

The Review

Spring 2011

Math & Science Teacher Partnership Highlights from 2010-2011

By Christy Hemp, MSTP Grant Coordinator/Math Specialist/School Improvement Specialist

The Math and Science Teacher Partnership (MSTP) is completing its 3rd year!

In Science, Cedar Mountain, Lincoln HI—Hendricks, Holy Redeemer, Hutchinson, Lynd, Minneota, Pipestone, Red Rock Central, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, and Worthington teachers participated in workshops focused on the new Science Strand—The Nature of Science & Engineering from the 2009 MN Science Standards.



In Math,

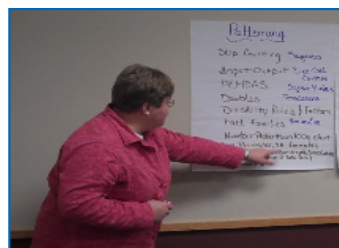
Bird Island-Olivia-Danube, Brewster, Lincoln HI—Ivanhoe, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg, Minneota, Round Lake, and Sleepy Eye teachers participated in workshops focused on Accelerating Students to Grade Level in Mathematics focusing on each strand of the 2007 MN Math Standards and pedagogy. Participating teachers in both groups also participated in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to implement the content and strategies provided through the project.



We are currently accepting applications for the 2011-2012 school year.

- The Science group will include grades 7-12 Life Science teachers focusing on the 2009 MN Science Standards Strands of Life Science and The Nature of Science & Engineering.
- The Math group will include grades 3-8 Math teachers focusing on the 2007 MN Math Standards sub-content of Rational Numbers (fractions, decimals, ratio and proportion).
- Both groups will have a PLC component and will receive ongoing support throughout the year from the MSTP Coordinator.

For applications and more information on the MSTP project, call Christy Hemp 507-537-2293.



SW/WC Service Cooperative

Cliff Carmody, Executive Director

Office Locations

Marshall Office
1420 East College Drive
Marshall, MN 56258
507-537-2240
Fax 507-537-7663

Montevideo Office
306 North First Street
Montevideo, MN 56265
320-269-9243
Fax 320-269-7132

Pipestone Office
1401 7th Street SW
Pipestone, MN 56164
507-825-5858
Fax 507-825-4035

Willmar Office
611 Southwest 5th Street
Willmar, MN 56201
320-231-5184
Fax 320-231-5302

Windom Office
41385 N. Highway 71
Windom, MN 56101
507-831-2936
Fax 507-831-2938

The SW/WC SC
is a member of:



www.swsc.org

SW/WC SC Administrative Leadership Team

Cliff Carmody
Executive Director

Deecy Jesse
Executive Assistant

Annette Miller
Director of Finance

Bob Braun
Sr Director of Tchg & Learning

Darin Jensen
Sr Director of Admin. Services

Doug Deragisch
Sr Director of Risk Mgmt

Edna Gossen
Operations Manager

Diane McCarron
Interim Director of Special Ed

John Willey
Principal, Red Rock Ridge

Josh Sumption
Manager of Info. Technology

Mary Palmer
Sr Director of Spec. Education

Shelly Maes
Manager of Member Services

Teresa Ostlie
Director of Special Education

Tammy Stahl
Director of Special Education

To contact via email:
first.last@swsc.org



News from the Executive Director....

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director

A Word About Innovation

A recent issue of Education Week displayed an upcoming forum called Innovation INSight: Managing Your District to Creatively Boost Learning....hmmm, innovation, you see this work word everywhere! Innovation in business, innovation in government, and yes, innovation in education, an argument could be made that this is the new buzzword for the 21st century.

So, what do we mean by innovation? I imagine there is a Wikipedia definition or a Webster's dictionary definition, one of the best definitions I have seen came from an article written by Bob Kill in the April edition of Prairie Business. In the article, Bob simply claims "innovation means a smarter way of doing things." He goes on to say "the best business leaders understand that innovation is a mindset about the most practical ways to improve a company." Interesting!

How does this apply to schools and school districts, cities, counties and other local units of government? When I read about innovation and I think about its application to what we do every day, a number of questions come to mind; what if this is as good as it is going to get? I mean, what if there is no more money? What if the "New Normal" is, in fact, the way the future is going to be? Then what? What are we going to do? Are we ready for the challenge this will create for our organizations? Too often, I hear my colleagues say we simply need to "weather the storm", things will get better in a year or two. . . will it?

So, what can we be doing now? I think the answer might lie somewhere in this idea of innovation. . . change is very hard for systems, organizations, and individuals, but I think we have to become better at learning and adapting to our "new normal". That means we have to innovate! We have to find ways to change our mindset about how we do the business of educating kids or delivering public services to our communities!

We need to use Bob Kill's definition of innovation and find "smarter ways of doing things." I think it is imperative that we open the dialogue and find ways to assess what we do, how we do it, and find ways to implement "practical ways to improve" what we do! Those organizations that can pull this off, whether in business or industry, education, or government, I believe may be able to survive and thrive in the challenging times ahead of us!



In this issue

Division of Risk Management Services, 3

Division of Special Education Services, 4

Division of Teaching & Learning Services, 5-6, 8-10

Division of Administrative Services, 11-15

School News, 6-7, 11-12 Professional Development Opportunities, 16

Division of Risk Management Services

By Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services

Guidance to Help You Be Your Healthiest

When you have questions about your benefits, a treatment plan, a health procedure or more, just call the customer service number on the back of your Blue Cross member ID card. You'll reach a Health Guide, a specially trained person who can answer your benefits and claims questions, help you find a provider or quickly direct you to the right information, resources and services. The Health Guide will listen carefully to your concerns and may ask you questions to learn more about your needs.

If you have questions about a condition, an upcoming medical test or procedure, your medication or other health-related questions, the Health Guide will ask you if you want to speak with one of our registered nurses. If you say yes, the Health Guide will make a three-way transfer to a Nurse Guide who will answer your questions and provide you with helpful information. In some cases, the Nurse Guide may refer you to other Blue Cross services. It's that simple. There's no waiting for a callback and no need to make another call. It's all right there.

Health Guides and Nurse Guides are available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday.

Health Cost Management

By Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator

The Division of Risk Management is wrapping up its third year of offering the Health Cost Management Program to all groups in the school health insurance pool. In addition to program activity dollars, there were dollars available for groups to offer biometric screenings to their employees. Groups offered a wide range of screenings, including cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure, body composition, BMI, vision, hearing, thyroid, PSA, vitamin D, cardiovascular, stress and hemoglobin. Reimbursements for program activities and screenings are due Friday, May 6th. Please submit all reimbursements to Kari Bailey on/before May 6th.

The fourth annual Fall Health Conference will be held on Wednesday, September 21st. Mark your calendars, and make plans to attend!

27th Annual Day of Excellence

Thanks to ALL who attended the 27th Annual "Day of Excellence" Conference held on March 7, 2011. Our keynote presentation, Seeing the Future: Using new tools to re-engage learners, from Kevin Honeycutt, Technology Integration Specialist - ESSDACK, was very well received. Some participant

responses to the keynote presentation include:

- "I love the website and links to the tools"
- "Great ideas - Motivating"
- "Really opened my eyes to just a glimpse of what I don't know about technology and the classroom. OH, THE POSSIBILITIES!"

The conference ended with a combination of 20 presenters; 10 vendors and service agencies; 25 breakout sessions; and 150 participants. There were many wonderful comments concerning the Day of Excellence and the experiences that the attendees feel they received. "It was an excellent conference, with a fantastic attendance and lots of excitement."



From intervention and credit recovery and innovative and teacher-facilitated solutions for traditional classroom instruction to trend-forward distance learning options

Contact:

Scott Mader, (717) 816-8767, smader@plato.com



Division of Special Education Services

By Teresa C. Ostlie Director of Special Education Services

What Came First? The Emotional/Behavioral Disorder or the Illegal Chemical Use

In an edition of the Minnesota Special Education Update, provided by the law firm of Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, there was an article written by Mick Waldspurger, J.D. and Willina Dikel, M.D. which addressed the issue of conducting special education evaluations of students who abuse drugs or alcohol. For those of us working in the field of special education, this has been the topic of many discussions. When educators see a pattern of behaviors which may have special education implications, and they either know or suspect the student is involved with chemical use, the question is often – “What came first?”

In Minnesota, but not in all states, the eligibility criteria for EBD (emotional or behavioral disorders) excludes those students for whom the illegal use of chemicals is the primary cause of the emotional or behavioral disorder. Special educators are put in the position of having to determine which came first: Is the illegal chemical use a result of an emotional or behavioral disorder, or has the illegal chemical use resulted in an emotional or behavioral disorder?

How should districts proceed when faced with this quandary? Below are some typical questions districts ask, and also some quick suggestions.

- We suspect a student is actively using chemicals, are we allowed to delay the educational evaluation until we determine the facts? The answer to this question is NO. Even if the district has compelling evidence that a student's behavior is the result of illicit chemical use, that information does not relieve them of their obligation to conduct an educational evaluation.

- How do we know what came first? This is a difficult question to answer. The district may never know for sure. A district will want to consider a comparison of behaviors from the time of referral to behaviors prior to the suspected onset of chemical use. Even then, it may be impossible to separate out the cause and effect factors.

- Can we ask the parent or student to obtain a chemical health assessment? Yes, a district may ask that question. However, the parent or student may refuse. Additionally, the results of such an assessment are only as good as the

information provided by the client. If denial is a factor, the results may be inaccurate. Further, the parent or student may choose not to share those results with the district due to data privacy laws that protect communication between chemical dependency counselors and their clients.

- What happens if we evaluate a student for EBD and recommend placement in special education knowing that illegal chemical use is a factor? What if we do not recommend special education because the team has evidence that the onset of chemical use coincides with the behavioral disorder? The answer to both questions is about the same. It depends on whether or not the student and/or parent are in agreement with that decision. Either way, they could argue the opposite.

- Can we discipline the EBD student for illicit drug activities at school? Yes, if the IEP team determines that the behaviors were not a manifestation of the student's disability. On the other hand, it would be nearly impossible to defend such a conclusion should the parent or student choose to challenge that decision. However, under the right circumstances, the district could pursue the 45 day unilateral change of placement.

The premier playground consultant for new playground equipment



Tom Witek

Phone: 800-747-1452

Fax: 952-361-3549 (fax)

Email: playscapes@earthlink.net

Ellsworth Student to Sing at Twins Game

Riley Meester is an 8th grader at Ellsworth. He will be performing the National Anthem at the June 19th Twins game against the Padres at 1:10 pm. Congratulations, Riley, and Good Luck!

Students Receive Awards at Reception

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Entries increased dramatically for the 7th Annual Creative Writing Contest. This partnership between SMSU's English Department and the SW/WC SC's Student Activities Program aims to encourage a love of language and writing for all students and recognize talented young writers in this region.

The contest is for students in grades 3-12 in three categories: fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction. 196 students from area schools submitted 346 entries. Students are split into grade strands: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12. The initial judging was done by students in the Creative Writing Program at SMSU with the final judging done by published authors from SMSU's English Department. An awards ceremony was held on Sunday, April 17 at SMSU. The first place winners are listed below:

1st Place Poetry: Cole Ahlers, Slayton (3-4); Alisa Fenske-Boyd (5-6); Brianna Gilbertson, Tyler (7-8); Jessie Lee, New London (9-10) Kari Louwagie, Cottonwood (11-12)

1st Place Fiction: Ellen Harrison, Marshall (3-4); Abigail Geotzman, Spicer (5-6); Emma Smisek, Marshall (7-8); Gordon Moore, Worthington (9-10); Benjamin Postma, Worthington (11-12).

1st Place - Non-Fiction: Cade Melin, Pennock (3-4); Kristen Moline, Slayton (5-6); Matthew Frazeur, Canby (7-8); Laura Frazeur, Canby (9-10).

Prizes, medals and certificates were given out at the awards ceremony.



First Place Winners

Congrats to KMS & MCC for the most winners from a district!



Scholarship winners with Lyn Brodersen, Dean, College of Arts, Letters & Sciences

Nominate Your Academic All-Stars!

It is time to nominate your students as Academic-All Stars! All Minnesota K-12 teachers, principals and academic challenge coordinators are invited to designate students as "Academic All-Stars," to be eligible to attend the 2011 Gathering of Champions. This free annual celebration and recognition of student excellence is sponsored by the Center for Academic Excellence and its educational partners. Visit our website and click on Gathering of Champions to nominate your students!

We recommend you consider the top 2-5% of your students from the following three categories: 1) Students who are consistent top academic performers, 2) Students who have shown significant improvement in achievement or have overcome barriers to academic achievement or 3) Students who are local, regional or state champions in a

MN Academic League Council endorsed event. To nominate your students, visit www.mncae.org - click on Gathering of Champions. The nomination deadline is June 30. For More Information: Please contact the Center for Academic Excellence at: cae@mncae.org or 507-389-2461.

The Center for Academic Excellence has changed its name to Synergy & Leadership Exchange. This transition reflects our expanded mission more accurately as we strive to better meet the needs of those we serve. Our updated mission is to foster collaboration, provide resources and celebrate achievement. Our revised vision is "Helping Minnesotans be their best."



has changed its name to



Division of Teaching & Learning Services

By Bob Braun, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services

Statewide PBIS Initiative -- New Schools

In 2009, 12 new schools participated in the southern regional Cohort 5 PBIS implementation grant. In 2010, 15 new schools were added under Cohort 6. Last week MDE announced that 19 schools have had their applications approved and would be participating in next year's southern regional Cohort 7 implementation grant. Those in our region include: KMS Jr/Sr High, Marshall High School, MCC Middle/High School, Lester Prairie, Edgerton, YME Bert Raney Elementary, and Redwood Area Reede Gray Elementary.

In 3 years we will increase participating schools from 4 to 50. The School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (SW-PBIS) initiative is based on the premise of schools shifting from a reactive and aversive approach to managing problem behaviors to one that is preventive and positive. Research has shown SW-PBIS can be directly related to student achievement. At the federal level, SW-PBIS has been identified as a major strategy for increasing student achievement. For more information contact: Bob Braun, Director of Teaching and Learning Services, bob.braun@swsc.org, 507-537-2252.

Marshall Students to Present Me Movers at Autism Conf

By Chris Kuehl, SMI and P/HD Consultant

Last October a helpful transition tool, called "Me Moves" was announced on an Autism Listserve, which MN teachers can subscribe to. Julie Kent, Marshall H.S. DCD Teacher, decided to purchase the tool. "Me Moves" a DVD (\$59.95) or App for an iPad/iPod (\$2.99), helps people calm, focus, or feel joyful through a series of large, motor, arm movements that participants follow along to. Julie has been using the DVD in her classroom with students before they transition from one setting to another, for example from lunch back to work! The students really enjoy this transition period as they forget about the past and future and just get a break to follow movements set to relaxing music.

Since Julie found so much success with using this transitional program, she was asked to present her findings at the "Day of Excellence" Conference, hosted by the SW/WC Service Cooperative this past March. Before presenting, Julie contacted the creators of "Me Moves" from Wisconsin to see if she needed their permission. The creators, Chris Bye and Roberta Scherf, were interested in seeing how their product was being used so they ventured to the conference to participate in the presentation. Julie also brought 10 students to the presentation to demonstrate the movements and express how this tool impacts them.

From that conference, Chris and Roberta asked Julie and her students to present at the Autism Society of Minnesota Conference which will be held in St. Paul, on April 22nd. Chris and Roberta will be taking Julie and her class to the MN Zoo and possibly a museum that day to thank them for presenting.

Though the students won't be missing any school when they venture to St. Paul, as they are traveling during Easter Break, they appreciate the Marshall School District's willingness to pay for staff support and transportation costs to the Autism Conference.

Congratulations to Julie Kent and her class for their willingness to use unconventional practices to achieve student success. To find out more information on "Me Moves" go to www.thinkingmoves.com.



WC Schools Regional Planning FLY Schools Hold Workshops

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

Throughout this school year, 17 school districts and three related agencies have been involved in a facilitated effort to identify and implement a course of action intended to provide the students of the west central region enhanced learning opportunities. These organizations secured grant dollars, hired a project facilitator, and met several times during the year to talk about how best to cooperate. Most significantly, the group surveyed residents on perceptions regarding possible change initiatives. It was apparent in the recent examination of nearly 2,800 respondent results that there is a strong desire for the affected school districts and partner organizations to increase collaborative efforts so that students have more opportunities and in order that increased efficiencies can be realized.

Retired Sauk Rapids-Rice Supt Greg Vandal was asked to design and facilitate a process by which ideas were generated, measured for community support and feasibility, and then developed for possible action. Vandal stated "the spirit of cooperation among partner organizations was strong and hopeful throughout the project. Targeted initiatives of great merit and which enjoy the support of the people of the region have the potential to have a strong and positive impact on the students served in that part of the state."

At a recent meeting, following a close examination of the data generated in the survey, the following top three initiatives were identified as having broad support among the group: 1) The sharing of academic services, through technology and other means, to students across the region, 2) The development of regional staff development opportunities focused on student achievement, and 3) The establishment of a common teacher evaluation process involving the training of administrators across the region.

Other possible initiatives to be explored include the increased sharing of school personnel between and among the region's school districts as well as the development of a common calendar including both student contact and staff development days. The survey revealed that public sentiment exists for both a common calendar and for a pre-Labor Day start for the school year. A Steering Committee will meet in the coming weeks to determine how to turn the ideas into plans of action. The entire group is expected to meet periodically during the coming year to take steps to implement these plans and to continue to pursue additional ways in which cooperation might best serve the students of the region.

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

On March 14, 2011, teachers and administrators from the 25 school districts comprising the Flexible Learning Year (FLY) consortium converged in Redwood Falls to learn more about improving student achievement. More than 1,500 educators were on hand to hear Dr. Thomas Many, co-author of Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work, present on the necessary structural and cultural components of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). During the next couple of months, these school districts will work out the logistics of the PLC structure in order for them to move forward with PLCs during the 2011-12 school year. While the majority of teachers will be on a PLC within their district, some teachers will be on PLCs with teachers from other FLY school districts. The development and implementation of PLCs is an integral part of the plan outlined in the Flexible Learning Year Application that was approved by MDE for the 2010-11, 11-12 and 12-13 school years.

This large group workshop is just one of the many efforts this year to get the 25 school districts on the same page regarding PLCs. Over 150 educators and administrators from all 25 school districts also received training on January 17 and March 15 for the second and third of three large group trainings on the topic of PLCs. These people are identified trainers for their school district. The trainers also received training in August 2010 and have been training their staff throughout this year on the PLC framework.

A few of the 25 school districts had already implemented PLCs in their district prior to these workshops, but these specific training efforts have enabled all schools to learn and use the same language and methods. Pooling professional development dollars together allows these 25 districts to have access to high quality speakers and resources—far greater than they would be able to afford if doing this effort alone.





Heidi Bau, MCC

Spelling Bee Results

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

The Regional Spelling Bee was held on Tuesday, February 15 at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. Thirty-one students, who were local winners, competed against each other through a written test and three preliminary oral rounds. The scores for those two events were added together and the 15 students with the top scores advanced to the afternoon's spell-down. After twenty-four intense rounds, Heidi Bau of Murray County Central was declared the champion. Other winners included Millie Piper (Fulda - second place), Meloni Johnston (Adrian - third place), Sophie Timm (Yellow Medicine East - fourth place), and Chris Molenaar (New London-Spicer - alternate). The top four students advanced to the Multi-Region State Spelling Bee on March 8 at Fergus Falls. It took 30 rounds of difficult words and competition before Alyssa Everson correctly spelled *deception* in Round 29 and the champion word *ramate* in Round 30. Heidi Bau, grade 8 from Murray County Central, and Spencer Johnson, grade 6 from Duluth, did not make it easy for Alyssa. The three were the only spellers remaining after round 10 and continued to battle for the next twenty rounds. Spencer and Alyssa each had the opportunity to become the champion in earlier rounds, but each failed to spell the successive word correctly. Spencer and Heidi share the 1st Runner-up title.

Another Successful Chess Tourney

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

On Wednesday, February 9th, 29 young competitors participated in the 4th Annual Regional Chess Tournament held at the YMCA in Marshall. Dedicated chess players rose as early as 5:00 am and drove from as far away as Hutchinson, Worthington, Bird Island, and other towns to square off against each other across the chess board. In the elementary category, top honors went to Maxwell Caruth (Montevideo, first place), Wyatt Thomas (Hutchinson, second place), and Regan Jacoby (Vesta, third place). Middle school winners were Michael Gutman (Marshall, first place), Vancelee Vang (Westbrook Walnut Grove, second place), and Tommy Kounlabout (Worthington, third place). High school winners were Rocky Yang (Westbrook Walnut Grove, first place), Eddie Kodet (Redwood Falls, second place), and Caleb Dusek (Westbrook Walnut Grove, third place). Besides the towns already mentioned, other participants came from Canby, Olivia and Renville.

A frequent tactic in the tournament was the dangerous Fried Liver Attack against the Two Knights Defense. The tournament was sponsored by the SW/WC SC and represented schools in the eighteen county area of southwest and west central Minnesota. There were 12 players from grades 9-12, and 17 from grades 3-8. The tournament Director was Steve Harder of Mountain Lake.



The Winners



Four Winners Chosen in Art Contest

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Student entries from six area school districts were entered in the 7th Annual Water is Life Art Contest, sponsored by the Freshwater Society and the MN Service Cooperatives. Water conservation was the theme for this year's contest. The contest gives Minnesota's senior high school students an opportunity to create art that may also influence and motivate others to take action to conserve our water resources. Judging was conducted by Peg Furshong and Patricia Hand from SMSU, Eric Olson from Pioneer Public TV, and Becky Wyffels from the Marshall Area Fine Arts Council.

After a short program, the winners were announced at a reception on April 11 for regional participants, family members, and teachers. The four winners include Brooke Henderson-Glencoe-Silver Lake, Winona Krohn-Glencoe-Silver Lake, Adriano Martins-Round Lake-Brewster, and Heidi Petersen-Springfield.

Their entries will be entered into the state competition on May 4 at the Gray Freshwater Center in the Lake Minnetonka area. Six \$500 scholarships will be awarded to the top six finalists at the ceremony. All finalists' artwork will be displayed at the MN State Capitol and at various venues throughout the state to educate on the importance of freshwater resources. Pictures of winners are on page 15.

Six Teams Compete at State KB

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Ninety-nine teams from thirty-eight districts participated in the Senior High Knowledge Bowl Program during the 2010-2011 school year beginning with four sub-regional events during late February and early March. Prior to that time, students practiced in their local schools and also competed against students from area schools in invitationals. Two sub-regional events were held in both Region 6 and Region 8. Teams that placed in the top half at the two sub-regional events in their region competed against each other at the regional event for the chance to advance to the state competition on April 7-8.

Sub-regional results for Region 6:

Feb. 28 at MACCRAY: 1st - Willmar #1, 2nd - Willmar #2, 3rd - Hutch #1

Mar. 4 at Canby: 1st-Dawson-Boyd #1, 2nd-Holy Trinity #2, 3rd-ECHO Charter

Subregional results for Region 8:

Feb. 25 at Jackson: 1st - Windom #1, 2nd - MCC #3, 3rd - MCC #2

Mar. 7 at SMSU: 1st - Marshall #1, 2nd - Worthington #1, 3rd-Springfield #1

The top three teams from each regional event advanced to the state competition.

Regional results for Region 6:

March 9: Willmar #2, Willmar #1, and Lac qui Parle Valley.

Regional results for Region 8:

March 10: Windom #1, Marshall #1, and Worthington #1.



Willmar

CONGRATULATIONS to the teams representing our region at the state competition. A Tier results: Lac qui Parle Valley tied for 12th and Windom tied for 15th
AA Tier results: Willmar White - 16th, Willmar Red - 21st, Worthington - 23rd, and Marshall - 24th.

Knowledge Bowl Teams



Marshall



Worthington



Lac qui Parle Valley



Windom



Willmar

2011 Culinary Skills Challenge

By Tom Hoff, Career and Technical Project Manager

Americans Love Food! Which probably explains why there are television networks devoted to covering the topic 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. In the U.S. alone, consumers spend approximately \$1 trillion annually on food. Agriculture, food processing, food transportation and food retail provide an abundance of valuable jobs in

southwest Minnesota. Who will fill those jobs and assume leadership roles in those industries in the next 10 years?

Some of those future food industry leaders gathered on March 31st at the Marshall High School to compete in such areas as: Baking Science, Food Art, Cooking, Cake Decorating, Garnishing, Table Setting, Knife Skills and Menu Design.

In addition to the competitions students and teachers had an opportunity to learn from top chefs and industry professionals through interactive seminars including: Nutritious and Delicious Healthy Eating Tips, Garnishing and Buffet Presentations, Spice Up Your Meals, Fun with Fondant, Pork-from Farm to Table, and Napkin Folding/Place Setting. This was the 6th year of the Culinary Skills Challenge and the event is gaining popularity every year. In fact, this year the event drew participants from as far

away as Shakopee, MN. In total, over 250 students, teachers, judges, and presenters participated in competitions and seminars.

The event will return to the Southwest Minnesota State University Campus next year. We hope to see you there! Check out www.LifetimeofLearning.com for pictures of this year's event and look for the event date for 2012.



Technical Skills Challenge

By Gail Polejewski, Career Development Coordinator

Sparks were flying and wheels were spinning, both figuratively and literally at the 9th annual Technical Skills Challenge held at Minnesota West in Pipestone April 6 as area high school students participated in welding, solar sprint car, problem solving, and digital photography competitions. Over 70 students from Canby, Dawson-

Boyd, Pipestone, Renville County West, R-T-R, Worthington, and Yellow Medicine East high schools participated

Minnesota West and the SW/WC Service Cooperative team up each year to offer competitions where students can display their talents in a creative and competitive environment.

The competitions are judged and designed by industry professionals and college instructors in order to give students a realistic glimpse into exciting career fields. The competitions often have the added benefit of being a classroom project.



Division of Administrative Services

By Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services

MacNeil Wins Environmental Occupational Health and Safety Bid

The SW/WC SC went out for Bid for a new 3-year Environment Occupational Health & Safety Contract beginning July 1, 2011. The Bid was awarded to MacNeil Environmental. The SW/WC SC has worked closely with MacNeil Environmental in the area of Health & Safety for many years.

The on-going activities performed by MEI include annual employee training, implementation of OSHA required programs, facility survey, required documentation and reporting activities, program review and recommendations, and program 24-hour availability of account manager. The number of visits provided will vary based on size and specific need of each district.

We look forward to this strong partnership to continue to provide a cost effective means of keeping your employees safe. Need assistance or have questions? Contact Darin Jensen (507)537-2280 Darin.Jensen@swsc.org or Christine Schmitt (507)537-2262 Christine.Schmitt@swsc.org.

Data Sitting in the Driver's Seat at BBE Elementary

By Rick Gossen, BBE Elementary Principal

I once heard a speaker talk about Response to Intervention (RtI) as public education's "Last best hope". While I would argue that he wasn't talking about Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Elementary or many of the schools that will receive this publication, education is definitely a subject that is always under the microscope. At BBE, we have continued to adapt as the needs of students change and yes, we are in our first year of implementing public education's "Last best hope."

As we found in our exploration of RtI, the model can really look many different ways. We have chosen to begin with literacy in grades K-2. The data component is provided courtesy of AIMSweb. We test all of our kindergarten, first and second grade students. The progress monitoring helps us determine if interventions are working or if things need to be changed. When student needs are determined, classroom teachers and Title I teachers determine how to group a grade level and distribute students to work on specific interventions. We may have as many as eight groups for a class of 55 kindergarten students! Certified and non-certified staff is given research based interventions that play a key role in making sure that our struggling readers are getting the support they need. As students move from group to group and reach their target goals provided by AIMSweb, we take this time as an opportunity to do enrichment activities for the students that are at grade level or above.

Our RtI time takes place from 1:30-3:00 daily. We spend twenty-five minutes with each of the three grade levels. It started out like a traffic jam with considerable confusion and lots of questions. I credit the BBE faculty and staff for sticking with it, clearing up the confusion, finding the answers to questions and creating something great for kids!





Wabasso School Is Making Change to Beat Cancer

By Corinna Erickson, Wabasso Public Schools

Students at Wabasso Elementary School in Wabasso, MN collected donations during the month of January as part of the 20th Annual Pennies for Patients program, benefiting The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.



Students teamed together, each contributing a little and the grand total brought in was \$994.02! Two representatives from each class then walked the money up to Integrity Bank in Wabasso to have it counted and went on a tour of the facilities. The first grade class raised the most money and was awarded a Dominos Pizza party in appreciation for their efforts.



Wabasso & Minnesota Reading Corps

By Corinna Erickson, Wabasso Public Schools

Responding to an increasing need to help Minnesota children with reading, Minnesota Reading Corps is recruiting more than 800 tutors across the state – up from 670 this year. One out of every four Minnesota third graders does not read at grade level. Minnesota Reading Corps, a statewide initiative to help every Minnesota child become a successful reader by the end of 3rd grade, places AmeriCorps tutors in pre-school and elementary schools to implement researched-based early-literacy instruction efforts to help struggling readers. Full-time and part-time positions will be available in locations around the state, including elementary schools, Head Start programs, community preschools, and ECFE classrooms. Since 2003, the program has worked with more than 25,000 children.

Locally, Wabasso is searching for candidates to fill one part-time position. For more information, please contact Corinna Erickson at 507-342-5114 or cerickson@wabassoschool.com.

2012 Technology Conference Dates

The 2012 Technology Conference will be held on March 8 and 9, 2012. The Thursday - Friday format was maintained in an effort to allow schools to use the conference as a staff development day. For 2012, we plan to expand the Thursday Pre-Conference to incorporate a few breakout style sessions in addition to the 3-hour workshops that have been offered. The format will allow us to use this time to focus more on Technology Leaders and other District Leaders. The Friday conference has become what we hoped—a time for school technology leaders, administration and teachers to intermingle and approach technology together. We need to keep moving forward and stay ahead of the changes and innovation yet to come!



5th Annual Technology Conference Motivates Participants

By Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology

The 5th Annual SW/WC SC Technology Conference was held on March 10 and 11 in Marshall. The pre-conference sessions got underway at 4:00 on the 10th where nearly 50 participants took part in five different sessions and user groups. Topics from Cyber Law and Cloud Computing all the way to a Digital Jam with classroom instructional tools took place to motivate and equip participants with knowledge and experience that they can bring back to their schools.



Building from our humble roots in 2007 when the first Technology Conference took place and just under 100 participants were on hand in our office we opened the doors on Friday, March 11 to nearly 325 participants for our 5th Annual Conference. The halls of the SMSU Conference Center, Student Center and Physical Education buildings were buzzing with excitement and collaboration as nearly 400 exhibitors, presenters and staff filed into the facilities. The conference started off with a motivating and thought invoking keynote presentation from Adam Garry, the Manager of Global Professional

Learning at Dell, Inc and author of *Teaching the I-Generation*. Participants were then left to attend their choice of 55 concurrent break-out sessions and network with their peers and the 36 exhibitors. A new feature this year was the hands-on lab where a variety of new technologies were showcased including iPads, the Dell Inspiron Duo, SMART Podium portable interactive system and the X-Box 360 Kinect system.



Featured speakers included Kevin Honeycutt, Technology Integrationist Extraordinaire from Hutchinson, Kansas; Aimee Bissionette, Attorney and Author specializing in Cyber Law and Policy Development for School Districts; Doug Johnson, Director of Technology at Mankato Public Schools and Author of several classroom technology books; Paul Musegades, training specialist from Apple, Inc.; Karina Berzins of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension who spoke on Internet Safety Risks in Schools; Mary Mehsikomer, Director of NW Links and Technology Integration and Planning evangelist; as well as many more talented and knowledgeable individuals from throughout Minnesota and the country. Nearly a dozen breakout sessions had standing room only throughout the day as over 75 participants tried to cram into some of the most popular sessions.

A big thank you goes out to E.C.H.O Charter School, Lake Benton Public School, Pipestone Public School and Renville County West Public School for utilizing this conference as a professional development day. Nearly half of the participants at the conference were from these four school districts. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all who helped plan, prepare for and work at the conference. Though the IT Department hosts this event the scope of help we receive runs throughout the agency as well as the Technology Coordinators from districts who help promote the conference and provide session ideas. A very special thank you must also be extended to Denise Hoek, without her assistance throughout all stages of this event it would never happen!

The underlying theme of the conference is "Collaborate. Innovate. Empower 21st Century Learners"; and as discussed in the opening remarks of the conference it is our intention that the conference is just a beginning, a starting point or midpoint of sorts for a number of our participants. The collaboration and innovation, even though it was bountiful at the conference, is really what will be taking place when participants return to their districts and put their experiences to practice with students and peers. The theme of the Technology Conference is meant to be ongoing and bridges from year to year, it is our sincere hope that the collaboration and innovation ignited in participants of this year's conference is still burning strong when we reunite in 2012!



Advantages of Cooperative Purchasing

By Shareen Neumann, Sales & Marketing/Cooperative Purchasing

Do you ever wonder if you are really getting the “best deal” when you order through the cooperative purchasing program vendors? Rest assured that you are saving in a number of ways when you purchase through the cooperative purchasing program.

First and foremost, you are saving on soft costs. When you make a purchase, whether it be a product or a service, there are both hard costs and soft costs associated with that purchase. Hard costs are the dollar amount you actually pay for the product or service. Soft costs are harder to measure, but they include the time you spend meeting with vendors/sales reps, shopping, researching prices, surfing the internet trying to “find it cheaper”, processing orders, and paying the bills. As budget cuts force us all to tighten our belts, time becomes more and more valuable. Bidding, requesting quotes and just plain old surfing the net to comparison shop all take up valuable staff time. In addition, when you purchase off the internet, you often have to wonder if you are dealing with a reputable company and whether they will be there “after the sale.” That “sweet” bargain you found on a hot ticket item, often doesn’t seem quite so sweet if there are problems with the product after purchase. The vendors in the cooperative purchasing program are chosen based on overall value. In addition to product price, our vendors focus on quality, reliability, in stock availability, exchange and return policies, shipping charges, vendor reputations, customer service, and ease of ordering. All of these variables contribute to the overall product value.

Cooperative Purchasing at Work

Conducting bids is a time consuming process; we do the bidding for our members by facilitating bids regionally, statewide, and nationally, allowing us to leverage member buying power, and ensure best value. The Cooperative Purchasing program at SW/WC SC is part of the MSC (Minnesota Service Cooperatives) Cooperative Purchasing Connection, combining the bargaining power of 389 school districts, 276 cities, 66 counties, and 188 governmental/non-profit agencies when we go out for bids. SW/WC SC members as well as service cooperative members in other regions throughout the state receive the same great prices. The MSC Cooperative Purchasing Connection is designed to help our members fulfill their purchasing needs while making their buying process more efficient. All of the vendor agreements of the MSC Cooperative Purchasing Connection are the result of formal bids or negotiated contracts. By partnering with reputable vendors and combining the purchasing power of the service cooperative members throughout the state, our members receive a wide variety of high quality products and services with excellent volume discounts. Because nearly all pricing is established through a bid process, our contracts provide price and shipping assurance. In FY 2009, MSC helped our members across the state save over \$3.5 million on quality products and services. We work with the vendors, but FOR our members, helping to resolve issues if and when problems arise. We survey members when making important decisions and solicit their feedback.

Myth Busters

Myth No. 1: Each time a member asks for a price quote for an item, such as a printer, we go out for bids on that item.
Fact: We do not go out for bids for each individual request for a price quote. When we receive a request for a price quote from a member, we go to the vendors who have been awarded bids in that category and ask them to price out the piece of equipment our member is looking for. Statewide bids which have been awarded were based on price, ease of ordering, quality of merchandise, vendor reputation, past experience, and past performance. If we have two or three vendors who have the same item in a category such as technology, we will request a quote from all three and forward those quotes to our members. Requesting price quotes from vendors is just another customer service we provide to our members. The decision is always left with the member as to whether or not to purchase the items quoted. Because they may have participated in the statewide cooperative purchasing program bid, many outside vendors have knowledge of “the price to beat” and know they have to come in under that price to be competitive, so a member may save money simply because they are a member of cooperative purchasing.

Myth No. 2: SW/WC SC is getting rich off the Cooperative Purchasing Program. **Fact:** The Cooperative Purchasing Program does receive administrative fees from vendors. However, those administrative fees are used to cover the costs



Coop Purchasing continued...

incurred in administering the Cooperative Purchasing Program and are re-invested into the program, allowing us to keep adding high quality contracts, solicit bids, support our commitment to customer service and member communication and eliminate the need to increase membership fees. We also provide and manage a MSC member access website and distribute vendor guides with the most current list of available vendor contracts, assist as needed in the ordering process, and mediate any vendor disputes and/or issues on behalf of our members. Our goal is to work together to combine the bargaining power of all our members to save them time and money while providing contracts of the overall highest quality and value. We always welcome your input and feedback.



MNTAAB is the answer!

- Sponsored by MSBA and Regional Service Cooperatives
- Low issuance costs
- Decreased administrative time
- No continuing disclosure requirements
- Access to a competitively bid, Guaranteed Investment Contract (100% collateralized)
- Low interest rates
- Moody's highest rating
- Proven track record

Find out more:

www.mnmsba.org/public/main.cfm or www.springsted.com

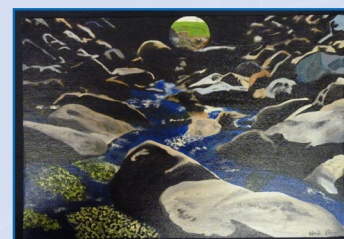
Water is Life Winners



Brooke Henderson, GSL



Winona Krohn, GSL



Heidi Peterson, Springfield



Adriano Martins, RLB

Article about Water is Life Contest located on page 9

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.

May 2011

5/3	SMARTBoard Level I Workshop
5/3	Playground Safety Seminar
5/5	SMARTBoard Users Networking Group
5/5	MA Billing Support Group
5/20	TACSEI Tier III Training - Willmar

July and August 2011

7/1	Type III Bus Driver Training
8/9	Para Conference - Pipestone
8/10	Para Conference - Willmar
8/11	SPED Extravaganza South - Westbrook
8/19	New SPED Teacher Training - Redwood Falls
8/25	SPED Extravaganza North - Maynard

June 2011

6/6	Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (LiPS)
6/8	UFARS Year End Workshop-Willmar
6/9	UFARS Year End Workshop-Marshall
6/9	Health and Safety Update
6/13	Visualize/Verbalize Program (VV)
6/13	Files, Files, Riles: Just Due It! - Pipestone
6/13	Webinar-UFARS Year End
6/16	Webinar-UFARS Year End
6/16	Files, Files, Files: Just Due It! - Olivia
6/21	Summer Superintendents Conference
6/22	2011 Response to Intervention Summer Institute
6/23	Battelle Developmental Inventory-2 (BDI-2) - Slayton
6/23	Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) Wksp - Willmar
6/24	Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) Wksp - Slayton
6/24	Battelle Developmental Inventory-2 (BDI-2) - Willmar

**All workshops held in Marshall unless otherwise noted.

Our Priorities for 2010-11

- We will develop a process for analyzing, developing, and implementing, programs and services that is based on an assessment of our members needs.
- We will continuously seek new opportunities to develop and maintain partnerships that result in added value and benefit to our members.
- We will continue to be innovative in our efforts to develop new programs and to re-design our current programs through assessing needs, conceptualizing solutions, and securing resources.
- We will provide clear communications to our key stakeholders in an effort to increase understanding and awareness of our vision and mission.
- We will provide high quality programs; combined with excellent service, in order to ensure and maintain strong fiscal health.
- We will utilize new and existing technologies to support and enhance the work we do.



Our Mission

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