

## Cosmos Elementary School Included in State Bonding Bill

The 2018 Bonding Bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature on May 20, and signed by Governor Mark Dayton on May 30, includes \$5 million dollars for the repurposing of the Cosmos Elementary School, which is currently being leased by SWWC Service Cooperative for the operation of the Cosmos Learning Center.

Representative Dean Urdahl introduced HF4414 in April appropriating money for the elementary building, which has been leased by SWWC since 2009. The Cosmos Learning Center is a Setting IV educational program serving students with autism, emotional and behavioral disorders and other severe disabilities.

A special Open House event will be held Monday, June 18 at the Cosmos Learning Center beginning at 5pm to thank Representative Urdahl. The agenda includes comments from SWWC Executive Director Cliff Carmody, ACGC Superintendent Nels Onstad, Minnesota Department of Education Assistant Commissioner Daron Korte, SWWC's Regional Director of Educational Learning Centers Bailey Rettmann and Robyn Klinker, a Cosmos Learning Center parent. Following comments, Representative Urdahl will be recognized.

Nels Onstad says, "Access to facilities such as the Cosmos Learning Center are vital to rural school districts in Minnesota. Representative Urdahl and other legislators recognize the need for the services that SWWC provides to member districts in order to effectively educate all students. ACGC is fortunate to have Representative Urdahl and SWWC as partners in education in order to recognize the need for and to provide appropriate settings to best meet the specific needs of students throughout the region. Thank you Representative Urdahl and our partners at SWWC for all the great work they do for our students."

"The Cosmos Learning Center has a history of dedication to students, striving for student excellence in both academics and community involvement. The status quo is not seen as an end but rather a point from which future progress is measured. The \$5 million dollars dedicated to the repurposing the Cosmos Elementary School will facilitate the ability to further enhance services to those in the area. We are able to service students across the region who have special needs and are always striving to provide the best services in the state," states Bailey Rettmann.

Cliff Carmody stresses the importance of collaboration, "On behalf of SWWC, we are extremely pleased and thankful for Representative Urdahl's understanding and support of this collaboration. The \$5 million dollars of state money through the bonding bill will go a long way to helping ACGC and SWWC to re-purpose the Cosmos Elementary School into an appropriate facility for students with special needs. The Cosmos Learning Center is an extraordinary example of how SWWC collaborates with our member schools to provide programs they cannot provide on their own. Through the commitment of the ACGC and SWWC governing boards, the Cosmos Learning Center will continue to meet the special needs of students from multiple school districts in that part of our region! SWWC's mission is to support and enhance the work of our members by providing programs that meet their needs. With the help of Representative Urdahl and the continued collaboration with the ACGC School District, the Cosmos Learning Center collaboration will help to meet the special needs of a number of schools, families and students."

Funds from the bonding bill proceeds will provide a grant to the ACGC School District to pre-design, design, construct, furnish, and equip the renovation and repurposing of the Cosmos elementary school for use by SWWC. Funds through the bonding bill do not come from the taxpayers of the ACGC School District. The funds are through the sale and issuance of state bonds, which also pays for roads and bridges, repair/maintenance of state-owned lands and buildings, sewer and water projects, mental health crisis centers, and other projects.