Bee Program.



Knowledge Bowl Season Begins

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator, sue.gorecki@swsc.org

A meeting for Knowledge Bowl coaches was held on September 25. Information about Knowledge Bowl was discussed, handbooks were distributed, the documents/resources on the website were reviewed, and additional invitationals were added. Coaches had the chance to network while enjoying pizza.

We'd like to welcome New Century Academy of Hutchinson who is beginning both a junior and senior high program this year. If other schools are interested in starting a Knowledge Bowl program or adding another level (junior or senior high) please contact Sue ASAP. Registration forms are available on our website (www.swsc.org/studentactivities) and deadlines are listed below:

Junior High

Nov. 20, 2012 - Early Bird Deadline

Nov. 30, 2012 - Final Deadline

Senior High

Feb. 1, 2013 - Early Bird Deadline

Feb. 8, 2013 - Final Deadline



Looking Ahead: Plan to Attend Science & Nature Conference in May

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator, sue.gorecki@swsc.org

Lonnie Dupre, polar explorer and author, is the keynote speaker for the 19th Annual Science & Nature Conference scheduled for May 15, 2013. During an arctic career spanning 25 years, Dupre has traveled over 15,000 miles throughout the high arctic and polar regions by dog team, ski and kayak. Plan to attend the conference to hear about his adventures. In addition to the keynote presentation, students will participate in three hands-on classes, selected from a wide variety of topics related to science, nature and technology.

Suggestion: consider bringing students to this conference in place of an end-of-year field trip!



Science & Nature Conference (Continued from page 8)

With the wide variety of topics offered, all students will find classes of interest and it will be a fun-filled, educational day.

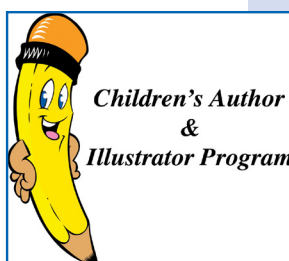
Mark your calendar – you don't want to miss this event! Early bird registration deadline is March 27 with the final deadline on April 3. Brochures will be sent out in late February and also posted on our website.

Elementary Residency Program

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator, sue.gorecki@swsc.org

Information on the Children's Author & Illustrator Program was recently emailed to elementary principals, superintendents, and schools that participated in last year's program. This program allows students in local elementary classrooms to meet professional authors and illustrators who share their personal adventure of creating and publishing books. Consider registering for this program soon; the registration deadlines are November 6 for the early bird deadline and November 13 for the final deadline. Nineteen districts and over 3,800 students participated last year.

The residencies will occur during the weeks of April 8-12 and April 22-26, 2013. While this is a very busy time of the school year, we've always been able to schedule days that work for each school involved. The presenters for this year's program are listed below.



Nancy Carlson – Author & Illustrator Nancy Carlson has written and illustrated over 60 picture books. Her specialty is teaching kids to feel good about themselves and others. Kids, parents, teachers and even book critics think she does a great job. That's because she is never out of touch with the kid spirit inside herself. Her brightly colored pencil drawings perfectly capture the happy-go-lucky characters that fill her clever and funny books. There is a life lesson to be learned from each story. You can check out Nancy's books and artwork at

www.nancycarlson.com.

Rick Chrustowski – Author & Illustrator Author and illustrator Rick Chrustowski lives and works in a turn of the century farmhouse. When not working in his studio, he can usually be found in his garden or exploring nature. His interests in gardening and nature photography clearly influence his books. Rick tries to write stories that are exciting to read and make artwork that's fun to look at. Chrustowski's wonderful books are filled with artwork which creates a world where "living is visual, colorful, and cool." Learn more about Rick at www.rickchrustowski.com.



Nancy Loewen – Author Nancy Loewen grew up in Mountain Lake, a small town in southwestern Minnesota. During the long summers on the farm, she entertained herself by reading large stacks of library books—which might just have something to do with her becoming a writer. She's published more than 100 books for children and young adults, both fiction and nonfiction. A recent picture book, The Last Day of Kindergarten, was a finalist in the 2012 Minnesota Book Awards. To learn more about Nancy and her books, visit her website at www.nancyloewen.com.



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

If you have questions about any of the Student Activities, contact:

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Encourage Students to Participate

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator, sue.gorecki@swsc.org

The 9th Annual Creative Writing Contest is open to students in grades 3-12. The categories include: fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction (grades 5-12). The submission deadline is January 18, 2013 so encourage students to begin working on their submissions. Details about the contest are listed in the brochure sent to schools and are also available on our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities, then click on Creative Writing Contest. This is a unique opportunity for students to get recognition for their individual work. Last year, 251 students from 17 school districts submitted 376 entries. The contest has continued to grow and we hope to increase participation again this year.

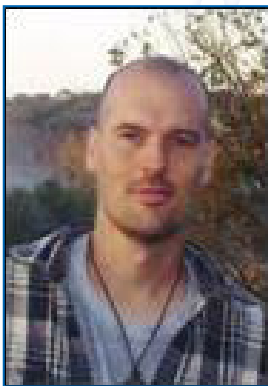
Finalists and their families and teachers will be invited to an Awards Ceremony on April 21. A \$2,000 scholarship to attend SMSU will be awarded to the top junior/senior place finisher in each writing category (limit of one scholarship per student, per year). Medals and gift certificates will be given to the top place finisher from each grade level in each writing category, along with one free copy of the anthology. A recognition award will be presented to the school with the most top three place winners. Last year there was a tie between Comfrey and New London-Spicer so they each received an award.



Check Out the Classes at the Conference for Young Writers

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator, sue.gorecki@swsc.org

Brochures for the 21st Annual Conference for Young Writers were recently sent to schools. The conference will be held on January 10, 2013 at SMSU in Marshall. Plan to attend and hear a story of hope from Jonathan Friesen, an award-winning author, international speaker, and storyteller. Tourette syndrome filled his teen years with anger and ostracism; but Jonathan's journey took an amazing and heartwarming turn, freeing him to achieve his dreams.



Through interaction with presenters at the conference, students explore their creativity and discover how to express their thoughts using written words. Students also learn that writing is an exciting skill that can open up a lifetime of opportunities. Classes feature speakers and hands-on activities related to poetry, scary stories, emotional writing, storytelling, fantasy or science fiction, creating characters, using your imagination, journaling, graphic novels, etc.

Last year's conference drew approximately 1,000 participants and we're hoping for more this year. The conference is targeted for students in grades 3-8. Check out our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities, then click on Young Writers for the brochure and also for the flyer that you could send home with students. Consider adding a link on your website to our website (address above) for parents to access information about our student conferences. We appreciate any assistance you can provide in helping to publicize our events.

Registration Deadlines:

November 20 - Early Bird Deadline

November 30 - Final Deadline

If you have questions
about any of the
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1,000+ Registered for the Conference for Young Artists

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator, sue.gorecki@swsc.org

The SW/WC SC is proud to present the "Southwest Minnesota Arts & Humanities Council" Conference for Young Artists on November 7 at SMSU in Marshall. Over 1,000 participants from 26 school districts are registered to participate in this event. We are grateful to Southwest Minnesota Arts & Humanities Council for being the title sponsor for the conference. SMAHC's support of this project is made possible by the voters of Minnesota, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Students, teachers and parents will attend a keynote presentation by Katie McKy from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. McKy is the author of Wolf Camp, Pumpkin Town, It All Began with a Bean, and Tough Kids, Tough Classrooms. She has traveled tens of thousands of miles to entertain and educate hundreds of thousands of kids. We're looking forward to hearing her message.

The conference is for students in grades K-8. Students will participate in three hands-on classes such as wheel thrown pottery, clay sculpture, mask making, sand art, watercolor, creating cartoon characters, making origami creations, drawing, making jewelry, doing folk dances, learning the art of magic, card making, etc. There's something to interest everyone!

Special thanks to the schools who continue to support the student conferences by sending groups of students. Listed below are the schools with the largest number of participants: Worthington-81, Murray County Central-77, MACCRAY-73, Litchfield-63, Marshall Area Christian-56, and KMS-55. Special thanks to SMAHC for their support in being the title sponsor for Young Artists!



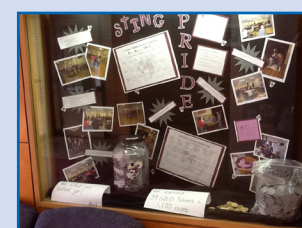
More information is available at www.swsc.org/studentactivities

Positively Proud at YME's Bert Raney

By Melissa Hesch, Elementary Principal

Bert Raney Elementary is positively proud about Sting PRIDE our school-wide PBIS initiative. The Bert Raney PBIS theme is: PRIDE - Practicing Respect in all I Do Everyday! Respect Myself, Respect Others, Respect Property.

Expectations for specific areas of the school for all students have been taught through stations and are visibly posted in each area of the school. When a student exhibits PRIDE, that student will be given a PRIDE token. Tokens will be collected in classroom jars and ultimately added to a school-wide jar in the office. A celebration of positive choices will be school-wide once the jar in the office is full. The first PBIS reward celebration was held on September 17th as students filled the school jar in one week! During the 2012-2013 school year Bert Raney will continue to focus on providing each child with new challenges that will result in a rewarding school experience creating "A Community of Learners Building a Foundation for Future Success". Academic emphasis on the core content areas of reading, language arts, science, social studies, and math will remain a priority as well as providing a learning program that aligns with the state standards. Our commitment will be to provide our students with research based instructional practices and learning opportunities that enhance their academic growth. In addition, we will be adding a new reading series, Journeys, by Houghton Mifflin as a component of balanced literacy. This series provides a scope and sequence of skill progression to ensure that all students receive a more consistent learning experience in reading and writing.



Administrative Services

Online Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools

By Christine Schmitt, Health & Safety Management Assistance Technician, christine.schmitt@swsc.org

EPA developed the Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program to help schools identify, resolve, and prevent IAQ problems. Through simple, low-cost measures, schools can:

- Reduce IAQ-related health risks and triggers for asthma
- Identify sources of mold
- Improve performance and productivity
- Avoid costly repairs
- Prevent negative publicity and loss of parent and community trust
- Avoid liability problems



Poor indoor air quality can affect the health of your staff and students. It can affect concentration, attendance, and performance. An important step of assessing your IAQ is an annual staff survey to get a good general assessment.

Did you know there is a low cost online option to comply with the EPA survey?

We offer an easy, cost effective way to survey your staff and compile the results for you into an easy to read summary ready for presentation to the school board and staff. For more information, visit www.swsc.org/IAQ.

New Technology Integration Specialist

By Kara Damm, Technology Integration Specialist, kara.damm@swsc.org

My name is Kara Damm and I am so excited to be a part of the SW/WC Service Cooperative! I began my new position as the Technology Integration Specialist in June 2012.

I have a Computer Education, K-12 Bachelor of Science Degree from Dakota State University in Madison, SD. Before joining the SW/WC SC, I taught for two years at Murray County Central Schools in Slayton, MN and was their Technology Administrator for the past seven years. I have a love of technology and most important, showing how we can use technology in the classroom to help engage students.



Technology Integration is when classroom teachers use technology to introduce, reinforce, extend, enrich, access, and remediate student mastery of curricular targets. The technology should become an integral part of how the classroom functions. My role is to help teachers find the tools they need to incorporate technology into their classes.

You can follow Kara on Twitter @kdamm and on Facebook at facebook.com/SwwcTechnologyIntegrationInEducation.

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A New RMIC Calendar

By Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services, darin.jensen@swsc.org

The Regional Management Information Center (RMIC) has been utilizing a calendar feature that is in addition to the calendar on the Service Cooperative website. This calendar is specific to reporting MARSS, Finance or Payroll service deadlines as well as workshops. You can locate the calendar from the swsc.org/rmic website. The calendar is listed at the bottom on the left hand side. We encourage our districts to check it out.

Tech Conference...Coming Soon!

By Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology, josh.sumption@swsc.org

Tech Conference, Tech Conference, Tech Conference. Everyone's favorite event will be here very soon. We have been working on the conference's backbone since August, and here are a few developments that we can share so far on the conference:

Kevin Honeycutt will be back. We're really going to try to focus in on the Digital Jam during the pre-conference this year.

Our Keynote this year will most likely be Kari Arfstrom, Executive Director of the Flipped Learning Network. <http://flippedlearning.org/>. What makes Kari very unique is that not only is she currently the head of the Flipped Learning Network, but she has also worked for CoSN, AESA and many other Ed Tech Organizations over the years. She has a well-rounded Ed Tech background and is spearheading what I hope teachers and school administrators will find to be a fascinating effort.

We are also working on bringing Ananth Pai and Secretary of State Mark Ritchie to the conference to talk about iCivics and the gamification of classroom learning. Ananth was at the conference last year and his sessions were very well received.

One small change that we will look at this year is having a "Focus Session" timeslot in the conference. During the Focus Session timeslot we will only run up to 4 (5 at the absolute most) sessions with our featured speakers. There will be no vendors, product demos, or things of that nature taking place during these sessions. Hopefully that will drive better attendance to these speakers that are having to compete with other sessions during the same time. Making this change will remove one of our breakout session timeslots, meaning we will be reducing the number of breakout session slots available.



Confidence Building Through Graphic Arts

By Tony Miller, Redwood Area High School

Walk into Tony Miller's new Graphic Arts class at Redwood Valley High School on a given day, and you'll see students engaged in such activities as: making short films, editing photos for websites, photographing sports events, producing Claymation series, or setting up photo shoots with local businesses.

What you won't see however, is Miller at the front of the class, teaching in the traditional sense. Miller, who is also a professional freelance photographer, tends to give his students the technical advice they need to complete their projects, and then leaves the execution of the finished product up to them. "I could give them an assignment and have all the students do an interview on specific topic, but students get much more out of assignments that they themselves generate." On the flip side, while it may seem contrary to traditional teaching methods, Miller welcomes student "safe failure" as a means to teach valuable lessons and handle personal disappointment. He does not intervene for example, if a student-- through lack of planning or skill development-- does not meet a deadline or produce a quality product; he simply views this as an important learning experience.

Miller calls this method of teaching, "Constructed Success," and both parents and staff are taking notice. A newly formed sense of student confidence has also carried over into improved grades and attendance at school for the

(continued on page 14)



Graphic Arts (Continued from Page 13)

students in class—which just happens to be made up of special education students. Rick Jorgenson, high school principal says, “I have been very impressed by the level of engagement demonstrated by the students in class. They take ownership of the content, and produce high quality products.”

Miller wishes to thank the Redwood Area Foundation and the administration for believing in innovation, and for making the class possible. “The results,” says Miller, “speak for themselves!”



The Power of ICU at GSL

By Daniel Svoboda, Assistant High School Principal

This year at Glencoe Silver Lake’s Lincoln Junior High we are going to be making some changes that will positively affect student learning and student achievement. Many of you have heard snippets about The Power of ICU. I am writing this to explain what this means and how this may impact parents at home, students and student achievement at Lincoln Junior High.

The Power of ICU, at its core, is a list; the ICU list, essentially, is a list of students who have not completed their homework. This list is created by the individual teachers and is shared with all teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and coaches. Parents will also be contacted when the student does not have the homework done, or has not completed the homework at an acceptable level. For example, a worksheet that is turned in with nonsensical answers will be returned to the student with instructions to redo it and do it well.

The list will be used as a tool to help ALL students complete ALL assignments so that teachers can get an honest assessment on what students have actually learned. This will allow teachers to change lessons to spend more time on standards that students are struggling with and less time on standards they have already mastered.

Another very important part of The Power of ICU is that the teaching staff at Lincoln Junior High School will be changing how they assess student achievement (i.e. give grades). In years past, students would accumulate points through homework, tests, quizzes, and projects. The teacher evaluated students work and assigned a point value to each of the assignments, tests and quizzes, add it all up, and assign a grade accordingly. With The Power of ICU, the teacher will have two sections in the grade books: one labeled “formative assessment” (practice or feedback while a student is learning the material) and the other “summative assessment” (assessment after the learning process has finished). All teachers at Lincoln Junior High School will be using 20% formative assessment and 80% summative assessment to grade students. This will give a more accurate assessment on what a student has actually learned.

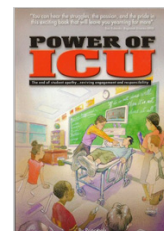
With The Power of ICU changes, we will be communicating our expectations a bit differently with students. Instead of “you need to do this work or you will get a zero”, we will simply ask four questions:

1. What do you owe?
2. Who do you owe?
3. What do you need?
4. How can I help?

After asking these questions, we will help that student in whatever way we can: giving extra help, extra time, a pencil, a notebook or whatever they need to complete the assignment. We need to have every student do every assignment so that we can know if they have learned the material or not. We will rely on the list to help us identify students who have not completed their work and ask the four questions to find out what they need to complete their assignments.

Additionally, there will be extra opportunities for students to get assignments done or restudy for tests. There will be time before school, after school, during lunch, and the potential to be pulled out of an elective course to complete the work. During these opportunities, GSL will provide a place, the time, and staffing with paraprofessionals, teachers or peer tutors.

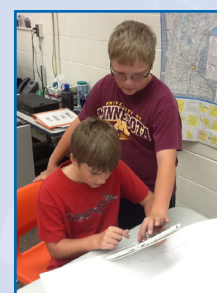
The goal is to get ALL students to complete ALL assignments by implementing The Power of ICU methodology. We have changed the grading system as well as using a new way of communicating; I am confident this will make a huge impact on our junior high students’ education and I look forward to the coming school year.



iPads Take Over 6th Grade at JCC

By Kari Wilkinson, Middle School Principal

Jackson County Central Middle School began a 1:1 iPad Pilot program this fall with all sixth grade students using an iPad as one of their educational tools. The iPad is being used to enhance learning through digital curriculum materials, collaboration tools, and organizational tools. All students are taking the iPads home with them as part of this project. This is working fabulously for our math teacher, Tara Boogerd, who does a flipped classroom. Students watch her instruction on their iPad at home and work on their practice work in class where she can assist them. It's working great for our English teacher, Deidre Wiersen, as she has completely rid the classroom of composition journals and students are using an iPad app to journal. The social studies teacher, Nathan Boler, is seeing a huge increase in scores on the infamous 6th grade states test because 6th graders are seen all over the building shaking their iPads, practicing their states knowledge with the Shake the States app. The language teacher, Shane Roenfanz, is having students blog on their iPads as a daily writing assignment, teaching students how to properly write online, and he can't wait till science starts and he can share all the exciting science apps. Many textbooks are available online so they can use their iPad for this as well. Teachers have created QR codes where students scan them and their assignment appears on their iPad. They are using an amazing app to do exit slips (a fabulous formative assessment) to assess what students know after a lesson and then utilizing the information given to them to adjust class for the next day. Students are also able to access and submit assignments using their iPad through our website. There are so many other things they are doing; the list goes on and on. Our teachers were just notified last spring that all 6th graders would receive iPads, and between them and our amazing technology coordinators, Shirley Handzus and Diane Ulrich, they have done a phenomenal job so far piloting it. They learn something new every day, and our students are so excited about 6th grade. Come visit or contact any of these teachers if you'd like to hear more about it.



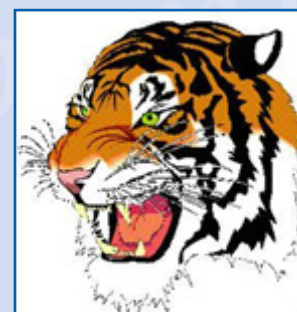
Marshall Receives PEN Award

By La Oeltjenbruns, Marshall Public Schools

Last spring, Marshall Public Schools completed an evaluation with the Minnesota Council for Quality (now called the MN Performance Excellence Network). As a result of this evaluation, the District received the 2011 Advancement Level Performance Excellence Award. This assessment helps leaders understand what is working well in their organizations and on what they should be focusing their attention. The foundation of the assessment is the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, which outlines validated criteria that have been shown to produce excellent organizational results.

The feedback from this process will be utilized by our SSI (Systems for School Improvement) team to improve our schools and is an important piece of continuous improvement. The assessment drives results in several areas: financial, customer, workforce, and operational.

Organizations recognized at the Advancement Level have demonstrated, through their commitment and implementation of quality management principles, progress in building systematic approaches responsive to the basic purposes of the Criteria.



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.

November - February

- 11/2 Secondary Transition Toolkit: The Next Generation - Marshall
- 11/2 MSTP Integrating Science Through Literacy and Math - Marshall
- 11/5 Special Ed Info for Administrators - Marshall
- 11/7 2012-13 Principal Network-Initiative Overload - Maynard
- 11/7 FLY Celebration - Tracy
- 11/7 Regional Technology Coordinator Workshop - Marshall
- 11/8 Nancy Blumstein Presentation-Special Ed Law Training - Marshall
- 11/8 Flipping Your Class - Marshall
- 11/8 Working Memory and Academic Learning-A Book Study - Marshall
- 11/9 CPI Full Training - Worthington
- 11/9 Google Drive (Docs) in the Classroom - Marshall
- 11/12 2010 MN Social Studies Standards - Marshall
- 11/13 MDE Special Education Fiscal Compliance Training - Redwood Falls
- 11/13 The Art of Teaching: Student Engagement - Marshall
- 11/14 MDE Program Compliance Training - Redwood Falls
- 11/15 Using iPads in the K-6 Classroom - Marshall
- 11/16 CPI Refresher - Worthington
- 11/16 SW-PBIS Information Workshop - Marshall
- 11/20 School Insurance Pool Wellness Incentives Workshop - Marshall
- 11/20 SEAT Networking - Redwood Falls
- 11/20 ECSE Workshop - Redwood Falls
- 11/21 CPI Full Training - Redwood Falls
- 11/21 CPI ASD Refresher - Marshall
- 11/29 Getting the Most from Microsoft Excel - Marshall
- 12/4 Regional Technology Coordinator Meeting - Marshall
- 1/21 CPI Full Training - Redwood Falls
- 2/7 Regional Technology Coordinator Meeting - Marshall
- 2/8 Principal/Teacher Evaluation Workshop--2nd session--with MDE - Marshall

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