



Southeast
Service
Cooperative

Connections

January 2024

Welding Contest News

P2



Agile Ideas Leadership
Sessions

P8

AGILE
IDEAS
LEADERSHIP

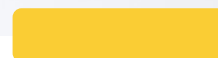
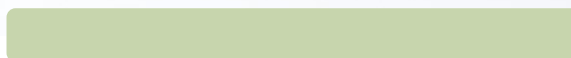
LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT
FACILITATION

Outstanding
Educator of the Year

P14



Inspiring Success



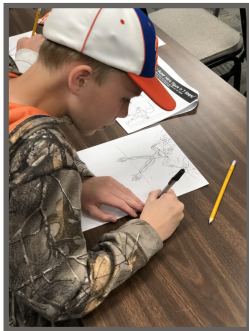
Save the date for the 37th Annual Young Authors, Young Artists Conference

May 14—16, 2024

Students in grades 3-5 are welcome to join in learning from over 14 professionals in their field. Some topics include: sculpting, comic drawing, creative storytelling, pastel and acrylic painting, origami, song writing, and so much more!



Young Authors
Young Artists



For more information please visit:
www.ssc.coop/yayaelementary

Southeast Minnesota Welding Competition Registration

The Southeast Minnesota Welding Competition student registration is now open. Schools will be limited to five competitors and three alternates. New this year is the opportunity to bring non-competing students to the event. We will have a career fair, breakout sessions, and demonstrations available to all, with a focus on welding, manufacturing, the trades, and military. For more information, please visit seminwelding.com.



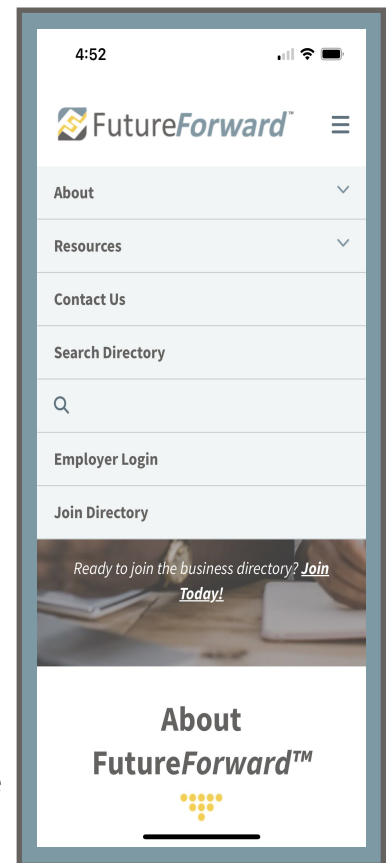
FutureForward™: Growing in Popularity

By Nick Wobig

The website and mobile application, FutureForward™, continues to see more and more users as youth are exploring career opportunities and utilizing the resources available within the platform. With direct links to FAFSA information, labor statistics, college registrations and applications, and more, FutureForward™ boasts a plethora of critical resources youth and their families are seeking.

And this app isn't just resources for post-secondary education and training. FutureForward™ also provides information directly from hundreds of businesses in Southeast Minnesota, directly from the leaders of these businesses. Youth are continuing to dig deep into their potential careers and discovering companies they may have never heard of or never knew offered the types of careers they are interested in.

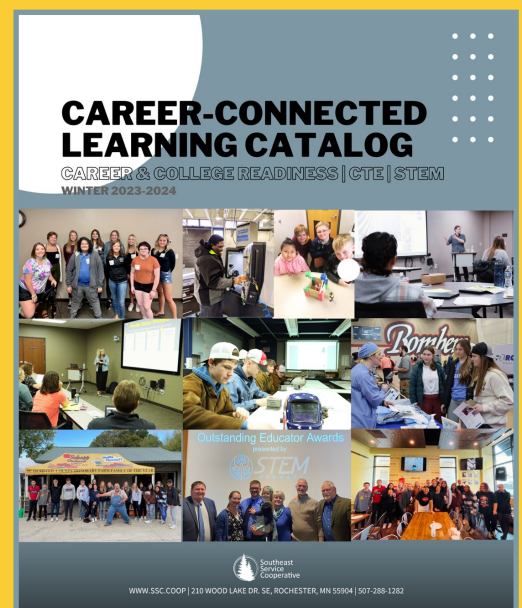
At a recent event, an Albert Lea student was exploring the app and asked if FutureForward™ was just a resource for healthcare careers. She was elated as she dove into the updated search feature and was able to find companies in her hometown that offered careers in every category. While this is just one example, we continue to receive positive feedback and are continuing to make updates that make this platform more user-friendly and more expansive to its users.



Get Connected - Catalog of Events

We are continuously exploring new opportunities to get the word out about the events we are hosting and promoting. Our latest and greatest concept is to create a catalog that is easy to read, navigate, and access. By scanning the QR code, you will have access to a catalog of all of SSC's career-connected learning, career readiness, STEM, and CTE opportunities available for youth, educators, and community.

We invite you to share this QR code with anyone who may find this useful and impactful. Send it out in a staff email, display copies in common areas, encourage your counselors to hand it out to students. The opportunities are endless!



One Day, Two Events

Friday, January 5, proved to be a busy day for career exploration for youth in Southeast Minnesota. SSC and Rochester Community and Technical College hosted the second annual Discover Healthcare event in RCTC's Heintz Center. Presenters from Mayo Clinic, Olmsted Medical Center, and more hosted 15-minute, hands-on sessions for youth from area schools. Youth could choose from sessions like EMT, Physical Therapy, Phlebotomy, Nursing, and much, much more. They also were able to participate in a career fair where they could dig in and learn more about career trajectory, necessary skills and education, military opportunities, and pay and benefits.

Overlapping the second session of Discover Healthcare was the Dodge County Internship Fair hosted by Kasson-Mantorville High School. 200+ plus youth from Dodge County schools gathered to talk with 36 businesses about their future careers and potential internship opportunities. Last year's event resulted in 10 students participating in internships with local businesses, and the organizers are hopeful that this event will boast record numbers of internships exceeding 20 or 30 opportunities for these youth.



Students engaging with healthcare professionals at the Discover Healthcare career fair.



PEM and St. Charles students explore FutureForward™.

Outstanding Industry Partner of the Year Awards

Planning has begun for this year's Outstanding Industry Partner of the Year awards! The career-connected learning team will be posting more information about how to nominate an industry partner that has made a positive impact on schools and youth in Southeast Minnesota. In the meantime, we ask that all school representatives start thinking about a business or professional that you would like to nominate for this prestigious award.



**Outstanding Industry
Partner of the Year
Awards**

2nd Annual FREE FutureForward™ Career, College, and Job Fair

This event, happening on March 5 in Cannon Falls, has a history of bringing together more than 125 employers and post-secondary institutions and 1,300 students from across southeastern Minnesota. We want to get your information as soon as possible to reserve your spot.

The primary objectives of this event are tailored to benefit students and help them become more aware of current job opportunities and future careers:



- Inform students about a wide array of career opportunities, igniting their curiosity about future career prospects.
- Showcase diverse training paths designed to equip students with essential skills, ranging from in-workplace opportunities to post-secondary programs.
- Highlight current or upcoming employment opportunities, ideal for summer positions or long-term career planning.
- Introduce students and educators to businesses committed to partnering with area schools, allowing you to find classroom presenters and potential opportunities for internships, mentorships, site tours, and job-shadowing experiences. All available for free on the [FutureForward™](#) platform.

If your **school** would like to participate, please fill out the following form: [FutureForward™ Career, College, and Job Fair - Education Signup Form](#).

If your **organization** would like to host a booth, please fill out the following form: [FutureForward™ Career, College, and Job Fair - Booth Signup Form](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Schnell at mschnell@ssc.coop, 507-281-6683. You can also contact your career-connected learning specialist, Jami Schwickerath, jschwickerath@ssc.coop, or Nick Wobig, nwobig@ssc.coop.

Your Path to CTE Teaching Licensure!



Lakes County Alternative Teacher Licensure, a PELSB-approved program, is competency-based and designed for teachers holding Tier 3 or 4 teaching licenses, emphasizing individualized learning. This opportunity is cost-free, thanks to the

Minnesota Service Cooperatives CTE grant, and offers efficiency and flexibility.

Overview: This adaptable, cost-effective, results-oriented licensure program provides a clear path to licensure while tailoring studies to individual candidate needs. It is

designed to deliver high-quality on-demand experiences, breaking away from traditional academic year constraints. Candidates are recruited, admitted, and paired with an advisor/mentor who guides them in shaping a personalized licensure program. They acquire necessary content through micro-credential stacks and field experiences. Upon program completion, a review process, including licensure requirements, concludes with a licensure recommendation.

Current Licensure Programs include CTE Core, Construction Careers, Transportation Careers, Manufacturing Careers, and Teacher Coordinator of Work-Based Learning. For details, please fill out the form [here](#).

Celebrate Career and Technical Education (CTE) in February!



As February approaches, it brings with it a fantastic opportunity to celebrate and recognize the incredible achievements and contributions of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and students across our region. CTE Month, a public awareness campaign initiated by the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), invites all of us in Southeast Minnesota to join in commemorating the importance of CTE in preparing our youth and adults for future success in the workforce.

What is CTE Month?

CTE Month is an annual event held each February to showcase and applaud the remarkable work accomplished by CTE programs, educators, and students. From K-12 through college and beyond, CTE plays a pivotal role in equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and experiences they need to thrive in their chosen careers. In Southeast Minnesota, we have a multitude of reasons to take pride in our CTE initiatives, and this month is all about celebrating them.

Ways to Get Involved

Here are some simple and effective ways for educators, administrators, and students to participate in CTE Month and make a positive impact:

Highlight Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs):

Showcase the role of CTOSs like FFA, FCCLA, SKILLS USA, BPA, DECA, and HOSA in fostering leadership skills and preparing students for future careers.

Promote Strong CTE

Programs: Collaborate with district Perkins representatives to share short

summaries of successful CTE programs in your district or consortium.

Showcase Business-Industry Partnerships:

Highlight the valuable partnerships between your school/college and local businesses, emphasizing how they contribute to CTE success.

Share CTE Infographics:

Download the CTE infographic and share it with students, educators, and parents through your school or college's website and social media channels.

Governor's Proclamation: Post the Governor's signed CTE Month Proclamation on your school's website or pages.

Express Gratitude: Have students write thank-you notes to school administrators, school boards, and superintendents, expressing the value they have gained from CTE programs.

Experiential Learning

Activities: Teachers can highlight experiential learning activities like field trips, industry tours, guest speakers, job shadows, and career exploration activities that enhance students' readiness for careers and college.

CTE Student of the Month:

Feature outstanding CTE students each month and share their success stories on social media.

Invite Administrators and

Counselors: Encourage administrators and counselors to visit your classroom or participate in CTE-related activities.

Advocate for CTE: Schedule meetings with principals and superintendents to share your program's accomplishments and impact on students.

Let's come together as educators and champions of CTE in Southeast Minnesota to make this February a memorable one for our students and programs. By participating in CTE Month, we have the opportunity to showcase the incredible work happening in our schools and colleges, and to inspire the next generation of career-ready individuals.

We encourage you to explore the resources provided by [ACTE & Minnesota Office of Higher Education](#) and make use of their CTE Month logo to enhance your promotional efforts. Need support? Contact your local Career-Connected Learning Specialist.

Together, we can ensure that the value of Career and Technical Education is recognized and celebrated in our region.

Unlocking Opportunities - Career Connected Learning Thrives in 2023

In the heart of Southeast Minnesota, a quiet revolution is unfolding in the realm of Career-Connected Learning (CCL). The Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC) has been tirelessly driving efforts and supporting partnerships to bridge the gap between education and industry, providing students with immersive experiences that prepare them for economically viable careers. As we reflect on our mid-year progress, we are excited to share some remarkable highlights from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

Impacting Lives: Direct Benefits to Students

In the last year, a staggering 7,081 students directly benefited which has been the cornerstone of our CCL initiatives. These students come from various backgrounds and schools across the region, with each one gaining valuable exposure to career pathways.

Industry Credentials and Dual Credits

We are proud to report that 58 students received at least one dual credit in a "pathway course." Notably, 9 students earned their credentials in the BCC MSCS Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program, and more information about credentials is currently being gathered on CNA courses in Red Wing and WInona. This signifies the progress the region has made in providing students with tangible skills and qualifications.

Work-Based Learning

45 students had the opportunity to participate in work-based learning experiences, getting a firsthand taste of the professional world. This exposure is invaluable in helping them make informed career decisions. Of those, ten students at Kasson-Mantorville attended the Dodge County Internship Fair last spring, took part in a summer internship, and received high school credit.

Supporting School Districts

Efforts have touched 53 school districts, enhancing CTE courses, programs, experiences, and pathways for their students through the support of 3.5 FTE of Career-Connected Learning Specialists (or similarly titled positions).

Leveraging Resources and Partnerships

The support from businesses and community partners has been overwhelming. A total of 657 business/

community partners have been actively involved in our initiatives, donating over 2000 hours to CCL events and initiatives. These partnerships have enabled us to leverage resources worth over \$263,000, which further empowers our CCL endeavors.

Impact Stories that Inspire

The Southeast Minnesota Welding Competition raised overall awareness of welding programs and careers in SE MN. RCTC reported four of those students from Triton participating in PSEO welding classes the following semester as a direct result of the Welding Competition.

FutureForward: A Tech for Good Award Winner

FutureForward (www.futureforward.org), was recognized with the Tekne Award for "Tech for Good." It received over 23,000 unique visits in 2023, with visit times exceeding industry averages.

Honoring Community Partners

Regionally, we recognize and celebrate industry partners at the Industry of the Year Awards, providing a platform for learning about labor market needs, showcasing career-connected learning initiatives, and fostering opportunities for youth.

As we look ahead, our commitment to equipping students with the knowledge, mindset, and skills to thrive in the workforce remains unwavering. The journey to prepare the next generation for success in Southeast Minnesota is a collective one, and we invite you to join us in unlocking new opportunities and fostering lasting change.



Catalog of Events

Empowering Emerging Leaders Series for School Administrators

By Kari Kubicek

Are you an aspiring or early-career administrator who wants to lead your school with confidence and competence? Do you want to enhance your emotional intelligence and influence as a leader? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this learning opportunity is for you.

The Empowering Emerging Leader Series is designed for aspiring and early-career administrators who want to learn to apply the capacities of leadership through skills development that will be used immediately on the job. This four-part series, facilitated by Agile Ideas Leadership's Shannon Helgeson and Ross Herdina, is scheduled from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM at SSC on the following dates:

February 28, April 9, May 14, and June 11, 2024

More about this opportunity

Using an experiential learning format, participants will focus on the following topics:

- Emotionally intelligent leadership
- Culture building
- Facilitation leadership techniques
- Facilitation of adult learner and adult learning design

- Facilitative questioning
- Structured conversations for driving results
- Building systems that encourage collaboration and communication for teams.



Resulting in:

- The capacity to design and deliver learning and collaborative experiences specific to adult learners.
- Facilitation skills and techniques designed to create a positive and productive staff culture and climate.
- Development of strategies to improve emotional intelligence and use it to enhance leadership performance.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided at all sessions and Admin CEUs will be awarded to participants.

[Click here to register now!](#)

Leading Projects and People Learning Opportunity

Designed for local government, non-profit, local business, and community leaders.

In this workshop on Tuesday, March 26, from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM at SSC, participants will learn the art of a focused conversation, a method that will help bring clarity and direction in interactions with others. Participants will also discover strategies to align people to projects and build functioning teams, using facilitation skills that drive decisions and direction.

Agile Ideas Leadership's Shannon Helgeson and Ross Herdina will cover the following topics:

- The Art of a Focused Conversations: Build your capacity to bring clarity and direction in conversations so you and others can build solutions and culture together.

- Facilitating Projects and Teams: Discover strategies to align people to projects and build functioning teams.

Resulting in:

- The capacity to address a variety of conversations with empathy and emotional intelligence.
- Facilitation skills to drive decisions and direction.
- Understanding how to apply emotional intelligence to your daily conversations.

[Click here to register now!](#)

Learn more about facilitators Ross and Shannon on the next page!

About Agile Ideas Leadership

Shannon Helgeson is a growth-focused coach and team facilitator who supports leaders in becoming facilitators in their schools and communities. Through a deep understanding of the psychology of learning and an emphasis on team collaboration and individual engagement, she moves teams from "going through the motions" to team buy-in and advocacy.



Shannon Helgeson

Ross Herdina is a leadership development facilitator focused on building the skills of educators to be the leaders in their buildings and communities through training focused on andragogy as a central practice to improving learning experiences. Through his expertise in development of systems, schools build cultures of learning, feedback, and growth.



Ross Herdina

As a team, Shannon and Ross specialize in leadership development, intentional conversations, and peer coaching. Both are licensed Minnesota teachers and featured presenters at workshops for organizations and schools. They recently completed a redesign for Education Minnesota regarding Andragogy Through the Lens of DEI, and were featured at the uLead Summit of Educational Leadership in Banff, Alberta, Canada.

What People Are Saying...

"I participated in an AIL training about facilitating adult learning, and I thought it was very helpful and used many of the ideas and practices in my past role as Professional Development Coordinator."

It emphasized the role of the presenter as "facilitator" vs. holder of all the knowledge. I really appreciated that approach and the opportunity to collaborate and work with colleagues during the session, very hands on and interactive. "

- Sarah Morrison, Director of Teaching and Learning, South Central Service Cooperative

Shannon and Ross recently facilitated a principal leadership series in Sourcewell's region (a partner MN service cooperative). District Strategy Partner Eileen Weber shared the following about her experience working with AIL.

"Ross and Shannon have been delightful to work with. From the beginning, they have been very responsive to our needs by offering a list of possible "workshops" they could provide. We then chose from those with some minor adjustments based on identified regional needs. We continue to check-in between (and actually during) sessions for additional debriefs and planning."

As for presentation style, Ross and Shannon are both approachable (friendly) and credible (competent). Their sessions engage participants with physical movement, cognitive wrestling, self-reflection, small and large group discussion, and in-context application."



Southeast
Service
Cooperative

Professional Development

SSC FACULTY



Angie Ellsworth
Behavior Management,
Mental Health,
Cultural Competency



Jen Gosha
Literacy & Reading
Strategies



Christine Gregory
Artificial Intelligence &
Data Analysis



Ryan Ihrke
Critical & Creative Thought,
Data Analysis



Heather Lyke
PLC Support, Reading
Strategies, Educational
Innovation, and more



Kori McKibben
Workshop Model
Teaching, SOR, Balanced
Literacy



Tom Meagher
Science and STEM
Education



Joan Sax-Bendix
Reading & Writing
Strategies



Heather Willman
Instructional Coach,
Literacy, PLC Support

SSC is looking for
experienced educational
professionals to join
our faculty.

Interested?

Contact [Kari](#) at SSC to
learn more about this
opportunity!

“Angie Ellsworth’s outstanding presentation gave a realistic view of how complex the cultural issues are for staff to cope and deal with. She helped the staff to reflect on their own biases and how we as a staff need to be sensitive to a multitude of cultural issues. Thank you for ongoing help and assistance with our professional development needs.”

-SE MN District Administrator

SSC’s Faculty travel to the member’s location of choice to facilitate professional development in multiple content and instructional areas, customized to meet the member’s specific needs.

Interested in becoming a faculty member or recommending someone? SSC is always looking for new additions to our team. Contact Kari Kubicek, 507-281-6668, or kkubicek@ssc.coop.





Southeast
Service
Cooperative

Professional Development

CUSTOMIZED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

1

SET LOGISTICS

Based on your staff needs, set the date(s), time, length, and location. Face to face or virtual options available.

2

DETERMINE PARAMETERS

Specify your audience size, grade levels, and positions to more efficiently impact your staff.

3

SELECT CONTENT

Choose content to specialize the impact of your Customized Professional Learning.

CONTENT AREAS

- ♦ Artificial Intelligence for Educators
- ♦ Mental Health Support
- ♦ Behavior Management
- ♦ Trauma Informed Instruction and Strategies
- ♦ Differentiated Instruction for All Learners
- ♦ Educational Innovation
- ♦ Growth Mindset
- ♦ Humanity in Our Classrooms
- ♦ Building Perseverance in Students
- ♦ Student Engagement Instructional Practices
- ♦ English Language Learners
- ♦ Standards Aligned Assessments
- ♦ Creating and Maintaining Intervention Systems
- ♦ Relicensure Topics (including Cultural Competency & Suicide Prevention)
- ♦ K-12 Instructional Strategies in Math
- ♦ K-12 Reading and Writing Strategies
- ♦ Science Standards Implementation
- ♦ Paraprofessional Support
- ♦ Special Education
- ♦ STEM/STEAM Education



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Kari Kubicek at kkubicek@ssc.coop

STEM Day at the State Capital

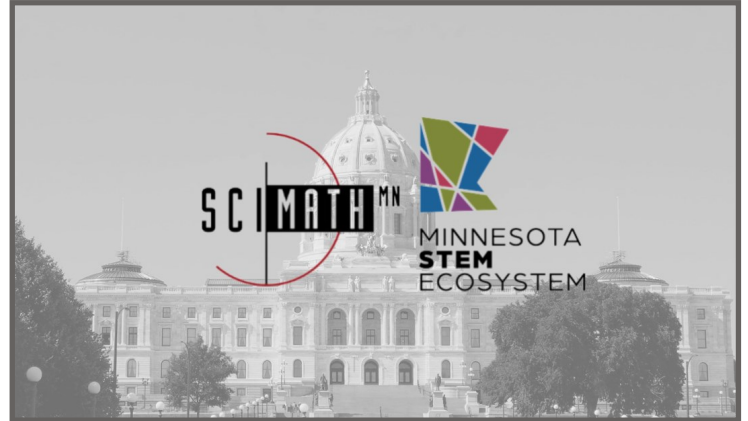
By Emily Saed

The Minnesota STEM Ecosystem is partnering with SciMathMN to host STEM Day at the Minnesota State Capitol on March 26th, 2024! We will be showcasing hands-on, interactive, and student-focused learning innovations taking place at schools, museums, community and cultural organizations and nonprofits across our state!



Emily Saed

With the equity as our cornerstone, we are narrowing the STEM learning gap and connecting learned STEM skills to real-world, career opportunities helping to address Minnesota's workforce development needs. Together, we will tell the story of the growing STEM initiatives, programs, networks and partnerships across Minnesota! For more information on STEM Day at the Capitol, visit our website at stemmn.org.



We are also excited to be collaborating with High Tech Kids, the Minnesota State Engineering Center of Excellence, the Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence, the Southeast Service Cooperative, and Lakes Country Service Cooperative to pilot a STEM internship program that will provide high schools students an introduction to careers in STEM through employer-based micro-internship and more immersive STEM internships. Stay tuned for more information on this program.

It's Gold Again for SSC!

The American Heart Association, a global force for healthier lives for all, has awarded SSC national Gold level recognition for its commitments to employee health and well-being as measured in the Association's 2023 Workforce Well-being Scorecard.

The Scorecard brings together the latest research and insights from industry experts to help business leaders build a science-backed, employee-centric culture of health and well-being. SSC has won Gold status from the Heart Association multiple times. SSC was also recently featured in, and served as one of nine employer reviewers of, the Heart Association's new Health Equity in the Workforce Resource Guide.

"We are deeply honored to be featured in the American Heart Association's brand-new Health Equity in the Workplace Guide and to have once again won Gold status in the Workplace Well-being Scorecard," said SSC Executive

Director, Steve Sallee. "It's a testament to our ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment where every employee has the opportunity to thrive. This recognition inspires us to continue our efforts in promoting health equity and well-being for our workforce."

The Workforce Well-being Scorecard is a free resource offered by the American Heart Association's Well-being Works Better platform. For more information, visit heart.org/workforce



[Learn More](#)

Project MOMENTUM: A Year of Milestones

By *Claudi Tabini*

In the last year, our dedication to provide equitable access to high-quality professional learning opportunities that improve instruction for multilingual learners across the state of Minnesota has reached new heights. We proudly launched eight meticulously curated courses, offering educators an unparalleled 70 cumulative hours of free, high-quality professional learning. These self-paced, accessible resources have been met with enthusiasm, drawing in 200 dedicated educators from various corners of Minnesota.



Claudia Tabini

Beyond our digital offerings, we took our expertise directly to the heart of educational gatherings. Our team facilitated four interactive and engaging professional training sessions, leaving an indelible mark on prestigious conferences and regional events, such as the MN-NAME Conference and the MELEd Conference. Additionally, we were honored to share our insights and experiences with eager undergraduates at the University of Minnesota.

But that's not all. We planted our flag firmly in the online domain by launching our website, attracting over 2600 unique visitors seeking knowledge, resources, and inspiration.

As we reflect on these achievements, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting educators, providing them with the tools and knowledge to shape the future of learning for multilingual learners across the state. Thank you for being part of our journey.

Together, we continue to transform education for the better.

As we step into 2024, our sights are set on new horizons. Anticipate the launch of fresh, innovative courses designed to further enrich educators' professional journeys and exciting updates on developments in teacher licensure.

Moreover, our commitment to excellence drives us to grow our team. We seek to bring on board passionate individuals dedicated to advancing the field of education for multilingual learners, ensuring our collective efforts continue to make a meaningful impact.

Join us on this journey as we continue our mission to enable educators, enhance learning experiences, and shape the future of education for multilingual learners.



Celebrating STEM Excellence: Honoring Outstanding Educators

By Sarah Ness

STEM Forward takes immense pride in recognizing K-12 professionals who go above and beyond in their dedication to STEM education. The Outstanding Educator Award is a testament to their unwavering commitment to fostering high student achievement, promoting STEM careers, and driving continuous improvement within their schools and communities. These educators are the heart and soul of our region's STEM education efforts, and we are delighted to honor them.

We are thrilled to introduce this year's Outstanding Educator Award nominees, each making a profound impact in their respective districts:

- Josephine (Joe) Winter, Austin Public Schools
- Lidia Wallerich, Zumbrota Mazeppa Public Schools
- Holly Vos, Byron Public Schools
- Jennifer Good, Holy Spirit, Rochester Catholic Schools
- Chris Gogolewski, Austin Public Schools
- Emily Hovland, Austin Public Schools
- Amy Dombeck, Cannon Falls Public Schools
- Bonnie Thoe, Cannon Falls Public Schools
- Jayme Miller, Cannon Falls Public Schools

While all these educators are truly exceptional, we are delighted to announce that Emily Hovland, from Austin Public Schools, has been named the STEM Forward Outstanding Educator of the Year for 2024. Emily's remarkable contributions epitomizes the spirit of this award.

Here's a sneak peek from Emily's nomination form: "Emily started a new program at the high school in 2018 called Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunity. Students visit area businesses, learn from guest speakers, participate in a class business, write business plans, and start and operate their own businesses. Students completing this program have



This year's winner, Emily Hovland.

communicated to us that this class has been the most impactful class they have ever taken. The trade show at the end of the year, where students sell their products from the business they created, is a point of pride in our community."

Join us in celebrating these outstanding educators and their invaluable contributions at the STEM Forward Outstanding Educator Awards Ceremony and Dinner on February 21, 2024, at The Workshop in Rochester. It's an opportunity to witness the transformative work happening in STEM classrooms, connect with educators, and gain insights into innovative education experiences. Free tickets are open to the general public on Wednesday, Feb 14, 2024.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all educators for their dedication to shaping the future of STEM education in southeast Minnesota. Together, we inspire the next generation of STEM leaders.

Join Us at the Educator Forum: A Deep Dive into AI and STEM Education

By Sarah Ness

Are you ready for an inspiring journey into the world of STEM education? Mark your calendars for the upcoming Educator Forum, a day filled with enriching sessions and invaluable resources that cater to educators from all disciplines and grade levels. This event is not to be missed!

Event Details

Date: Wednesday, February 28
Time: 4:30 - 7:30 PM
Location: Wood Lake Meeting Center, Rochester

Sessions:

AI Show and Tell: Kick off the event with an engaging introduction to the world of AI by our experts, followed by speed-dating style information gathering sessions at tables hosted by local STEM network partners. Get a taste of AI innovation, make valuable connections, and bring back resources to your school.

Topics: AI in Education, STEM Innovation, Curriculum Insights
 Presenters: Jen Hegna, Christine Gregory, Valerie Franklin Lockhart

Technology Playground: Explore the Technology Playground featuring vendors who offer free resources and information on paid summer stipend opportunities for educators. Don't miss this chance to discover cutting-edge tools and teaching materials.

Vendors: Pitsco, Engineering Tomorrow, Solar Suitcase, SciMathMN's Teacher Center, The Hormel Institute's Lending Library, and FutureForward™

Session Menu:

Choose from a variety of sessions that cater to your interests and expertise. Sessions cover AI, standards integration, and connecting careers to STEM classrooms. Whether you teach science, technology, engineering, math, special education, or any other subject, you'll find something valuable here.

Session 2 and 3 Menu:

Track 1: AI

Cheating: AI Resistant Activities and Lessons

Target Audience(s): All classroom teachers and admin
 Presenter: Christine Gregory

C.R.E.A.T.E. with AI/How to Beat AI Before It's Too Late

Target Audience(s): All K12 Educators / Technology and Computer Science
 Presenters: Valerie Lockhart, Troy Peterson

Track 2: Standards Integration

Supporting Standards Integration: Using Magic School (AI) to increase ROI

Target Audience(s): All educators
 Presenter: Jen Hegna

Information Gap: Math Language Routine

Target Audience(s): Math Educators, Language Arts Educators, Integration Coaches
 Presenter: Marcy Kickhafer

Fostering Computational Thinking in the 6-12 Math Classroom

Target Audience(s): Technology & Computer Science, Math Educators
 Presenter: Sandra Tischer

Track 3: Connecting Careers to STEM Classrooms

Student Motivation to Learn and Pursue Careers in STEM

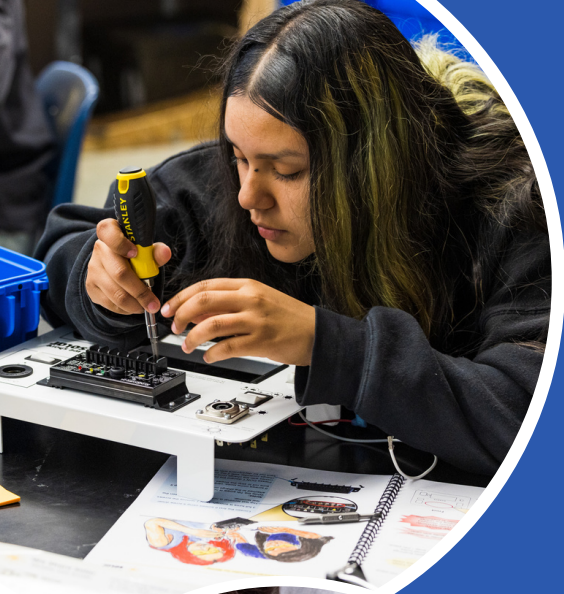
Target Audience(s): Science, Technology and Computer Science, Engineering, Math, Career and Technical Educators, Future Educators
 Presenter: Erica Meyers

Vision for the Future: Human skills students need to compete in the future economy

Target Audience(s): All educators
 Presenter: Jen Hegna

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your teaching skills, discover innovative resources, and connect with fellow educators and industry partners. We look forward to welcoming you at the Educator Forum!

[Register today!](#)



**we share
solar®**

SOLAR SUITCASE PROGRAM

AN EXCITING HANDS-ON SERVICE-LEARNING
STEM PROGRAM FOR YOUR STUDENTS

THE PROGRAM

An innovative opportunity for STEM solar education. Build a Solar Suitcase for a school that lacks electricity, lighting the lives of students in other parts of the world. It's hands on learning with real world impact. Designed for students ages 12 and up. Serves well as a capstone project for in-school credits or meeting out-of-school community service goals

A \$5,000 Value Per School!



GAIN SOLAR LITERACY

The curriculum includes 5-10 hours of interactive online and hands-on lab lessons, plus more for those who want a deeper dive.

PRACTICE STEM SKILLS

A Solar Suitcase assembly kit with complete lab materials will be shipped to you upon enrollment.

BE A GLOBAL CITIZEN

The Solar Suitcase you build and return to We Share Solar for installation in East Africa delivers real impact for hundreds of youth in off-grid schools.





THE WEM FOUNDATION

FUNDED PROGRAM OPPORTUNITY FOR STEM FORWARD MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS, MINNESOTA

WSS SOLAR SUITCASE PROGRAM 2024-2025

ENGAGING, HANDS-ON STEM SERVICE-LEARNING

WE SHARE SOLAR

We Share Solar® helps equip students for the future through solar energy education with real world impact. Our program offers a project-based-learning experience with interdisciplinary curriculum and engaging hands-on lessons. Our programs cultivate student interest in renewable energy and real-world challenges, inspiring them to become effective global change-makers.

Access the [free curriculum here](#).

THE OPPORTUNITY

With grant funding from the WEM Foundation, We Share Solar is offering middle school and high school teachers at schools in the STEM Forward Network a fully-funded opportunity to join the WSS Solar Suitcase program. After school programs and organizations will also be considered. Learning will focus on the science of solar, climate change, and innovation. Participating teachers will be given full access to a virtual learning platform and a curriculum library. Teachers will have access to a rotating supply of Solar Suitcase kits (standalone solar electric systems) that come complete with solar lab materials and tools so that participating teachers have access to a class set. In addition, each school will build one Solar Suitcase that will be sent to East Africa to be installed in a school or community center that lacks access to reliable electricity.

The Solar Suitcase curriculum offers teachers flexibility on when to implement the program. Core lessons take approximately 5-10 hours, including hands-on lab activities. We are excited to offer this STEM solar and community service program to educators at no cost to schools.

A one day In person training will be held in Rochester, on Tuesday August 6th, 8:30am - 4:00pm. Location: [Wood Lake Meeting Center](#). 210 Wood Lake Dr SE, Rochester, MN 55904

Participating teachers will receive CEUs.

SIGN UP!

To submit an expression of interest, please complete the [form linked here](#) by Friday February 9th, 2024. Submission of the form is not a guarantee of participation.

CONTACT

If you have any questions about this opportunity, please contact Christi Fosland at cfosland@ssc.coop.



Unlocking STEM Opportunities with STEM Internships

By Sarah Ness

Exciting news for STEM enthusiasts and aspiring young minds!

Southeast Service Cooperative is thrilled to announce its involvement in the DEED's Robotics & Internship Grant, a groundbreaking initiative that promises to reshape the landscape of STEM education and career readiness.

This grant, totaling \$750,000, aims to nurture the next generation of innovators and problem solvers by providing internships for youth for careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. The grant is a partnership between High Tech Kids, MN STEM Ecosystem, and STEM Forward.



STEM

F O R W A R D

STEM Forward will serve as a hub for STEM internships, offering micro-internships (10-20 hours) and work-based learning and/or summer internships (30+ hours). This means real-world experiences, stipends for students, and support for employers.

While specific details are still in the works, we can't contain our excitement about the opportunities that lie ahead. With a commitment to shaping the future of STEM education and careers, STEM Forward is poised to make a

meaningful difference in the lives of students across the state.

Stay tuned for more information as we delve deeper into the framework, application processes, and employer engagement strategies for these exciting STEM opportunities. The future of STEM education is brighter than ever, and we invite you to be part of this incredible journey!

STEM Forward
[website.](#)

ONLY 10 SEATS LEFT! STEM JOY TRAINING

Presented by the Minnesota Science Museum, STEM JOY training is for formal and informal educators for the purpose of helping ALL students feel that they belong in STEM spaces.

JUSTICE OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

Join us for three February sessions

- Feb. 6, 13, 20
- 7:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.
- Virtual presentation – NO travel

Over \$1000 training value for **FREE!**

- 10.5 hours of cohort PD training
 - Additional 1:1 training
 - Receive a \$200 stipend
- MUST ATTEND ALL 3 SESSIONS TO BE ELIGIBLE**



Seeking AI Table Talk Hosts: 10 Minute Conversations

During the opening session of the STEM Forward Educator Forum (February 28, 4:30 - 7:30 PM) our presenters will provide a general introduction to artificial intelligence in Education. However, AI is simply too broad for us to cover all that our attendees want to know. Our vision is to provide at least a dozen (more is okay!) topics that can be introduced in just 10 minutes. We are asking YOU to share what you know with a single table of peers (4-6 people at a time). To learn more about this opportunity and throw your name in the ring, view the Google Form [here](#).

School Health Conference - March 21

By Cheryl Wendt

SSC together with the Southwest and South Central Cooperatives, is excited to once again host a school health conference for school mental health professionals and school nurses. The conference will be hosted across southern Minnesota in Rochester, Mankato, and Marshall.

This year we will have two keynote speakers, Kris Langworthy and Amy Thiesen Walz. Both of these renowned speakers are located in Minnesota, and will each bring their unique style of addressing mental health and wellness. There will also be breakout sessions at each site geared towards the specific roles of school personnel.

The conference will be held on Thursday, March 21, from 9:00 AM-2:45 PM. There will be an optional additional hour for communities of practice to meet and debrief after the conference. CEU credits will be available for the entire conference.

This conference is made possible by several sponsors, including Covid-19 Public Health Supplemental funding through the Minnesota Department of Health.

Register here.



School Health CONFERENCE

Thursday, March 21, 2024

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

FREE TO ATTEND!

SAVE THE DATE!

The conference will be hosted at three sites, featuring keynote speakers with breakout sessions at each location. Registration will open February 1, 2024.



SOUTHWEST WEST CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

SWWC

1420 East College Drive
Marshall, MN 56258



**Southeast
Service
Cooperative**

210 Wood Lake Drive SE
Rochester, MN 55904



SCSC
**South Central
Service Cooperative**

2075 Lookout Drive
North Mankato, MN 56003

Keynote Speaker: Kris Langworthy



Stress can be deadly. As a nurse and workplace chaplain for 25+ years, Kris Langworthy regularly witnessed the mental and physical price tag of unresolved stress. It was because of those experiences, and the lessons learned while coaching her daughter through brain cancer, that she launched Impact Zone Strategies. Impact Zone Strategies provides speaking, coaching and training focused on equipping leaders with the tips, insights and strategies needed to boost their emotional health and well-being, so that they can make a positive impact on the world without sacrificing what matters most. Learn more at www.ImpactZoneStrategies.com

Kris' keynote, entitled "AAA: 3 Steps to Successfully Navigate Stress, Overwhelm, and Anxiety," is sure to be relatable. Do you ever feel like you are stuck in feelings of stress? You're not alone. Unfortunately, many attempts to ease or escape those emotions do more harm than good. In this presentation, Kris will equip you with 3 steps to successfully navigate those emotions (or any other undesired emotion) in a positive and healthy way, so that you can experience better outcomes in every aspect of your life, personally and professionally. It's time to maximize your impact, without sacrificing what matters most!

Keynote Speaker: Amy Thiesen Walz



An avid pup-lover, advocate for the underdog, vocalist, and speaker, Amy Thiesen Walz retired from her 30-year career in the medical world and is the Founder and President of the non-profit You're Not Alone; where Amy brings her heart, hope, and inspiration to students, families, and community members struggling with mental health diagnoses. With a mission of creating a non-judgemental zone by personally understanding the many trials our students experience with mental health diagnoses, You're Not Alone has built a network of 20 therapy dog teams and has placed therapy dogs in 15 schools in Minnesota in less than one year.

Amy lives in Monticello with her husband Nick of 33 years, her sweet 4-year-old therapy pup, Willow Grace, and a 1-year-old therapy pup in training, Spirit of Hope. She adores her three adult children, their spouses, and her darling grandson, Declan. They have more grand "paws" than grandchildren, including Kitty Wynter, Paisley, Tucker, and Bingo. Amy is also blessed to live within miles of her darling elderly mom.

Through this mission of You're Not Alone, Amy strives to put a dent in the stigma surrounding mental health diagnoses through the unconditional love of a pup, so that no child feels all alone!



**DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH**

This conference is made possible through COVID-19 Public Health Workforce supplemental funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), administered by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).



Medica

Meals and refreshments sponsored by Medica.

Althing Expands Breakthrough AIRs Program for School Districts with Key Enhancements

Mat Johnson, CEO and Founder of Althing

In a groundbreaking move to address the crucial behavioral health needs of students and staff, Althing has announced significant expansions of its Assess-Intervene-Refer/services (AIRs) program. AIRs stands out as the nation's only qualified and direct behavioral health encounter available for every student and staff member within a school district. This unique approach focuses on early intervention and support, emphasizing the importance of timely and targeted behavioral health services.

Althing has expanded its team of behavioral health experts. The AIRs team is expert at engaging a qualified encounter for all students and ensuring a seamless, convenient and qualified health service for individuals in need. The first ever full health solution inclusive of same day assessment, intervention and referral makes Althing a pivotal player in the provision of comprehensive behavioral health solutions for districts.

Althing's commitment to addressing mental health challenges extends beyond its



immediate services. The organization has deepened its involvement with state and federal agencies, fostering collaborative efforts to create a more robust support system for school districts. By aligning with these agencies, Althing aims to contribute to the development and implementation of effective policies that enhance the overall mental well-being of students and staff.

Furthermore, Althing has expanded its alignment with health insurers, paving the way for increased accessibility and coverage. This strategic partnership ensures that a wider range of individuals can benefit from the AIRs program, promoting inclusivity and reducing barriers to mental health care.

As schools grapple with the challenges of the modern educational landscape, the AIRs program stands as a beacon of hope, providing a vital resource to address behavioral health concerns and foster a supportive environment for students and staff alike. With these latest enhancements, Althing Health reaffirms its dedication to revolutionizing mental health care within school districts and ensuring the well-being of the next generation.

Reach out to Kari Kubicek at kkubicek@ssc.coop with any questions.

Andover Community Center Lighting Upgrade - The Retrofit Companies

Andover Community Center had a problem. Their facility contained an ice area and an additional rink, but the lights in the ice arena had different light levels from those in the additional rink.

That's where The Retrofit Companies (TRC) came in. They listened to the outcomes and improved functions that community center staff wanted and then submitted a project proposal designed to meet those needs. The proposal included updating the ice arena to new LED fixtures, updating the existing LED lights to match the light levels in the adjacent rink, and implementing lighting controls in order to set scenes for different activities happening at the rink.

TRC got right to work after their proposal was accepted, handling every aspect of the project from start to finish. And because Cooperative Purchasing Connection (CPC) had already gone out to bid for lighting solutions and already awarded a contract to TRC - administrative staff did not have to secure multiple quotes or run a bid themselves.

The rink now has a noticeable improvement in light levels, staff now has the ability to control the lighting as needed in an efficient manner, and pricing was not an issue.

Reach out to CPC and The Retrofit Companies when you're ready to update or upgrade your LED lighting! And to learn more about all of the ways that CPC vendors can help you upgrade your facilities, just go to PurchasingConnection.org and click on Meet Our Vendors.



CREATIVE MEDIA SOLUTIONS



Southeast Service Cooperative and South Central Service Cooperative have partnered to provide our members with communications services through **Creative Media Solutions**.

..... **Offering These Media and Marketing Services and More**

- Branding
- Fundraising Campaign Tools
- Graphic Design and Layout
- Photography and Image Correction
- Social Media Audit and Planning
- Videography and Production



**CREATIVE
MEDIA
SOLUTIONS**



Contact Katie Hendrickson at SSC for a full list of services and a customized quote.

☎ 507-281-6687 ✉ khendrickson@ssc.coop

Radon Could Be a Threat to Your School

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the Surgeon General's Office have estimated that as many as 20,000 lung cancer deaths are caused each year by radon. Radon is a cancer-causing radioactive gas and is the second leading cause of lung cancer. You cannot see, smell or taste radon; because of this, the only way to determine if radon levels are present is to test for it.

A nationwide survey of radon levels in schools estimates that nearly one in five has at least one schoolroom with a short-term radon level above the action level of 4 pCi/L (picoCuries per liter); the level at which EPA recommends that schools take action to reduce the level. EPA estimates that more than 70,000 schoolrooms in use today have high short-term radon levels.

It is recommended that schools test for radon every 5 years and after major building renovation or changes to the HVAC system. School districts that receive health and safety revenue to conduct radon testing must conduct the testing according to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) 'Radon Testing Plan', which includes the following:

- Use certified radon testing devices.
- Use a licensed radon professional for the testing or



consider becoming licensed if the testing will be done by school staff.

- Test all frequently occupied rooms, including rooms with ground contact and rooms immediately above unoccupied spaces that are in contact with the grounds (e.g. crawl spaces and tunnels).
- Conduct follow-up testing in all rooms that are above the Action Level.
- Mitigate or take corrective measure in rooms that are still above the Action Level after follow-up testing.
- Re-test after corrective measure to show radon reduction.
- Report all radon test results to MDH and at a local school board meeting.

For more information on Radon testing, call Angie Radel at the Institute for Environmental Assessment at 507-281-6682, or e-mail angie.radel@ieasafety.com.



SSC Board Actions and Information

In addition to routine fiscal and business actions, the Board took the following actions in recent meetings. Complete SSC Board of Directors meeting minutes are available on the SSC website at www.ssc.coop.

November

- Approved the SSC Fiscal Audit for 2022-2023.
- Approved the SEMNET Audit for 2022-2023.
- Approved the posting of the Regional Funding Coordinator position shared with the City of Farmington.
- Approved the new annual vacation cash-out.
- Approved SSC membership for the City of Zumbrota.
- Approved Rochester Arts & Sciences Academy for associate SSC membership.
- Approved the Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) contract.
- Approved waiving paper ballot use for voting.
- Approved FutureForward promotional materials purchase.

December

- Approved the SSC Bylaws.
- Approved the SSC Policies.
- Approved the employee handbook.
- Approved the board nomination form.
- Approved the Election Return Report.
- Reappointed Lynn Gorski to a new 4 year term as the Category 3 Board Appointed Board Member.
- Transferred \$812,175 "Land" line item from Insurance Fund to General Fund. In turn,

\$812,175 will be transferred from the General Fund to the Insurance Fund.

- Approved the joint powers agreement with the City of Farmington.

January

- Approved the election of officers and committee appointments.
- Approved the 2024-2025 board meeting schedule.
- Approved the 2025-2026 board meeting schedule.
- Approved the Pay Equity job report.
- Approved the acceptance of \$1,000 in sponsorship from Akkerman for Career Readiness.

Please **visit our website** for more information.

The information listed here is only a summary. The full text is available for public inspection at SSC's administrative offices.

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Shaping the Future
for communities of leaders and learners

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