Annual Report
To Our Partners 2013-2014
Friends of SW/WC Service Cooperative:

“Partnership, Innovation, Leadership, and Service”

The SW/WC Service Cooperative Board, administration, and staff focus on providing programs and services that meet the needs of our members!

This Annual Report to our Partners illustrates the core mission, values, and commitment our agency has for our region. As you review this report, I hope you will see how our programs and services are critical to, and support the work of, the members we serve.

Our shared services model of delivering services is demonstrated through the new and existing initiatives highlighted in this report. We are a membership driven organization...through the use of a number of advisory committees, our Board and administration work collaboratively with our members to offer programs and services that support, enhance, and meet the needs of our members.

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

As we plan for 2014-15, we continue to recognize the challenges facing our members. We are grounded and committed to our service approach and will continue to find ways to be innovative in our practice of administering high quality programs and services.

Thank you for your support of our collaborative work and I look forward to working with you to address the challenges of the new year!

From the Executive Director
Cliff Carmody

Partnership.

Innovation.

Leadership.

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

An exciting highlight from this past year is the new Cooperative Purchasing online marketplace, the Express. The Express was designed to bring the purchasing process together in a simple, single to use, online environment. Members can place orders, compare prices from our partnered vendors, approve and manage orders, and utilize flexible payment options including purchase orders or credit cards/P-Cards. Members can even order items from different vendors and place all of the items into a single shopping cart. Product searches can be done with a variety of options to help improve the shopping experience. In addition, all pricing in the Express is member-discounted pricing – so there is no need to remember contract codes or quote numbers to receive our contracted pricing. The Express site can be easily accessed by visiting our Cooperative Purchasing Connection webpage at www.swsc.org/cp.

This division, led by Doug Deragisch, is comprised of the school insurance pool, the city/county/other governmental (CCOGA) agency pool, and the health cost management program (HCMP). The SW/WC SC operates two health insurance pools on behalf of our members. The School Pool has 55 member schools with a total of nearly 7,000 covered lives. The CCOGA Pool has 109 members covering nearly 7,500 lives. The SW/WC SC’s renewal success rate is near 80% annually. Over the years, the Pools have been successful in serving our members with high quality insurance products as well as educational and support services.

A highlight from this past year is pictured at left. These students from the Culinary Arts & Hospitality program, sponsored by The Schwan Food Company, brought over 250 students to Southwest Minnesota State University to compete in the 2019 Culinary Challenge. Students were given a theme and presented their work to their peers and a panel of judges. The Culinary Skills Challenge, sponsored by The Schwan Food Company, brought over 250 students to Southwest Minnesota State University to compete in seven food competitions. A variety of breakout sessions were held for students who weren’t competing, which allowed students to try new foods and learn new techniques from professional chefs. Both of these events allowed students to more deeply explore career options by working directly with professionals from the industry.

This division, led by Dr. Mary Palmer, is comprised of direct student services, regional low incidence programs, outreach clinics, autism training project, transitions outcome project, and the alternative learning programs and settings.

One highlight from this past year was our first Low Vision Clinic which served 10 students with visual impairments. Dr. Siemsen (Mayo Clinic) and Dr. Hinkemeyer (Pine Cone Low Vision Center) set up a small clinic where students were interviewed and given a series of eye examinations. Some students were prescribed visual aids to assist them in school and the community.

Kristin Olsen, Specialist for the Blind/Vision Impaired from MDE, met with students and families to look at devices for low vision. Each of the students received free devices specific to their level of vision needs. These devices included magnifiers, monoculars, and special sunglasses. Following the exam, the students had their vision tested with and without the devices. The results were amazing for some students, putting huge smiles on their faces! They were all very excited after receiving their devices, and one student said, “Now I can see when my teacher is smiling”!
The School Crisis Response Team is comprised of over 70 trained individuals from schools in our region who are either mental health professionals or licensed support team members. The team provides support to students and staff through the facilitation of debriefings, defusing, and crisis management briefings following the protocol of the CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) model. The team is coordinated by Brian Skogen from Canby Public Schools (pictured above), with additional leadership support from Jason Kratochvil from the SW/WC SC. Since the team's creation in 2010, the 2013-14 school year proved to be the most tragic, with countless hours of support provided to districts by the team members. We thank Brian Skogen for the exceptional leadership he provided in the region this past year—working days, nights and weekends to meet school needs.

Located in Willmar, the North Central Learning Center (NCLC) completed its first year of operation in the Spring of 2014. The North Central Learning Center is a program that serves students with special education and therapeutic mental health needs. The program has grown and additional staff have been added. We look forward to continued growth and collaboration with our member districts. The program employs three teachers, three mental health workers and four paraprofessionals. The North Central Learning Center will be adding a part-time administrator for the 2014-2015 school year.

This past year, the SW/WC SC partnered with SafeSchools to offer three exciting programs to our member districts. The three programs include:

*Online Staff Training and Tracking Program. This program allows a district to see where they can increase compliance, offer easy to use training, and save time and money.

*Online (M)SDS Management Program. This program is an affordable and easy way to access Safety Data Sheets by creating and storing virtual binders.

*Bullying Reporting and Tracking Program. This program is a great way to receive and track tips reported via phone, text, email, and web.

The SW/WC SC became a partner in the Minnesota Partnership for Collaborative Curriculum (MPCC) on behalf of its school district members. MPCC is a grassroots initiative among schools to create comprehensive open education resources, with the overall goal to create course work in a digital format in the four core subject areas for grades 3-12. Membership benefits to districts include:

*Access to high quality curriculum aligned to standards and available at minimal cost;

*Local control to edit, remove, add, or customize the content;

*Improved capacity for personalized learning; and

*Training opportunities for teachers to develop digital content and become skilled in delivering personalized learning through digital content.

The MDE monitoring process is an on-going endeavor for all 46 school districts who purchase special education coordinator/director services from the SW/WC SC. This year, for the first time, all 46 school districts were on the same schedule and thus, had to complete a ‘Self-Review’. Janet Dirksen, Coordinator of Special Education, was assigned to facilitate and oversee the process for all of our districts. This marked the first time one coordinator was assigned to the entire process – with the hope that the process would be streamlined and more efficient for all districts. Of the 676 files reviewed, a variety of citations were found but overall the process would be streamlined and more efficient for all districts. This marked the first time one coordinator was assigned to facilitate and oversee the process for all of our districts.

The SW/WC SC is home to a new Regional Center of Excellence: the Southwest Prairie Regional Center of Excellence. The goal is “to assist and support school boards, school districts, school sites, and charter schools in implementing research-based interventions and practices to increase student achievement within a region”. The Center will serve all schools by providing training in dropout prevention, transition to postsecondary education and employment, and statewide curriculum standards implementation. This partnership with MDE allows dissemination of information to our schools through a regional training format. MDE Specialists conduct the initial training session and center directors create additional training modules to assist school districts through the implementation process.
Leadership

Providing opportunities for all

Whether it be in the area of student conferences, school finance, insurance, or workshops for teachers, the SW/WC Service Cooperative strives to provide opportunities for all to learn, grow and lead.

Students as Leaders—through our student enrichment programs, we offer students a variety of educational and leadership opportunities outside of the classroom. A parent recently sent us this note: “My children are former students of your various conferences. Two of my children have now graduated. Your conferences were amazing and my children learned so much. Sometimes the learning came from making contacts with other adults and kids of like mind. Two of my children (I have four) won first place in their science fair projects in Mankato. They were given ideas and advice on how to run a successful project. These two children are continuing their adulthood education in the medical field and engineering. My other daughter fell in love with German and Linguistic and my last one is still an art fanatic and the tips she received helped her to explore so much more on her own. She loves animation and pottery. Thank you so much for having these opportunities offered to our students in the regions. They learned so much”.

Teachers as Leaders—through professional development, partnerships, and other collaborative ventures, we work to provide every kind of teacher the opportunity and ongoing support to be a great leader.

Staff as Leaders—through a variety of leadership opportunities, our staff can serve as mentors to new staff, serve on various committees, provide support, assistance and leadership to our member school districts, work as teachers in our alternative programs, and so much more.

Leaders in the Region—through active listening and experienced facilitation, our agency strives to provide leadership in the region through innovative and collaborative new ventures.

2013-14 Executive Director’s Cabinet
Cliff Carmody, Executive Director
Deecy Jesse, Executive Assistant
Annette Miller, Director of Finance
Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services
Edna Gossen, Operations Manager
Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services
Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services
Dr. Mary Palmer, Senior Director of Special Education Services
Bob Braun, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services
Dr. Amy Christensen, Interim Director of the Southwest Prairie Regional Center of Excellence
Service
Serving the 18 counties of southwest and west central Minnesota

Office locations
Marshall, Montevideo, Pipestone, Willmar, and Windom

School Locations
Belview, Benson, Cosmos, Pipestone, Willmar, and Windom

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

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

Our Board of Directors
Maydra Maas, Chairperson, WWG Schools
Kathi Thymian, Vice-Chair, Ortonville Schools
Donald Brugman, Clerk, Windom Schools
Kathryn Kelly, Treasurer, Renville County
Michael Zins, Fulda Schools
Jan Fransen, Jackson County
Tom Walsh, KMS Schools
Maggie Kluver, Montevideo Schools
David Kilpatrick, New London/Spicer Schools
Jody Bauer, Tracy Schools
Steve Schnieder, Worthington Schools

Members of the SW/WC Service Cooperative Board of Directors are elected from our membership.

Our Staff
We employ 291 regular employees throughout the 18 counties of southwest and west central Minnesota.

Our staff are located in one of our office or school locations, and many are housed right in the school district where they work.

Employee retention is important to us!
The average length of service for our current staff is over 7.15 years.

The number of employees who have worked at the SW/WC SC over 20 years: 25
15-19 years: 19
10-14 years: 32

Board of Directors — listed/pictured as of 6/30/14
Members are our focus. We have a unique understanding of the strengths and needs of our members and use these insights to positively impact and improve how our members do their work.

Benefits of Membership
- Provides access to the various programs and services offered through our agency
- Allows members to operate more efficiently and cost effectively through creative program development and partnerships
- Creates access to programs and services not readily available to members without cooperation and coordination
- Helps members maximize dollars and realize cost savings by pooling money and resources

Public, Private and Charter Schools
- Adrian
- AGCC
- BBE
- Benson
- BOLD
- Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart
- Butterfield-Odin
- Canby
- Cedar Mountain
- Central MN Christian, Prinsburg
- Clermont Area Charter
- Cologne Academy
- Comfrey
- Dawson-Boyd
- E.C.H.O Charter
- Eden Valley-Watkins
- Edgerton
- Ellsworth
- Fuld
- Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop
- Glencoe-Silver Lake
- Hendricks
- Heron Lake-Okabena
- Hills-Beaver Creek
- Holy Redeemer, Marshall
- Holy Trinity, Winsted
- Hutchinson
- Immancu Lutheran, Lakefield
- Ivanhoe
- Jackson County Central
- Kimball
- Lac qui Parle Valley
- Lake Benton
- Lakeview
- Lester Prairie
- Lourver
- Lynd
- MACCRAY
- Marshall Area Christian
- Marshall

Governmental Agency Members
- Cottonwood County Developmental Achievement Center
- Countryside Public Health
- Des Moines Valley Health & Human Services
- Hospice of Murray County
- Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Redwood Falls
- Jackson Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- Kandiyohi Area Transit
- Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District
- Lake Minnetonka Conservation District
- Lincoln County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Lincoln/Pipestone Rural Water
- Marshall Municipal Utilities
- Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
- Murray County Developmental Achievement Center
- Nobles County Soil and Water Conservation District

NonProfit Members
- Admin Client Training Service
- Advance Opportunities
- Area II MN River Basin Projects
- Chippewa River Watershed
- Heartland Community Action
- Hiaawatha Manor
- New Life Treatment Center
- Prairie Five Community Action
- PACT 4 Families Collaborative
- Parkview Home
- Pioneerland Library System
- Pipestone County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Pipestone County Medical Center
- Prairie Lakes Youth Programs
- Red Rock Rural Water System
- Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area
- Renville County Hospital and Clinic
- Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Southwest Regional Development Commission
- Swift County-Benson Hospital
- Westbrook Public Utilities
- Willmar Municipal Utilities
- Windom Housing and Redevelopment Authority

City Members
- Adrian
- Appleton
- Atwater
- Benson
- Bird Island
- Buffalo Lake
- Canby
- Carver
- Clara City/ Nursing Home
- Cosmos
- Cottonwood
- Ellsworth
- Fairfax
- Franklin
- Fulda
- Granite Falls
- Greenfield
- Hanley Falls
- Hendricks
- Jackson
- Kerkhoven
- Lake Benton
- Lake Elmo
- Carver
- Madison
- Marshall
- Maynard
- Minot
- Milroy
- Minnesota
- Monroe
- Montgomery
- New Prague
- Mountain Lake
- Whippany

County Members
- Chippewa
- Cottonwood
- Jackson
- Kandiyohi
- Lac Qui Parle
- Lincoln
- Meeker
- Nobles
- Pipestone
- Renville
- Rock
- Yellow Medicine

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

Membership List Current as of 6/30/14
Ryan Groeneweg, Certified Behavior Analyst, was presented with the Heartland Association for Behavior Analysis (HLABA) Award of Excellence. The Award of Excellence is given to one individual in the area that has made a significant contribution to the advancement of the field of behavior analysis in our area.

Paige Fossum, a Licensed Graduate School Social Worker, was selected as the Patrick L. Redinius Spirit Award recipient for 2014, an honor given by the Center for Disabilities in Sioux Falls. This award is presented annually to a former trainee who has exemplified the following: enthusiasm and commitment to disability issues, a high level of energy for work in the field of disabilities, and compassion and respect for all.

Diane McCarron was named the 2014 New Special Education Leader by the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE). She was honored for her commitment to students with disabilities and their families, and her active involvement in professional and community affairs.

Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services, was elected to a 4-year term representing Agency-Statewide South Zone on the Minnesota Rural Education Association Board of Directors. Doug is also taking part in the Association of Educational Service Agencies' Executive in Residence Program. In May of 2014, Doug spent a week visiting Capital Region BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) in Albany, New York.

Hazel Ashbeck received national certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). This required passing a national board exam after having completed a minimum of 1,500 hours of supervised work in the field and multiple accredited courses in Applied Behavior Analysis.

Kathleen Fischer completed training through Salus University (Pennsylvania) that allowed her to receive her vision teaching license. The Salus Program is very rigorous and difficult to complete. Kathleen is now serving students in our member districts who have vision needs.

Kayla DeJong completed the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) Studies certificate program from the University of Minnesota, which allowed her to become the FASD consultant for the agency. Kayla is available to districts for consultation on how to assess and help children with FASD academically and behaviorally. Kayla also is available to educate staff on FASD and how to assist children with this diagnosis.

Ryan Groeneweg was certified as a Behavior Analyst by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). He has been providing consultation to schools and families on the treatment of children with autism spectrum disorders.

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Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.

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

~Cliff Carmody
Executive Director

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

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

I hope you will consider what you can do for each and every child. Gather with the excellent SW/WC Service Cooperative administration and staff. Push each other to think outside the box. Think big about what can be tackled together.

Thank you, one and all, for being part of the SW/WC Service Cooperative. There’s always an open seat in true collaboration.

From the Board Chair
Maydra Maas
Superintendents’ Executive Council 2013-14

Chair: Jerry Kjergaard, Superintendent, Willmar
Vice Chair: Jim Lentz, Superintendent, Pipestone Area
Past Chair: Luther Heller, Superintendent, Montevideo
          John Dotson, Superintendent, BOLD
Luther Onken, Superintendent, Fulda and Murray County Central
Chris Sonju, Superintendent, Glencoe-Silver Lake
Ann Wendorff, Superintendent, Heron Lake-Okabena
Todd Meyer, Superintendent, Jackson County Central
          Chris Fenske, Superintendent, Lakeview
          Klint Willert, Superintendent, Marshall
          Dan Deitte, Superintendent, Minneota
Bill Strom, Superintendent, Mountain Lake
Robert Windel, Superintendent, Mountain Lake Christian
          John Brennan, Superintendent, Red Rock Central
Ray Hassing, Superintendent, Round Lake-Brewster
Loy Woelber, Superintendent, Westbrook-Walnut Grove
          John Landgaard, Superintendent, Worthington
          Al Stoeckman, Superintendent, Yellow Medicine East
Sharon Kabes, Education Dept. Chair, Southwest MN State University
Michael Van Keulen, Manager, Minnesota West

The Superintendents’ Executive Council provides advice and support to the
SW/WC Service Cooperative Administration and Board of Directors.

The SW/WC Service Cooperative is a member of the
Minnesota Service Cooperatives,
an association of nine educational
service agencies in Minnesota.