Annual Plan and Report


2009-2010
Dear Friends of SW/WC Service Cooperative:

The staff, administration, and Board of Directors of the Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative are committed to providing high quality programs and services to our members!

Our mission highlights partnership, innovation, and exceptional leadership as the basis for all that we do! We believe this past year exemplified our efforts to reach for our mission. Using a model of shared services, that includes high quality, flexible, and responsive programs/services, our agency works hard to meet the ever changing needs of our members.

Authorized by statute in 1976, the history of our agency dates back to 1965 when the Southwest and West Central Minnesota Educational Research and Development Council (ERDC) was created. A pilot Educational Service Area (ESA) was established in 1973 and the Minnesota Legislature authorized our enabling legislation in 1976. This enabling legislation allows our agency to provide the programs and services to our members that we provide today! A “quasi-governmental agency” we receive no direct state aid, but through contracts and fees for service we generate the revenue to support our various programs.

We are a membership driven organization! We are committed to working collaboratively with our members to bring opportunities, efficiencies, and innovative services to our region. In this annual report and plan, you will learn more about our programs and services. We are proud to be partners with our school districts, cities, counties, and other governmental agencies as we embark on providing high quality programs and services for our members.

As we continue to plan for the 2010-11 year, we recognize the impact and burden our members face due to an ever-growing reduction in revenues. Because we are a reflection of our members, we are committed to a financial plan that reflects the challenge of the current budget problems. As a result, we will do our best to manage our revenues and fee increases, while maintaining tight controls over our expenditures. At the same time, we will continue to challenge our agency in finding new and innovative programs and services that assist our members in their day-to-day operations.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, we want to thank you for taking time to review our annual report and plan. As we continue to strive for transparency and accountability, we believe it is important to report back to our members the status of our agency.

Just as we believe it is important to report to you, we also believe it is critical that we listen to you. Tell us what you are trying to do and are having difficulty getting done! In addition, please feel free to contact us with your thoughts, comments, and concerns!

Sincerely,

Cliff Carmody
Executive Director
SW/WC Service Cooperative

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50,000
Number of students within the SW/WC Service Cooperative Region

18
Number of counties served by the SW/WC Service Cooperative

12,500
Square miles in the SW/WC Service Cooperative Region
Map of the SW/WC Service Cooperative Region

Represents Office locations
A Glimpse of the Past

An adequate history of the SW/WC Service Cooperative is difficult to piece together. Its roots are deep into such places as the Granite Falls Fire Hall, Montevideo's Hotel Hunt, the Cyrus Public School and the Universities at Morris and Marshall.

Cooperative activities in the 1960s included a series of meetings beginning in Morris in 1965, that led in 1966, to the creation of the Southwest and West Central Minnesota Educational Research and Development Council (ERDC). The ERDC was independently organized by area school superintendents who were willing, without federal support, to develop a dues structure to fund the council.

The ERDC was succeeded in 1973 by a pilot organization authorized by the State Legislature, the Southwest and West Central Educational Service Area (ESA). The Educational Media Center, begun by the Montevideo School District with a 1965 Title II grant, was donated to the ESA and was one of the first services offered by the ESA.

The ESA was so successful that in 1976 the Legislature expanded the concept to all regions of the state, and renamed the agencies ECSUs (Educational Cooperative Service Units). Governor's Planning Regions 6 & 8 combined to form one administrative entity and the SW/WC ESA became the SW/WC ECSU on July 1, 1976. The rest of the governor's planning regions formed their own ECSUs, as well, making a total of nine ECSUs in Minnesota.

The purpose of the ECSUs was to perform educational planning on a regional basis and to assist in meeting children's specific educational needs that may be better provided for by an ECSU than by the individual districts.

The 1992 State Legislature changed the enabling legislation for ECSUs to include providing services to cities, counties, and other governmental units. This legislative change reflects the state's attitude toward government operating in an efficient manner.

On July 1, 1995, through legislative action, the Minnesota ECSUs became Service Cooperatives. The Service Cooperative’s Board of Directors officially named Regions 6 and 8 the Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative on August 23, 1995.

“The SW/WC Service Cooperative supports the efforts of the many districts it serves, by continually looking for programs that will support both the students’ needs and the needs of the school district. Providing quality educational programs is a top priority.”

~ Gary Fisher
Superintendent
Luverne Public Schools
“The SW/WC Service Cooperative has been THE catalyst for meaningful collaboration among school districts throughout southwest Minnesota. The Executive Director and his staff are possibility thinkers! They are constantly looking for opportunities to help school leaders work together to improve the quality and efficiency of education. They have not been “stuck in the rut” but rather “have illuminated” the path for school leaders striving for improvement.

Perhaps at no time in it’s history has the Service Cooperative’s effectiveness been so evident as it has in the past year. The Cooperative facilitated the emergence and approval of the Flexible Learning Year proposal; it worked to improve efficiencies and quality of services by dissolving ‘special education territories’; and it advanced the regional RtI initiative on a continuum that makes it possible for all participating schools to benefit.”

~Rick Ellingworth
Superintendent
Redwood Area Public Schools
SW/WC Service Cooperative’s

Divisions Of Excellence

A Division of Excellence combines comprehensive services with highly experienced and educated staff to deliver quality programs and services to our members.

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

Vision
We will be known as the agency of choice that provides high quality, flexible, responsive, and innovative services to our school, city, county and other governmental agency members.

The priorities of the SW/WC Service Cooperative:

- 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.
Division of Special Education Services

Number of students served through Special Education Programs:
~**Over 5,200**

Number of students who received hearing screenings through audiology services:
~**875**

Number of students who graduated from Red Rock Ridge School, Windom, in June 2010:
~**30**

Number of educators who attend the Day of Excellence Conference:
~**136**
Special Education Programs
The Special Education Offices, located in Montevideo, Pipestone, Willmar and Windom, provide direct services to students and member school districts. The SW/WC Service Cooperative employs occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, and many other specialists.

Each office provides numerous training and workshop activities on a variety of topics, as well as bring a number of staff development activities to the region. They continue to find ways to collaborate on regional activities, as well as customizing training activities for the schools in their area.

All of the offices utilize a web-based IEP software system. The Special Education Forms software is a valuable tool for special education teachers in the region. The service SW/WC Service Cooperative also oversees the third party pay system and to date have helped districts access millions of dollars in revenue from this system. We continue to assist member districts in completing their applications for state and federal funding. In addition, the information for the state EDRS system was reported by the SW/WC Service Cooperative to ensure local funding for special education programs. We have also created a web based TSES Manual (Total Special Education System).

Educational Resource Library
The Educational Resource Library, housed in the Montevideo Office, is available to staff in participating school districts. By working with regular and special education teachers, the resource library will assist district staff in locating and using valuable instructional support materials for their classroom, such as teaching machines, instructional kits, videos, multi-media kits, games and books, and computer programs; all of which are designed to facilitate learning programs for children with special needs.

Alternative Learning Programs
Another part of the special education division includes the following programs: Belview Learning Center in Belview, Cosmos Learning Center in Cosmos Heartland Ranch School in Benson, and the Red Rock Ridge School in Windom. These programs provide educational settings for a wide range of students with varying abilities.

Interpreter Training & Mentoring Project
This project is designed to assist interpreters to obtain training and certification, and to offer certification test opportunities. It is a partnership with MN West in the development of a Deaf Studies Program.

Developmental Cognitive Disability (DCD) Training and Network Project
This project establishes networking activities for individuals serving DCD students. It provides instruction in behavioral strategies specific to DCD, training opportunities in the area, a state DCD network, and training for paraprofessionals relating to the DCD student.

Speech Language Tele-practice
One of our newer services is Speech Language Tele-practice. Using interactive voice and video technologies, an ASHA certified speech language pathologist provides individualized speech language services at the child’s school during the school day. The speech language pathologist is located in the Benson School District. Special video equipment paired with Internet technology enables the child and speech language pathologist to see and hear each other during live interactive speech language sessions. Additional programs, pictures or Internet pages may be shared to elicit communication. Both speech and language skills may be addressed. SW/WC Service Cooperative staff have been called upon to provide technology assistance and training to other agencies across the country.

Autism Training Project
This project provides customized training for teams at the local district level, with a goal of establishing teams in each district with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorder. This is a collaborative effort between all the local districts, SW/WC Service Cooperative, and MDE.

Regional Assistive Technology Project
The Assistive Technology Lending Library and Demonstration Lab lends equipment and materials to school districts which enhance special education learner outcomes and quality of life. Items are available for short-term loan to assist the school team in determining the effectiveness of specific forms of technology. The Lab provides on-site assistance in enhancing a special needs learner’s outcomes through consultation, training and demonstration. The Lab is located at the Marshall office, and also works with Project Discovery to help assure appropriate accommodations in vocational assessments of students with disabilities. The Used Equipment Referral Project assists school districts and families who have assistive technology equipment they are no longer using and desire to sell.

Outreach Clinics
Gillette Outreach Clinics are available to anyone (people of all ages with disabilities, families, therapists, teachers, counselors, social workers, etc). Clinics can provide general information, demonstrations, hands on work and/or training for many types of assistive technology, as well as, discussing specific needs and product recommendations.

Transition Outcomes Project
This is a 6-phase project aimed at improving transition services for junior high and senior high students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The project provides training to special education teachers, families, and agency staff to develop practical transition plans using a student-centered process.

Regional Low Incidence
Project Consultants serve as ongoing resources for school personnel, families and others serving students with Low Incidence handicaps. Regional Low Incidence staff rely on a multidisciplinary approach to meeting the student’s education needs. Students served range in age from birth to 21.

The consultants are available to assist with: in-service, consideration of assistive technology, reviewing progress, developing educational strategies, for organization related skills, effective design of the physical environment, self-advocacy skills, evacuation plans, mobility issues, access to curricular and education experiences, transition planning from one setting to another as well as transition to life after high school.

Low Incidence refers to children who are: deaf/hard of hearing, visually impaired, deaf/blind, physically impaired, autistic, other health impaired, have a developmental cognitive disability, or have a traumatic brain injury.
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

We strive to be a valuable partner with our member districts in their efforts to provide quality education by:

- Recognizing and responding to local needs of member schools and districts
- Building effective relationships with administration and teaching staff
- Building capacity and creating sustainability for a continuous school improvement process
- Working collaboratively with other SW/WC Service Cooperative programs and staff

Number of:

- Districts Receiving School Improvement/AYP Services: 18
- Schools in Minnesota West Carl Perkins/Tech Prep Consortium: 40
- Schools Participating in Math Science Teacher Academy: 11
- Schools Participating in Shared Curriculum Services Project: 6

Number of students attending:

- Children’s Author & Illustrator Program: 4,935
- Science and Nature Conference: 1,174
- Conference for Young Artists: 703
- Conference for Young Writers: 703
- Culinary Skills Challenge: 193
- Technical Skills Challenge: 119
Carl Perkins and Technical Education

The Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium is comprised of 40 high schools and Minnesota West Community and Technical College, our post-secondary partner. The consortium works closely with regional agencies, businesses, and other consortiums throughout the state in order to offer the best services possible to participating high schools. High schools that are involved in the Minnesota West Carl Perkins/Tech Prep Consortium have the opportunity to make improvements to their state-approved career and technical education (CTE) programs using consortium funds. All proposed improvements must meet strict state and federal guidelines. To be eligible to make local improvements, schools complete an application that specifies the approved program and the expenditure they would likely to make. If approved, the expense is paid by the SW/WC Service Cooperative, the consortium’s fiscal host, directly to the vendor. Each year several hundred thousand dollars worth of improvements are made to regional CTE programs. Examples of improvements include: text books that link to industry standards, consulting services, mileage and sub fee reimbursement for staff development, commercial grade equipment, industry based software, instructional videos, etc. Many schools in the region use Carl Perkins funds to purchase career assessment instruments and on-line career information systems to support career development activities in their school.

The consortium also works with numerous agency and post-secondary partners to provide career and education planning experiences through an interactive “Career Expo” event and through “Project Discovery” a regional career assessment and exploration program. Having students demonstrate what they have learned and giving them a chance to develop leadership skills are central goals for the consortium. Our consortium provides strong support to student organizations (FCCLA, BPA and FFA) and is proud to have some of the strongest in the state. We also host two very popular regional competitions each year: “Culinary Skills Challenge” and the “Technical Skills Challenge”. These events are led by industry partners and provide students the opportunity to learn about the expectations of industry and to participate in competitions that help them reach high standards.

School Improvement Project

The SW/WC Service Cooperative is in its fourth year of providing a team of school improvement specialists to work with school districts not making adequate yearly progress. The overall goal of the team is to help districts increase student achievement. School improvement specialists assist AYP schools and district teams to increase their knowledge and skills in the school improvement process. They assist schools in developing improvement plans in order to identify strategies for school improvement and professional development. Some activities include conducting needs assessments, and cleaning, analyzing and interpreting their testing data.

The school improvement team can provide specific assistance to districts in areas such as data retreats, NWEA, curriculum mapping, assessment processes, and cohorts for formative assessments, leadership development and sheltered instruction. School improvement specialists provide help and coordinate the provision of professional development, including workshops and on-site consultation. Another role they have is to help schools and districts identify and implement effective strategies for improvement. They help them build internal capacity through data/assessment retreats and curriculum mapping. This allows school districts to use data to drive decision making regarding instructional curriculum. The school improvement department also provides support for schools as they analyze their own performance and their student achievement, as well as build relationships with leadership teams in order to support internal efforts at school improvement.

Student Activities

SW/WC Service Cooperative plans and coordinates quality programs, conferences and competitions for students in the eighteen counties of southwest and west central Minnesota. The activities are for all students including regular ed, students with special needs, gifted and talented, home schooled, etc. The popularity of these activities is evident by the continued growth in participation with over 23,000 participants last year.

Conferences

*Conference for Young Artists (grades K-8)
*Conference for Young Writers (grades 3-8)
*Science & Nature Conference (grades K-8)

Competitions

*Creative Writing Contest (grades 3-12)
*Culinary Skills Challenge (grades 9-12)
*Junior High Knowledge Bowl (grades 7-9)
*Senior High Knowledge Bowl (grades 7-12)
*Regional Chess Tournament (grades K-12)
*Spelling Bee (grades 5-8)
*Technical Skills Challenge (grades 9-12)
*“Water is Life” Art Contest (grades 9-12)

Other Programs

*Career Exploration Days (grade 10)
*Children’s Author & Illustrator Program (elementary schools)

Math & Science Teacher Academy (MSTA) Grant

The Math and Science Teacher Partnership (MSTP) is a continuation of the Math and Science Teacher Academy Grant from 2008-2009. We provide services to participating districts and teachers. During the 2009-2010 school year, the project worked specifically with grades 3-8 math teachers on the Accelerating Student Mathematics Achievement to Grade Level. This project is in partnership with the Minnesota River Valley Education District (MRVED) and Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU). Eleven districts (59 teachers) participated in the project this past year. This grant is continuing through the 2010-2011 school year & will focus on The Nature of Science & Engineering strand of the 2009 MN Science Standards with teachers in grades 3-6.

Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Services

The SW/WC Service Cooperative can provide many services in the area of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to our member districts. This year, we worked with a group of districts to coordinate curriculum mapping software and textbook purchases. We also provided professional development opportunities in a wide variety of areas. Additionally, we contracted with 6 districts to provide direct services within a district, such as curriculum mapping, curriculum coordination, staff development, standards alignment and more. We strive to meet the needs of our districts in the most efficient, cost effective manner possible.
The Division of Administrative Services is committed to delivering high quality, reliable services to our members and partners, which exceed expectations for responsiveness and expertise.

“I have always found the SW/WC Service Cooperative staff committed to working collaboratively with their member school districts in providing unique programs and opportunities for students in southwest Minnesota. The SW/WC Service Cooperative staff serve as a reliable and trusted resource consistently delivering professional and high quality services to members. The SW/WC Service Cooperative has proven to be a valuable nexus for us in southwest Minnesota.”

~Keith Kottke
Superintendent
Springfield Public Schools

Number of people attending:
Technology Conference: 145
School Business Conference: 130
SMARTBoard Conference: 104

Darin Jensen
Director of Administrative Services
RMIC
Regional Management Information Center (RMIC) provides finance, human resource, payroll, and student administrative support services to districts and educational cooperatives.

Business Services are provided to all contracted districts and educational cooperatives. Besides assisting the districts with maintaining their school district records, our staff provide advice and assistance with accounting, payroll, HR and bookkeeping procedures. They also serve as a regional liaison between local districts and the Minnesota Department of Education school finances staff and other various state agencies. Accounting assistance services may be purchased as an alternative to hiring an accountant or contracting from an auditing firm to perform accounting functions.

SMART HR services are provided to the districts that use SMART Systems HR/payroll and eR Modules, which produce payroll, retirement, direct deposit, leave, quarterly and year-end tax reports. The program is also capable of storing and reporting a wide range of human resource information, as well as tracking employee flexible benefit and leave information. An online employee self service website is available for employees to view pay and leave detail, tax, flex info, emergency contact and licensure information.

STAR (Staff Automated Reporting) reporting consists of reporting licensed and non-licensed school staff data to the Minnesota Department of Education. The data reported on STAR will be used to determine licensure violations, highly qualified staff, supply and demand studies, and to fulfill state and federal reporting requirements.

MARSS (Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System) reporting consists of automated reporting of student data to the Minnesota Department of Education. Data elements are maintained and reported by school districts for each student attending a public school in Minnesota. The primary focus of MARSS information is the accurate accounting of students resulting in payment of state and federal dollars.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Management Assistance Program provides consultation and coordination of services related to the management of environmental health and safety concerns for school districts. These services may include: Assist schools in identifying and prioritizing health and safety plans and programs, Conduct on-site management assistance work for a minimum of two site visits per district per fiscal year, Interpretations of mandatory requirements from the Minnesota Department of Education, Assistance completing mandatory reports such as Attachment 99, IAQ information and development, machine guarding, etc., Assistance to determine what is allowable under Health & Safety funding, Mock OSHA building walk-through, Assistance with Machine Guarding, and Playground Safety Inspection.

The Drug and Alcohol Management Program is provided by MEI, and complies with the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines. The program includes drug/alcohol management plan development, supervisor training, random selection for drug/alcohol testing, on-site alcohol testing, and on-site specimen collection.

Cooperative Purchasing
The Cooperative Purchasing program offers a wide variety of products and services with excellent volume discounts to members. By combining the purchasing power of the members of SW/WC Service Cooperative and service cooperatives throughout the state, we achieve volume pricing on quality products and services from reputable vendors. All programs are a result of bids or negotiated contracts. Many of our agreements with vendors were established through a formal bid process. Purchasing from these vendors satisfies Minnesota competitive bidding requirements. Members can purchase directly from the vendors and purchase only what they need, when they need it. No need to buy in large quantities to get a great price. The Cooperative Purchasing team is dedicated to providing you with the best price, quality and service available. We strive to make sure that you will receive the best experience possible when purchasing from our partner vendors.

Technology
The staff of SW/WC Service Cooperative’s Information Technology Department continues to provide our members with access to high-quality technology services to meet their diverse needs. In the current times of economic hardship we have continuously found new ways to expand our shared services offerings in the technology field such as Technology Coordination and Integration Services. These services provide districts and organizations with full access to a staff of IT professionals who are available at your fingertips to help out with planning and issues as needed. We are confident that the access that we provide you with these services will provide the best value you can find anywhere. Our Technology Coordination program has become well-known throughout the state and we are now offering oversight and assistance to other Service Cooperatives in providing technology services to their own members. The expansion of our services to other Service Cooperatives serves as a testament to the quality and need for these services not only in our region, but throughout the state. Topping off our Technology Coordination Service is the incorporation of our Technology Integration Program, which will provide training and mentoring in the use of your IT resources to operate more effectively and provide the greatest impact for the use of technology for instruction.

We continue to expand the functionality of our Student Information System, TSIS, and Data Warehouse Application, Cognos, through our partnership with TIES, a cooperative based in St. Paul. The developments and new features added to this reliable and robust system are continually making it the top choice for Student Information Systems and Data Driven Decision Making tools in Minnesota. New advancements in Personal Learning Plans, a new philosophy for the use of technology systems in regular education are now entering the national spotlight. The incorporation of Personal Learning Plans, TSIS, Cognos and our new Lite Lunch Point of Sale System make our Student System offering the most valuable and comprehensive student data management systems available. Top that with the continuous enhancements made to the system based on the feedback and suggestions from our districts and it is also a student data management system that our schools can feel ownership in.

Two of our veteran programs, the Wide Area Network and Distance Learning continue to thrive. Our Wide Area Network continues to perform at a very satisfying level, and the use of Internet2 has taken off. An upgrade to our Internet capacity will take place on July 1, 2010 to provide our districts with the added bandwidth necessary to bring our districts into the future. Together our districts will be able to continue to leverage the WAN to jointly purchase technologies that districts cannot afford to purchase on their own. The coming year will bring forth a number of joint technology acquisition and grant opportunities that simply would not be feasible for any one of our member districts to pursue on their own, an added value to the collaborative effort our Wide Area Network Consortium brings to its members.
The Goal of the SW/WC Service Cooperative’s Health Insurance Pool Program is to:

1. Reduce the individual risk for our member groups.
2. Stabilize rates for our members on a year-to-year basis.
3. Negotiate with the claims administrator, on behalf of our members, a competitive price, product design options, and services.
4. Provide educational trainings and workshops for our members and their employees.

Our Risk Management Team:

Cliff Carmody, Executive Director
Doug Deragisch, Director of Risk Management
Bobbie Carmody, Administrative Assistant
Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator
Annette Miller, Director of Finance
Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services
Dan Weir, Consultant

~Our School Pool has 60 groups totaling 4,469 members.
~Our CCOGA Pool (cities, counties and other governmental agencies) has 123 groups totaling 5,367 members.

“There isn’t an easy fix to our health insurance issues. The Service Cooperative provides the pooling ability along with the expertise to assist us as we look for solutions to help our employees.”

~Loy Woelber
Superintendent
WWG Public Schools
School Pool Advisory Committee Chair

Doug Deragisch
Director of Risk Management
History of the Pools

In 1985, the SW/WC Service Cooperative entered into its first operating agreement to provide a school district insurance pool for its members. Since that time, the risk management services have focused on a “minimum premium plan” that provides a self-insured health insurance product for schools, cities, counties, and other governmental agencies.

In 2003, the research and development of VEBA products was completed, with availability of the VEBA plan for schools in July, 2003, and cities, counties, and other governmental units in January, 2004. In 2008, Health Savings Account (HSA) became an available plan option for all groups. The development of new programs and services continued with the advent of the Care Support Program focusing on the management of chronic conditions, and an emphasis on health and wellness initiatives through the Worksite Wellness Program.

Today, risk management services provide a cost-efficient health insurance option for our members. With flexibility and choice of plan design, a complete network with deep discounts, low administrative and stop-loss fees, and new consumer-directed health products, we believe our school pool and city/county/other governmental agency pool have worked in helping our members find the best option for their health insurance dollar.

Benefits of Pooling

Strength and Security in Numbers. Statewide, there are over 500 groups who partner with their regional service cooperative for health care coverage.

Leveraged Purchasing Power. Partnering with the SW/WC Service Cooperative protects your employees and your bottom line. Public employer groups of all sizes achieve purchasing power usually reserved for very large employers. This collective group participation maximizes your limited health benefit dollars.

Great Stability Through Shared Risk. Pooling results in more stable and predictable health care rates. With insurance pooling, your risk is spread among similar public employer groups participating in the plan. This reduces the need for sizable rate increases following a year of high claims, and promotes a willingness to pay a little more in years of low claims. Smaller yearly rate fluctuations contribute to greater stability, enhanced risk management, and long-term financial security for your organization.

The Health Plans People Want. The SW/WC Service Cooperative, along with the other Minnesota Service Cooperatives, have teamed with Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) to offer the state’s most comprehensive health care coverage. The array of benefit plans features innovative and flexible plan designs, competitive pricing, member health management and improvement programs, and dedicated customer service and support.

Preserving Your Group’s Autonomy. When you join forces with other public employer groups in your area, you maintain your group’s independence and local autonomy.

Keeping Your Health Care Local. BCBS has the state’s largest provider network, in addition to dedicated customer service, operations, sales and account management teams.

Good Health is Good Business. There are many health plan support programs and services through BCBS.

Lower Costs. There are lower administrative fees, a 20-25% lower stop loss rate than the commercial market, lower target loss ratio for stop loss claims, and consumer directed plans such as VEBA and HSAs.

Health Cost Management Program Available

With approval from the School Pool Advisory Committee the SW/WC Service Cooperative initiated a Health Cost Management Program (wellness) for the 2008-09 school year. The program was evaluated in the Spring of 2009, and based on the positive feedback was approved by the School Pool Advisory Committee to continue the program in 2009-10. The intent of the program is to assist school groups in developing and implementing an employee health cost management program. Incentive grants were made available based on school size to help groups offset the cost of running their program. The overall goals of the program are to have; 1) healthier individuals with improved self-esteem, 2) employees that perform optimally at work and home, and 3) lower health plan utilization. In the second year of the program 17 districts took advantage of the Health Cost Management Program with approximately 35% of all employees in the pool involved in this year’s program.

“In these chaotic times with healthcare being a focal point of national debate and costs continuing to rise at exponential rates it is good to have an organization that one can rely on for straight answers to those difficult questions. The SW/WC Service Cooperative insurance pool and its related Risk Management Services provides that needed advice and help as districts work to contain the spiraling healthcare/insurance costs that they are faced with. By participating in the insurance pool a district receives the best options, information, advice and pricing that are available in these most uncertain times.”

~Bruce Lampecht
Business Manager
Marshall Public Schools
SW/WC Service Cooperative is a public agency. No state or local tax dollars are used to fund our programs and services. Operating revenue is derived from membership fees and grants. We invite corporate and foundation sponsorship of student and adult enrichment programs and services.

“"It has been a positive experience for our staff to have the opportunity to be a part of this specialized training in math conducted by Service Cooperative staff and teaching personnel at Southwest State. Staff return from the meetings having received something that they feel they can use in their classroom. I know that the opportunity to work with fellow peers that teach at their grade levels has been a real positive addition to the program. We are glad to have been offered this learning opportunity. It is all for the students and their improved learning and increasing their level of excitement about math learning.”

~Raymond Staatz
Middle/Secondary Principal
Pipestone Area Schools
“I feel that the Math and Science Teacher Grant program has been very beneficial in my growth as a classroom teacher. Over the past 2 years I have gotten to meet and talk to a number of teachers in our area and collaborate on the curriculum. I am teaching and finding ways to improve its effectiveness.”

~Keven Larson
Elementary Teacher
Minneota Public Schools

“Buffalo Lake/Hector School District was hit hard by the economic issues of the state. But following the realization of the depth of those issues, BLH like every other public school in Minnesota, will continue to deliver quality opportunities for our students—working with our colleagues, assisting each other with support as needed.”

~Rick Clark
Superintendent
Buffalo Lake/Hector Public Schools
Valuing Employees

Edna Gossen
Operations Manager

“I have really enjoyed my time working for the Service Cooperative. My favorite thing has been working in districts with great teachers and administrators, who do the complex work of education with skill and heart. I want to thank all the districts with whom I’ve worked and the wonderful colleagues with whom I’ve had the privilege to collaborate.”

~Carol Svingen
Response to Intervention Supervisor
Retiring July 1, 2010, after 16 years of dedicated service

Edna Gossen
Operations Manager
The SW/WC Service Cooperative employs a wide range of employees. Below is a sampling of some of the varied professionals we have on staff. Out of 241 employees...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism Specialist</td>
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<td>Bilingual Paraprofessional</td>
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<td>Career Accommodation Specialist</td>
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<td>Career and Tech Project Coordinator</td>
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<td>Coordinator of Educational Programs</td>
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<td>Cultural Liaison</td>
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<td>ECSE Coordinator and Teachers</td>
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<td>ITV American Sign Language Teacher</td>
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<td>LAN/PC Specialist/Technicians</td>
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<td>MARSS/Student Services Coordinator</td>
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<td>Math Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapist/COTAs</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapist/Physical Therapist Assistant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RtI Supervisor and RtI Coordinator</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Marketing Coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Improvement Specialist</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Psychologist</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Social Worker</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/Language Pathologist</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Coordinator</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Integration Specialist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Billing Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The SW/WC Service Cooperative serves as fiscal host and provides HR and Administrative Services to the following two programs:
CRIC-Cottonwood River Integration Collaborative, New Ulm
WCIC-West Central Integration Collaborative, Willmar

“What a terrific group! The people who work at SW/WC Service Cooperative make its mission statement come alive! They are personable, friendly, responsive and expert servants who make a difference for students and staffs in our part of the state.”

~Bill Strom
Superintendent
Mountain Lake Public Schools
Superintendents’ Advisory Council Chair

We value and practice initiative, ingenuity, and creativity.

Terri Collins, special education teacher at the Heartland Ranch School in Benson, received a 2009-10 College Access Champion Award from the Great Lakes Higher Education Guarantee Corporation.

Donna Day Beck, teacher at the Red Rock Ridge School, was named as a regional honoree in the WEM Foundation’s 2009 Outstanding Educator Awards program.

Cliff Carmody, Executive Director, received the 2009 MREA Distinguished Service Award

Josh Sumption, Information Technology Manager, received the TIES 2009 District Technology Leader Award.
## Member Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Regular Public School Members</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Charter and Non-Public School Members</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of City Members</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of County Members</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Other Governmental Agency (OGA) Members</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

““The SW/WC Service Cooperative has provided the Renville County West school district with expertise in many areas of school operation and educational programming. They are, without a doubt, an integral part of assisting us in providing the quality of education and opportunities our students, families and community members have come to expect.”

~Lance Bagstad
Superintendent
Renville County West Public Schools

“The SW/WC Service Cooperative provides on-going professional development opportunities for administrators and staff members that we could not provide without their partnership.

The professionals from SW/WC Service Cooperative consistently provide realistic, relevant, and research-based guidance to the members of our school improvement team thereby enriching our efforts and ensuring our progress.”

~Daron VanderHeiden
Superintendent
Hutchinson Public Schools

Shelly Maes
Manager of Member Services
2009-2010 Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative Members

Adrian Schools
Adult Client Training Service
Advanced Opportunities
Area II MN River Basin Projects, Inc.
Atwater/Cosmos/Grove City Schools
Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center
Belgrade/Broten/Elosa Schools
Benson Schools
BOLD Schools
Brewwster Schools
Buffalo Lake/Hector Schools
Butterfield Schools
Canby Schools
Cedar Mountain Schools
Cedar Riverside Community School, Minneapolis
Chippewa County
City of Adrian
City of Appleton
City of Atwater
City of Benson
City of Bird Island
City of Buffalo Lake
City of Canby
City of Carver
City of Cosmos
City of Cottonwood
City of DeGraff
City of Ellsworth
City of Fairfax
City of Franklin
City of Fulda
City of Granite Falls
City of Greenfield
City of Hanley Falls
City of Hendricks
City of Heron Lake
City of Hugo
City of Ivanhoe
City of Jackson
City of Jasper
City of Kerkhoven
City of Lake Elmo
City of Lakefield
City of Lamberton
City of Madison
City of Marshall
City of Maynard
City of Mendota Heights
City of Milroy
City of Minnesota
City of Montevideo
City of Mountain Lake
City of New Prague
City of Newport
City of Oak Grove
City of Okdale
City of Pipestone
City of Prior Lake
City of Renville
City of Rosemount
City of Round Lake
City of Russell
City of Sacred Heart
City of Scandia
City of Slayton
City of Spicer
City of Springfield
City of St. Paul Park
City of Stewart
City of Stillwater
City of Tyler
City of Vadnais Heights
City of West St. Paul
City of Willmar
City of Windom
Clara City Nursing Home
Clarkfield Area Charter School
Cologne Academy, Cologne
Comfrey Schools
Community Christian School, Willmar
Cottonwood County
Cottonwood County DAC
Countrywide Public Health
Dawson/Boyd Schools
E.C.H.O Charter School
Eden Valley/Watkins Schools
Edgerton Schools
Ellsworth Schools
Fulda Schools
Gibbon/Fairfax/Winthrop Schools
Glencoe/Silver Lake Schools
Heartland Community Action
Hendricks Schools
Heron Lake/Okabena Schools
Hiawatha Manor-Pipestone
Hills/Beaver Creek Schools
Holy Redeemer School, Marshall
Holy Trinity School, Winsted
Hospice of Murray County, Inc.
HRA of Jackson
HRA of Redwood Falls
Hutchinson Schools
Ivanhoe Schools
Jackson County
Jackson County Central Schools
Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg Schools
Kandiyohi Area Transit
Kandiyohi County
Kandiyohi County SWCD
Latique Parle County
Latique Parle Valley Schools
Lake Benton Schools
Lake Minnetonka Conservation District
Lakeview Schools
Lester Prairie Schools
Lincoln County
Lincoln County SWCD
Lincoln/Pipestone Rural Water
Luverne Schools
Lynd Schools
Lyon County
MACCRAY Schools
Marshall Area Christian School
Marshall Municipal Utilities
Marshall Schools
Meeker County
Mid-MN Development Commission
Milroy Area Charter School
Milroy Schools
Minnesota Schools
Montevideo Schools
Mountain Lake Christian School
Mountain Lake Schools
Murray County
Murray County Central Schools
Murray County DAC
New Heights School, Stillwater
New Life Treatment Center
New London/Spicer Schools
Nobles County
Nobles County SWCD
Odyssey Charter School, Brooklyn Center
Ortonville Schools
Ortonville Area Health Services
PACT 4 Families Collaborative
Parkview Home, Belview
Parkview Manor, Ellsworth
Paynesville Schools
Pioneerland Library System
Pipestone Area Schools
Pipestone County
Pipestone County Medical Center
Pipestone County SWCD
Prairie Five Community Action
Prairie Lakes Youth Programs
Prinsburg Schools
Progress, Inc.
Red Rock Central Schools
Red Rock Rural Water Systems
Redwood Area Schools
Redwood County
Redwood County SWCD
Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area
Renville County
Renville County SWCD
Renville County West Schools
Rock County
Rock County DAC
Round Lake Schools
Russell/Tyler/Ruthton Schools
Rural Enterprises for Acceptable Living/SWCLIL
St. Anne’s School, Wabasso
St. Edward’s School, Minnesota
St. Mary’s School, Bird Island
St. Mary’s School, Tracy
St. Paul Conservatory for the Performing Arts
St. Peter’s School, Canby
St. Raphael School, Springfield
Samuel Lutheran School, Marshall
Sleepy Eye Schools
Southwest Regional Development Commission
Southwest Christian School, Edgerton
Springfield Schools
SW MN Housing Partnership
SW MN Opportunity Council (SMOC)
Swift County
Swift County-Benson Hospital
Tracy Area Schools
Wabasso Schools
Westbrook Public Utilities
Westbrook/Walnut Grove Schools
Western Community Action
Willmar Schools
Willmar Municipal Utilities Comm.
Windom Schools
Worthington Schools
Worthington Area Language Academy
Yellow Medicine County
Yellow Medicine East Schools

*60 Cooperative Purchasing Members from South Dakota
Governance

An elected board of directors representing our membership governs us. Advisory committees provide planning and evaluation input. We operate as a regional system delivering programs and services responsive to our members and others.

2009-2010 Superintendent Advisory Council

Bill Strom, Chair, Mountain Lake Public Schools
Dan Deitte, Vice Chair, Minnesota Public Schools
Gary Fisher, Past Chair, Luverne Public Schools
Lance Bagstad, Renville County West Public Schools
John Brennan, Red Rock Central Public Schools
Rick Clark, Buffalo Lake/Hector Public Schools
Carol DeSmet, Holy Redeemer School
Rick Ellingworth, Redwood Area Public Schools
Roger Graff, Adrian Public Schools
Loren Hacker, Canby Public Schools
Martin Heidelberger, KMS Public Schools
Luther Heller, Montevideo Public Schools
Sharon Kabes, Southwest Minnesota State University
Dave Marlette, Tracy Public Schools
Chris Sonju, Glencoe/Silver Lake Public Schools
Allen Stoeckman, YME Public Schools
Ted Suss, Wabasso Public Schools
Robert Tews, Cedar Mountain Public Schools
Daron VanderHeiden, Hutchinson Public Schools
Michael Van Keulen, Minnesota West College
Klint Willert, Marshall Public Schools
Wayne Wormstadt, Windom Public Schools

“The Service Cooperative is a member driven organization with a mission to serve schools and agencies by partnering. We believe available resources are expanded by joining together in programs from cooperative purchasing to curriculum, special education to student activities, instruction to information technology.”

~Sally Vogt
Canby Public Schools
SW/WC Service Cooperative Board Chair
Board of Directors

Sally Vogt, Board Chair
Canby Public Schools

Michael Zins, Vice-Chair
Fulda Public Schools

Richard Vroman, Clerk
Milroy Public Schools

Maydra Maas, Treasurer
Westbrook/Walnut Grove Public Schools

Don Brugman
Windom Public Schools

Jan Fransen
Jackson County

Carol Morgan
Luverne Public Schools
New member as of January 2010

Kathryn Kelly
Renville County SWCD

Loren Mathews
Glencoe/Silver Lake Public Schools

Michael O’Brien
New London/Spicer Public Schools

Lynn Suter
Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg Public Schools

Kathi Thymian
Ortonville Public Schools

Daniel Zimansky
Tracy Public Schools
This report is published for members, educators, legislators, and business/government partners who enable us to provide relevant, cost-efficient, and high quality services throughout the 18-county southwest and west central Minnesota region. You’ll see throughout the pages of this document why we are proud of who we are and what we do to make a difference every day in schools and communities.