



Southeast  
Service  
Cooperative

# Connections

October 2023

Redefining Ready Update **P8**



An Intro to the STEM  
Ecosystem

**P10**



Kari Kubicek  
Awarded Honor

**P16**

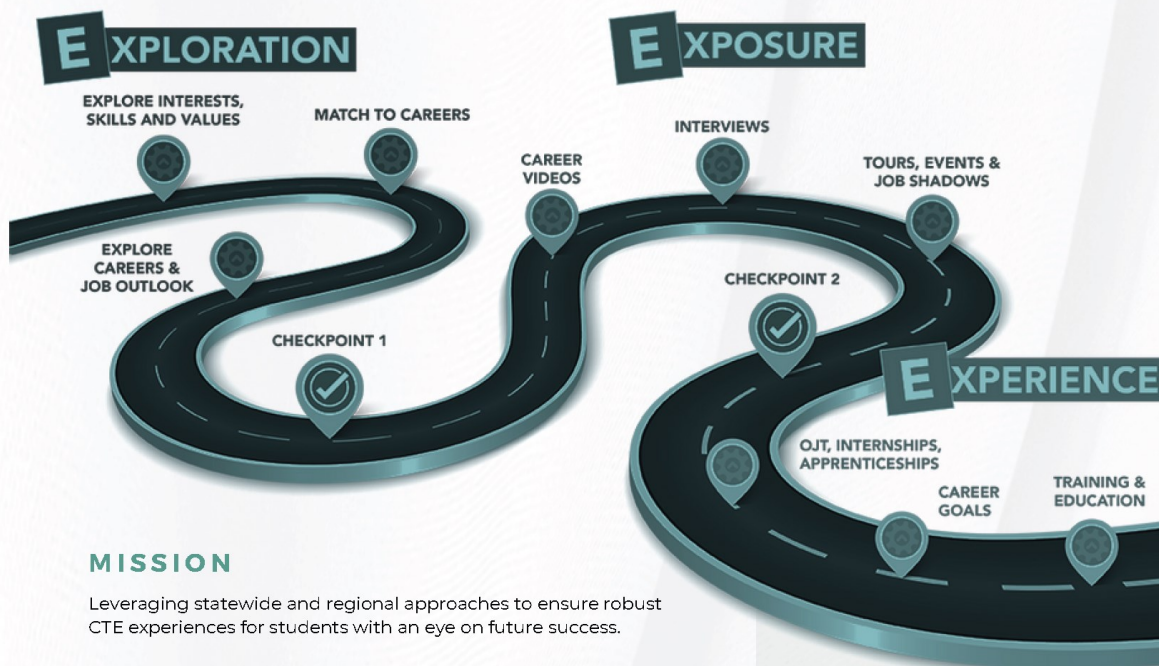


*Thriving Together*



# Career Readiness Work - Mission and Vision

Let's take a closer look at the mission and vision of the Career Readiness work taking place in SE MN (and around the state).



## MISSION

Leveraging statewide and regional approaches to ensure robust CTE experiences for students with an eye on future success.

## VISION

All students have access to innovative, career-connected learning through a vibrant CTE education network with strong industry connections, providing students with the knowledge and skills needed for their future.

## WE SUPPORT & DEVELOP...

- Accessible, equitable, and inclusive career-connected learning that builds pathways to local/regional careers for all students.
- Highly trained and engaged educators who help students build CTE pathways through relevant coursework, collaborative partnerships, and advanced equipment.
- Advanced collaboration with business, industry, labor, workforce, and higher education that fosters innovation, harnesses creativity, and accelerates quality CTE learning/pathways.
- Integrated and aligned efforts that enhance and sustain quality CTE.

## WE ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE ...

- All students have access to innovative, career-connected learning showcasing local careers;
- Minnesota has a vibrant CTE teacher network with strong industry connections;
- Business, labor, and industry play a key role in student career awareness and life/work skills;
- Education recognizes the benefit of CTE courses/experiences for all careers;
- Students make informed financial investments in post-secondary training and education; and
- Public and private investments in CTE help address workforce challenges across Minnesota.



## ABOUT US...

In association with the Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSCs) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Consortium, we are committed to strengthening relationships with each other as well as our education, economic development, and workforce agency partners.

Working together, we will lead a student-centered, business-driven CTE network in which a shared vision drives new collaboration, harnesses creativity and innovation, and accelerates quality learning. These collaborative efforts will provide students with the knowledge and experiences they need to select and prepare for career pathways that align with local, regional and statewide economies.

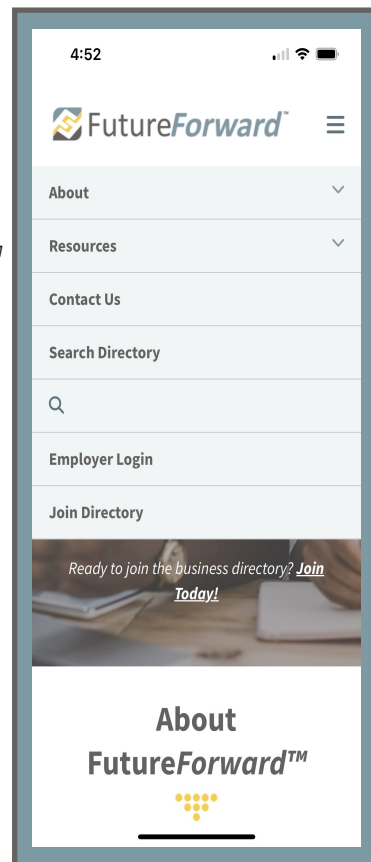
# FutureForward: The App

By Nick Wobig

Students, teachers, parents, employers, and more can now access all that FutureForward™ has to offer through the new mobile app. Available in the Apple Store and Google Play Store, the FutureForward™ app grants access to a library of career-connected learning opportunities, resources for exploring post-secondary options, and hundreds of local businesses that want to support students in making the most educated decisions they possibly can.

FutureForward™ received a major upgrade about a year ago and continues to see regular updates and improvements. One major upgrade we saw coming into the '23-'24 school year was taking the wildly popular website platform and putting it in the pockets of thousands of people throughout Minnesota. The best part of the app? It loses no functionality from the website version.

Updated daily, FutureForward™ showcases events happening in southeast Minnesota, information on local businesses, a full resource library, and lesson plans that encourage teachers and parents to bring CTE into everyday learning. Visit [FutureForward.org](https://FutureForward.org) or download the app today to see all this amazing platform has to offer.



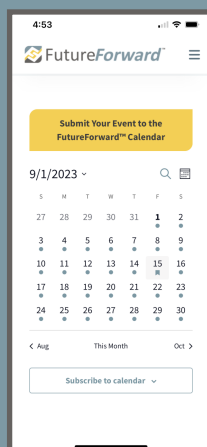
## This Year's Career-Connected Learning Initiatives

The Career-Connected Learning Team is in high gear planning, organizing, and supporting events throughout our region this year. In September, we celebrated and promoted Post-Secondary Month. A resource guide was sent to all school districts in Southeast Minnesota and is still available on FutureForward™. This guide includes detailed information on FAFSA, applying to colleges, training opportunities, and much more.

There are several more events coming up this school year as well. Manufacturing Month brings opportunities for students to get a first-person view of our local manufacturers and the types of careers available in these companies. Other events coming this school year include:

- Internship Fairs
- STEAM Summits
- CTE Celebration Month
- Southeast Minnesota Welding Competition
- Career and College Fair
- Industry Partner of the Year Awards

For a complete guide of everything planned for this year, and to stay up-to-date on new events, be sure to subscribe to the FutureForward™ calendar.



## Bussing Costs Reduced for Manufacturing Tours

The Minnesota State Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence has made a large sum of money available to help schools offset the costs of bussing when attending manufacturing tours in October. Assisted by Perkins funding, the Center of Excellence is hoping that schools throughout the state can see an average of \$250 reimbursed for their bussing.



The Career-Connected Learning Team plays a significant role in assisting schools in planning their manufacturing tours across southeast Minnesota. Preliminary numbers show that over 500 students will be participating in tours while also taking advantage of other CTE events happening in the region. Construct Tomorrow, a state-wide initiative that showcases trades careers, was hosted by RCTC on October 11 and several schools piggy-backed this outing with their tours of manufacturers.

For more information on Manufacturing Month, visit [FutureForward.org](https://FutureForward.org) or download the FutureForward™ app.

If you haven't submitted for bus reimbursement, please contact Mike Schnell at [mschnell@ssc.coop](mailto:mschnell@ssc.coop) for more information.



# Celebrating Success: Inspiring the Future of Manufacturing

*By Nick Wobig*

At Southeast Service Cooperative, we firmly believe in the transformative power of partnership and education in shaping the future of our community. It is with immense joy and gratitude that we share the success of our recent collaboration with the Minnesota State Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence in organizing the Minnesota Manufactured events in southeast Minnesota. This initiative brought nearly 500 students from our region on tours to over a dozen outstanding employers and training partners, illuminating the exciting possibilities within the world of manufacturing.

These tours offered much more than just a glimpse into the manufacturing industry; they provided an eye-opening experience that ignited the passions of our young learners. It is heartening to report that a remarkable 72% of the students who participated in these tours also attended the Construct Tomorrow event or explored local post-secondary training programs at RCTC. This serves as a testament to the profound impact these tours had in inspiring the future workforce and connecting them to valuable educational opportunities.

We are profoundly grateful for the incredible support and collaboration from our partners who made this initiative possible. Our heartfelt thanks go to Akkerman, Construct Tomorrow, Crenlo, Domaille Engineering, Fastenal, Geotek, Halcon, Hayfield Window, McNeilus Steel, Rochester Community & Technical College, Rochester Public Utilities, and Valley Design. Your unwavering dedication to the cause of education and your commitment to nurturing the next generation of manufacturing professionals is truly inspiring.

One student, Martin, who toured Domaille Engineering, said, "I've known I wanted to be an engineer, but I am looking for scholarships." Tours like this provide opportunities for interested youth to connect with employers seeking to hire talent and learn about the available scholarship programs. In Martin's case, he was delighted to discover that there are three scholarships available for learning and earning through Domaille Engineering. Martin took a scholarship application and expressed his gratitude to the organizers for the opportunity at the conclusion of the tour.

Furthermore, SSC has been granted \$14,250 from the Minnesota State Center for Advanced Manufacturing,



*Pictured here and below are groups of students touring manufacturing facilities for Manufacturing Month.*



which will be allocated to high schools to offset the costs for those who participated in the tours.

As we celebrate this success, we also eagerly anticipate more opportunities to collaborate and make a lasting impact on our community. Together, we can continue to inspire, educate, and shape a vibrant future within the manufacturing industry.

To learn more about Minnesota Manufactured and the Minnesota State Advanced Center of Excellence, please visit [this link](#).

We extend our deepest thanks to all of you for your unwavering support and dedication to our mission. We eagerly look forward to our continued work together in shaping the future of manufacturing in our region.



# Support Local Youth and Workforce Development

By Nick Wobig

Invest in the future of our community by sponsoring our career-connected learning programs.

Your support ensures students graduate with the skills needed for successful careers, benefiting both their futures and our local workforce. Your sponsorship offers students invaluable experiences, mentorship, and industry exposure, preparing them for the demands of the workforce. By backing career-connected learning, you contribute to a thriving community where businesses flourish and local talent shines. Stand out as a champion of youth development and community advancement – become a sponsor today!

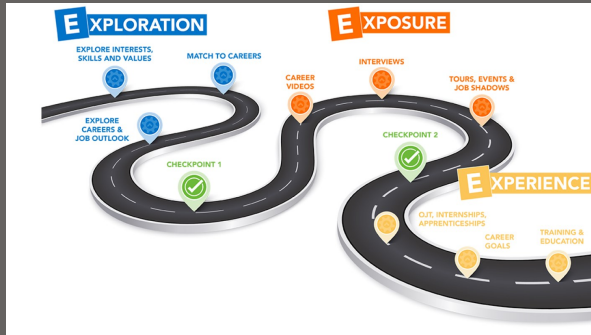
Your sponsorship directly supports annual programs in southeast Minnesota, impacting students across the 11-county region. These initiatives include the SE Minnesota Post-Secondary Guide, Manufacturing Month, Healthcare Month, the #IAMCTE Campaign, STEM Forward Educator Forum and TechFest, Career and College Fair, Outstanding Educator Awards, Industry Partnership of the Year Awards, SE MN Welding Competition, and Internship Fairs. Join us in making a difference in the lives of our local students.

## FutureForward Receives High Honors from MNTECH

Exciting news! FutureForward™ is a finalist in the "Tech for Good" category of the Tekne Awards. This recognition highlights SE MN's commitment to creating a better future for Minnesota through innovative tech solutions. FutureForward™ seamlessly connects educators, youth, parents, and industry partners in career-connected learning experiences.

Stay tuned for the winner announcement on November 16!

[View Finalists](#)



# New SSC Faculty Member Excited to Share Her Passion for AI in Education

By Kari Kubicek

In the ever-evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI), it can feel overwhelming for school administrators and staff. Christine Gregory has joined the faculty at SSC to offer professional learning opportunities in AI for education, data analysis, data visualization, and curriculum development. As an SSC faculty member, Christine will share her expertise on AI in educational settings, offering invaluable insights into saving teachers' time, automating tasks, crafting AI policies, streamlining administrators' workload, and enhancing feedback mechanisms. Keep reading to hear from Christine on how her professional experiences have led to her passion and work in AI.

My immersion in the world of AI was a natural progression, nurtured by my roles as Director of Teaching and Learning and Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment. These positions were pivotal in shaping my belief that AI has the potential to revolutionize education. Recognizing the value of AI-driven solutions to ease the burdens faced by educators and administrators, I delved deeper into the AI landscape.

An important accomplishment to me is my dedication to the development of a repository of free AI resources for teachers. With my curriculum development background, I understood that AI could be a powerful tool to save teachers time and automate



repetitive tasks. This repository not only offers access to essential AI tools but also provides guidance on how educators can leverage AI to enhance their teaching practices. In my presentations, I will share these invaluable resources, demonstrating how they can be harnessed to empower educators and create more efficient classrooms.

AI policies in educational institutions are another area where I am excited to work with schools. My experiences as a Director and Coordinator have provided me with some unique insights into the intricacies of educational administration. I have witnessed firsthand the challenges administrators face in managing complex systems. I see an opportunity to save administrators time, streamline their workflows, and support them in crafting AI policies that not only ensure compliance; but also optimize operations.

Feedback is the lifeblood of effective teaching and learning. My

journey into AI education also encompasses finding ways to provide more and better feedback using AI. Through the exploration of innovative feedback mechanisms powered by AI, my presentations will delve into these transformative approaches and showcase how AI can revolutionize feedback processes, ultimately improving student outcomes.

My goal is to offer a roadmap for educators and administrators, illuminating how AI can save time, automate tasks, craft policies, and revolutionize feedback mechanisms. As the AI revolution continues to reshape education, I want to help others by inspiring and guiding schools toward a more efficient and effective educational future.

Beyond my professional accomplishments, I am a mother of four, a board game enthusiast, a coffee aficionado, and a fervent football fan. I feel that my love for board games and my enthusiasm for football mirror my approach to AI education – it's about strategy, teamwork, and a touch of excitement.

Interested in having Christine work with your staff? **Contact** Kari Kubicek to take advantage of this opportunity!

# SE MN Redefining Ready District Spotlight

By Kari Kubicek

SSC is extremely proud of the work that is being done by the Redefining Ready (RR) districts! We asked a couple of our RR districts to share some of the work they have done and continue to do to implement RR in their district.

## Lake City Public Schools

By High School Principal Greg Berge

In Lake City, when we first heard of the Redefining Ready initiative, we jumped on board right away. Many of the pieces of the scorecard and the research fit perfectly with what we had been doing for many years in Lake City. For this reason, we had a lot of data that we were already keeping. The Redefining Ready scorecard allows us to use the data of what we are doing and put it in a format that helped validate the good things we are doing in our school. This initiative also allows us, as a school, to showcase and promote the many things we value in our school, not just test scores. It also provides us with a great continuous improvement model that makes sense for our students and our school.



### Our steps to implement Redefining Ready consisted of the following:

- We gathered and consolidated the data that we currently had.
- We created a format for our Lake City scorecard and developed a baseline of data to use.
- We then created an individual student scorecard that we embedded into our school system through our advisory program and guidance department.
- We implemented a new program to document and record service hours in Lake City. This has been a big initiative for us and an area where we have seen much growth with our students.
- We implemented the Lake City scorecard into many of our PLCs. We now have PLC's focused on specific areas

of the scorecard. For instance, our certifications have jumped tremendously because one of our PLCs has made that a main goal for their team.

- We have implemented our scorecard into our PLC leadership group. This group will do data dives and analyze our data each and every year. We will use this to set goals and plan for the future.
- Our long-term goal would be to create a scorecard at our elementary and middle school to have it as a more systemic plan in Lake City.

We are very proud of the progress that we have made on our Lake City scorecard through the Redefining Ready initiative. We have shared this with our teachers, students, school, board, parents, and community. There has been tremendous buy-in from all groups. It is hard to argue against an initiative that promotes college and career readiness for all students. We look forward to the research on life-ready skills and how to implement them into our system.

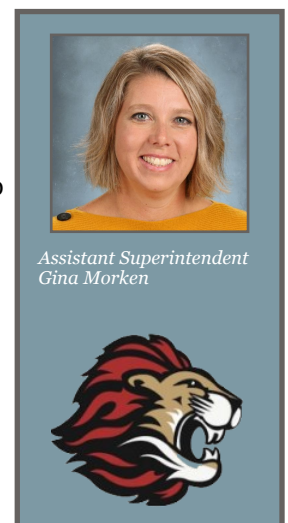
Contact **Greg Berge** if interested in learning more about Lake City's RR experience.

## Spring Grove Public Schools

By Assistant Superintendent Gina Morken

Spring Grove has been tracking redefining ready data relating to career and college ready metrics since 2015. The district has been making shifts with courses, programming, and data collection to ensure all students understand the steps they need to take to be college and career ready, while feeling empowered to make decisions that drive their future goals.

At first, we tracked the data as a leadership team. We met with students in their senior year to help them to fulfill all goals. Over time we realized students needed to know about this data before their senior year so we started to communicate and educate students starting in the 9th grade year. We created a postsecondary and career planning checklist and



Continued on the next page...



# SE MN Redefining Ready Districts Continue Collaborative Work to Grow Programming

By Kari Kubicek

Redefining Ready, a national campaign launched by AASA, The School Superintendents Association, introduced a new multi-metric, research-based approach to determining what it means to be college ready, career ready, and life ready. The RR readiness indicators (which include AP courses, Algebra II, early college credits, industry credentials, attendance, community service, and more) more accurately reflect the educational landscape of the 21st century. This campaign was designed to change the national narrative regarding public education from a one-standardized-test judges all (students, teachers, parents, and communities) philosophy to a focus on readiness for our students.

SSC launched the SE MN Redefining Ready programming in August of 2021 with 13 SE MN district teams participating in a two-year cohort experience. These district teams were made up of district leaders including superintendents, principals, teaching and learning directors, counselors, activity directors, and more. The cohort teams met six times over two years working through a process that included 1) defining, accurately tracking, and reporting district metrics based on the RR indicators in alignment with the district strategic plan, 2) educating and maintaining communications with staff, community, local businesses, families and students on the importance of tracking and meeting these indicators to support student success, 3) providing resources to support the work including financial and district leadership buy in, 4) learning

to utilize the data to improve student experience and success, and 5) produce an annual district scorecard illustrating the district's progress in the multiple metrics being tracked based on the Redefining Ready indicators.

As a next step for this work, representatives from the district teams will continue working collaboratively in the SE MN Redefining Ready Leadership Cohort facilitated by Gina Morken, Assistant Superintendent at Spring Grove Public Schools. The focus of the cohort will be on the following:



- Communicate and Analyze Redefining Ready Scorecards - Metric Comparisons and Next Steps (Elementary and Middle)
- College and Career Programming - How are districts using the data to push their schools to create college and career readiness experiences for students?
- Statewide movement and support - In what ways do we want to work together to discuss policy, statutes, programming, and partnerships to support more opportunities for students?

*Redefining Ready continued from previous page.*

a personal learning plan for students, parents, and educators to use to ensure students are making choices to be college and career ready.

Last year, we started having college and career focused parent and advisor conferences, so that students, advisors, and students have clarity and support in decisions about high school and the transition to life after graduation. This year, we are using our student personal learning plans and career and college data to create tiers of support. All students will have conferences, data tracking, guiding documents, advisors and guidance counselors to support them, but some students, depending on their Redefining Ready data, will get extra support from our college and career support team.

At a district level, we track and report our data within our community, as well as the action steps we take each year. We have a district team that meets monthly to continue to drive next steps. Some action items for this year include pursuing more dual credit courses in CTE areas, clarity with how we track student service hours, connecting Redefining Ready data and experiences in the middle and elementary schools, and connecting more with businesses, other schools, and community members.

Contact **Gina Morken** if interested in learning more about Spring Grove's RR experience.

# Paraeducator Online Training and Assessments Available Through SSC

By Kari Kubicek

The Minnesota Service Cooperatives have partnered with The Master Teacher to access discounted pricing on the Paraeducator Online Training and Assessments for member districts. Paraeducator is recognized by the Minnesota Department of Education as an option for the formal assessment required to consider a paraprofessional highly qualified. Paraeducator also provides high quality professional development that districts can use to support all paraprofessionals.

## Paraeducator Online Courses Include

150+ self-paced courses covering general education and special education environments ([Course listing](#))

- Courses that are organized into bite-sized units and are perfect for training days.
- Post-tests at the end of each course that are automatically graded.
- Training and assessments to highly qualify paraprofessionals and meet Title I, Part A requirements.
- Transcripts and course certificates that paraeducators can access to document their training.
- Content that aligns with CEC standards for paraeducators endorsed by CASE.
- Research-based content written by experts in the field.

## Assessment Information

Highly qualified prep courses in the areas of mathematical skills, reading skills, writing skills, and supporting instruction, will be assigned to those taking the assessment. We strongly recommend that individuals complete these prep courses prior to taking the assessments (estimated to take 8-12 hours to complete).



The passing scores are 65% for the Instructional Support test and 70% for the Knowledge and Application test.

To purchase licenses/assessments for staff, districts may complete this [order form](#) and submit it to [Christi Fosland](#) at SSC. Individuals can visit our [event listing](#) and register for a license. Individuals testing at SSC must be assigned a license and registered prior to the testing date and bring his/her own internet-accessible laptop.

Districts also have the option to provide testing at their site with a designated proctor.

## License Costs

\$79 / license - Access to highly qualified online prep courses, access to all online PD courses, and assessments  
 \$59 / license - Access to all online PD courses only  
 \$20 / attempt - Each additional assessment retake

## Benefits to accessing this service through SSC

- Coordination support for districts to purchase licenses
- Discounted rate on license cost
- Flexible testing dates
- Convenient testing location at SSC in Rochester
- Individuals receive their score immediately following completion of the assessment. If time allows, individuals may re-take the exam upon payment of \$20.00.

Contact [Christi Fosland](#) at SSC with any questions.

## Instructional Coaching Cohort Opportunity

SSC is offering this opportunity for instructional coaches of all levels of experience, and for those who want to strengthen their facilitation skills. The cohort will meet three times during the 23-24 school year (November 1, January 17, 2024, and April 10, 2024) from 8:30 to 11:30 AM at SSC. District teams and individuals are welcome to participate.

Winona Area Public Schools Instructional Coaches Shannon Helgeson and Ross Herdina will be facilitating the cohort. Participants will have opportunities to share ideas, practice conversational and coaching strategies, and increase their professional development skills.

Register for this opportunity by clicking [here](#).

*"The Instructional Coaching Cohort was a valuable way to network with coaches from different areas around the region. As a group we affirmed some of the difficulties related to being an instructional coach and worked together to enhance processes for focused coaching conversations. Shannon and Ross are approachable, and organized, and help foster conversations between coaches with the ultimate goal to help create stronger schools that support our kids."*

Melanie Kulmeshkenova - John Adams Middle School, Rochester Public Schools (past and current cohort member)

# Introducing the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem

By Emily Saed

Welcome to the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem! We are on a mission to close the STEM learning and workforce opportunity gap through a cross-sector collaboration that centers equity.

As a statewide network, we increase the impacts of cross-sector collaborations by connecting regional STEM networks with resources, ideas, and best practices from every corner of our state. That means the work of all supporters and stakeholders — business, education, government, afterschool programs, museums, non-profit and community organizations, policy leaders — are working together to exponentially multiply our impact on our common objective.

Over the last few months, the MN STEM Ecosystem began executing our plan for STEM asset mapping. In partnership with the MN Service Cooperatives, we have identified common goals and key personnel to strengthen regional STEM networks. We believe this will create better connectivity of both in-school and after-school STEM programs and continuity for learners. These features are integral to support increased access to STEM opportunities for youth!

We are also excited to be piloting equity based professional development in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota right here in the Southeast Service Cooperative through STEM Forward in October. As a recent Moonshot Catalyst Grant Awardee, we believe this training will provide both traditional and after-school STEM educators the tools needed to shift practices to create more inclusive STEM learning opportunities for students historically underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

Through dedicated staffing and the continued commitment of the Steering Committee, the MN STEM Ecosystem has



Emily Saed

established its presence in a number of ways including solidifying the vision, mission and values driving the Ecosystem and developing structural components that facilitate cross-disciplinary exchanges between educators, employers, non-profits and other stakeholders in STEM.

Our goals include increasing the number of young people engaged in the exploration and pursuit of STEM career fields, especially those who don't readily see themselves in STEM, like young women and young people of color; collaborating across partner institutions to expand the depth and breadth of career exploration options to encompass a wider variety of STEM careers and disciplines; supporting experiential, hands-on STEM learning while building bridges that connect those STEM skills to real-world job and career opportunities; and strengthening the public-private partnerships and conversations to better understand and address Minnesota's STEM-based workforce development needs.

So stay tuned and watch this space! We believe we can do big things together!



MINNESOTA  
**STEM**  
ECOSYSTEM

To learn more about Emily, please see page 15.



# Exciting News from STEM Forward:

## *Unlocking Opportunities in Southeast Minnesota*

By Sarah Ness

We hope this season finds you well and brimming with enthusiasm for the incredible developments happening within our STEM community. As your gateway to all things science, technology, engineering, and math in southeast Minnesota, STEM Forward is thrilled to share the latest updates, grants, partnerships, and upcoming events that promise to ignite your passion for STEM.

### Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendars!

#### **Educator Forum - Unleash the Power of STEM Education and AI**

Are you eager to explore innovative teaching techniques and connect with like-minded educators? Look no further! STEM Forward is proud to present the **Educator Forum**, a unique opportunity for K-12 school district educators, higher education professionals, and industry experts to come together and exchange ideas.

Join us at this event by visiting our website [here](#). Get ready to dive deep into the world of STEM education, AI for the classroom, math standards implementation, and more!

Present at the forum and receive a \$100 stipend! Visit the website for more information [here](#).

#### **STEM Justice Training - A Partnership with the Science Museum of Minnesota**

In our quest to promote inclusivity using STEM learning opportunities as a vehicle for growth and engagement, STEM Forward has teamed up with the **Science Museum of Minnesota** to bring you the **STEM Justice Training**. This transformative program is designed to empower individuals from all backgrounds to thrive in STEM learning opportunities and careers. This renowned training is for in and out-of-school time educators, student organization leaders, non-profits, higher-education, industry and more!



To learn more about this exciting partnership, click [here](#). Together, we can create a more equitable STEM community.

#### **We Share Solar's Solar Suitcase - Shedding Light on Possibilities**

STEM Forward believes in the power of renewable energy education. Our collaboration with **We Share Solar** brings you the **Solar Suitcase** project, an initiative that educates, empowers, and illuminates. Get involved with our 26 pre-registered educators joining the green energy revolution in southeast Minnesota!

For detailed information on this inspiring partnership, click [here](#).

#### **Join STEM Forward Today!**

Are you ready to take your STEM journey to the next level? STEM Forward invites you to join our vibrant network of educators, professionals, and enthusiasts. Together, we can make a difference, unlock opportunities, and shape the future of STEM in southeast Minnesota.

Visit [www.ssc.coop/stemforward](http://www.ssc.coop/stemforward) to become a part of our dynamic community.

We hope this article has sparked your excitement for all the incredible initiatives STEM Forward has in store. Stay tuned for more updates, and remember, your passion for STEM can lead to endless possibilities.

# Empowering First-Generation College Students for Success

By Sarah Ness

In a rapidly changing educational landscape, we're witnessing a growing trend among first-generation college students. They are doubting the value of higher education, their own capabilities, and facing unprecedented challenges, particularly post-pandemic.

The rise of "Generation P[andemic]" is marked by concerns about social and mental health, which profoundly impact their choices. These concerns are even more significant for those who could be the first in their family to pursue a college degree. Negative perceptions about college readiness, coupled with rising costs, are dissuading them.

To tackle this issue head-on, a STEM Forward partner from the University of Minnesota Rochester reached out to STEM Forward for support to aid a community conversation, identify experts in student success and data, and share their personal stories as the first in their families to attend college. Jamie Mahlberg, Ed.D. (RCTC), and Mike Schnell (SSC) joined Jeffrey A. Ratliff-Crain, Ph.D. (UMR), and Sarah Ness, MBA (SSC), at the Cradle to Career Education Summit for an active-learning session, where attendees participated in discussions and co-designed future conversations and experiences for next steps.

The goal? To find innovative solutions and create a supportive network for first-generation college students in southeast Minnesota. Let's join forces to empower these students, overcome barriers, and help them build a brighter future for themselves and their communities. View the data presented at the Education Summit [here](#).



*Julie Ruzek, Cradle to Career Executive Director, and the engaged audience at the Education Summit.*



*Jamie Mahlberg, Ed.D., RCTC, Jeffrey A. Ratliff-Crain, Ph.D., UMR, Sarah Ness, MBA, SSC, and Mike Schnell, SSC*

# Free Online PD for Teachers of Multilingual Learners

By Dr. Kendra Katnik

We are thrilled to announce the launch of the first set of Project MOMENTUM courses – a remarkable opportunity for all educators looking to enhance their expertise in working with multilingual learners. Our series of online, self-paced courses is designed to empower educators with the skills and knowledge needed to promote equitable educational opportunities for all students in a diverse educational landscape.

Minnesota schools have always been home to a vibrant community of multilingual learners, each with their own unique linguistic strengths. It's our firm belief that every teacher deserves access to professional development that equips them to provide the best possible support to these learners. Aligned with PELS standards, our courses can

help educators meet mandatory requirements for licensure renewal.

What sets our professional learning apart is a focus on real-world application. Educators will gain actionable strategies that can be immediately integrated into their classrooms. Additional courses will be released in 2024 and beyond. All courses are free of charge through a National Professional Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition (Award #T365Z220119).

Explore available courses, enroll, or join a communications list for future courses on our website:

[www.sscprojectmomentum.org](http://www.sscprojectmomentum.org).



**Free**

## Professional Learning

The goal of Project MOMENTUM is to provide equitable access to high-quality professional learning opportunities that improve instruction for multilingual learners across the state of Minnesota. We offer free, self-paced, online courses for educators.

### Project MOMENTUM

Our courses offer relevant, engaging, and applicable content for educators to grow their expertise in working with multilingual learners. All teachers can earn CEUs and take courses toward relicensure. Participants will also earn digital badges demonstrating competency in key course content areas.

### Participant Feedback

★★★★★

*I have gained so much confidence in meeting the needs of MLs in my classroom! Thank you for all of the tangible videos, examples, strategies, and resources.*

### Currently Available Courses

- Differentiation for Multilingual Learners (15 CEUs)
- Building a Foundational Understanding of Multilingualism (10 CEUs)
- Multimodal Language & Literacy (16 CEUs)
- Evidence-Based Literacy for Multilingual Learners (2 CEUs)
- Incorporating Linguistic Supports as an Education Support Professional (2 CEUs)

Additional courses will be released throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

**LEARN MORE OR REGISTER**

 [www.sscprojectmomentum.org](http://www.sscprojectmomentum.org)

**CONTACT US**

 [info@sscprojectmomentum.org](mailto:info@sscprojectmomentum.org)



# Southeast Minnesota School Crisis Response Team

By Cheryl Wendt

Southeast Service Cooperative is offering the opportunity for districts to access emotional/mental health support in the form of a school crisis response team for students, staff and community members following a school crisis. The SE Minnesota School Crisis Response Team (SE MN SCRT) was created using funding made available by MDE through a federal Project AWARE grant.

This SE MN SCRT team's mission is to provide support, guidance and resources to schools during and after a serious loss. The team recognizes that each district has a crisis emergency plan in place. The school crisis response team functions in a different capacity, as they are unattached to the district and do not have strong emotional ties to the students or staff. This allows the team to make decisions more objectively, counsel groups, and support individuals to assist in restoring the emotional well-being of the school community.

Currently, 20 professionals (school social workers, counselors, public health nurses, etc.) serve on the SCRT. These individuals completed a two-day Managing School Crises: From



Theory to Application training in early August. The training, developed through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc., is designed to prepare school administrators and all educators for the inevitable crises that occur within schools and/or that effect those in schools. The training reflects the three most common phases of a crisis: pre-crisis planning, acute crisis response and post-crisis activities and introduces the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) framework and specific, research-informed and widely recognized

interventions that can be easily applied within the school setting.

If you have questions about the school crisis response team, please contact Cheryl Wendt, [cwendt@ssc.coop](mailto:cwendt@ssc.coop) or Kari Kubicek, [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop).

SSC remains dedicated to providing quality service to our members, partners, and local organizations. If you have specific needs (professional development, consultation, etc.) related to the area of mental health, please reach out to **Cheryl Wendt**, SSC's Mental Health Program Coordinator, for assistance.



Cheryl Wendt

## Welcome to SSC Emily and Claudia!



### Emily Saed

MN STEM Ecosystem Director

I arrived at SSC as the Director of the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem in April. I am excited to work in cooperation with STEM programs across the state to strengthen and define Minnesota's already robust STEM networks. Our goal is to increase STEM literacy, close the learning gap in STEM education and address the workforce development needs in Minnesota through a cross-sector collaboration that centers equity.

Prior to this, I served as the Executive Director of the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) for 20 years, providing leadership to Minnesota's intra-curricular career and technical student organizations (CTSOs). One of the most rewarding things I had the opportunity to do in this position was develop a program supporting underserved students' participation in our CTSOs.

My first "real" job was working at the Better Business Bureau of MN and ND. I began in membership development and later served as the Manager of Industry and Trade Practice Review. It was an interesting place to work. I learned a lot about predatory and bait and switch advertising practices.

I attended Inver Hills Community College and the University of Wisconsin at River Falls. I am also a Certified Poverty Awareness Trainer.

I live in Woodbury with my husband and three rescue cats. Not rescued as in from the humane society-rescued like they just found us and needed a home! Outside of work, we like to spend time with family and we are both animal welfare advocates. And my vice - I play World of Warcraft. I actually even played the BETA test 20 years ago.



### Claudia Tabini

Community Engagement and Marketing Coordinator - Project MOMENTUM

Originally from Perú, I have lived in Rochester, Minnesota for over 25 years, where my husband and I raised our three multilingual sons. In this time, I have been actively involved in the community while witnessing its growth and I wholeheartedly believe all children deserve a high-quality educational experience.

I am passionate about youth and education, and I enjoy working with volunteers, local nonprofits, school staff, and community leaders to achieve equitable educational opportunities for all. I love being around the community and being involved in initiatives that work with youth and families.

In my free time, I love traveling with my husband, taking road trips, reading, being outside (given the proper temperature, of course) and spending time with our sons. We have a fantastic group of friends, and we often dream of (one day) creating our own retirement community in a warm place! I wish summers were longer, winters less icy and after 26 winters in Minnesota, I am still amazed by how beautiful each season can be.

## Kari Kubicek Wins Outstanding Service Award!

Congratulations to Kari Kubicek, winner of this year's Minnesota Service Cooperative's Outstanding Service Award!

Kari, SSC's Manager of Educational Services, is an incredible asset to SSC, and we're so lucky she shares her many talents with the staff and membership. Kari is an excellent example to other staff members by modeling the exemplary way she cultivates relationships with SSC Members and partners. The relationships she has built and nurtured through the years have been very valuable to SSC's success. She is very thoughtful when making decisions, and carefully takes into account Member needs and the success of SSC.

Through her over 19 years at SSC, Kari has worn many hats. Today, as the Manager of Educational Services, Kari continues to lead SSC's professional development program.



*Although I didn't get to work with Katie from CMS on a long-term project, she helped me in identifying my needs and the ways she could support them. It was great to work with someone who was able to bring so much knowledge right away with a plan on how we could see an impact immediately with our communication. -John, Superintendent*

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## SSC Honored with Wellness Award's Top Tier

We're thrilled to share that Southeast Service Cooperative has been honored as a Five Star mspWellness Champion. This designation was created by the Minneapolis Chamber/Health Department and SHIP to honor organizations, statewide, that that develop, implement, and promote wellness programs as part of their organizational culture.

At SSC, we've fostered an environment that places work-life harmony at the forefront. We offer a variety of opportunities for staff members to connect with one another. We incorporate all



of the dimensions of wellness into our robust employee well-being programming. A flexible workplace environment allows employees the freedom to fit activity or other life obligations into their day.

Thanks to the Minneapolis Chamber/Health Department and SHIP for bestowing this designation to SSC!

## MDE Principal Development and Evaluation Session - November 1 at SSC

Minnesota statute requires each local district to develop and implement a system for annually evaluating their school principals. What should such a system include and how might it emphasize growth and support?

MDE is inviting teams of 2-5 people, including at least one building principal and one principal supervisor, to engage in discussion and collaborate to develop or revise their meaningful PDE system. This session will take place at SSC on Wednesday, November 1 at SSC.

Six BOSA CEUs will be offered for participation. For more information, click [here](#).



## CPC Celebrates New Partnership with MASA!

MASA is pleased to announce a new partnership with the Cooperative Purchasing Connection (CPC) as we launch the new [CPC Online Marketplace](#)!

The CPC Online Marketplace offers MASA members access to a wide range of products and services, including office supplies, technology, facility maintenance, and transportation, allowing you to conveniently find everything you need to meet your district purchasing needs in one place.

The CPC Online Marketplace will save you time by eliminating the need for time-consuming bids and multiple price quotes. You'll be able to quickly and easily find the compliant and competitively solicited contracts all in one place, streamlined so you can get the best value for your organization!

We invite you to explore our new CPC Online Marketplace hosted on the [MASA website](#). In order to access the full features of the online marketplace, you will need to log into your CPC's Express Online Marketplace account.

Thank you for considering the CPC Online Marketplace as a valuable resource for your organization!



### MASA'S COOPERATIVE PURCHASING CONNECTION Online Marketplace

Streamline your purchasing and save money with Cooperative Purchasing Connection's Online Marketplace. Your one-stop-shop for competitively solicited contracts on a wide range of products and services.

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[www.mnasa.org/cpc-online-marketplace](http://www.mnasa.org/cpc-online-marketplace)



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# 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](http://www.ssc.coop).

## May

- Approved the addition of Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday, as well as updates to the 2023-2024 Employee Benefit Plan.
- Approved the purchase of a planer for the Stewartville Schools using Carl Perkins funds.

## June

- Approved the 2023-2024 budget.
- Approved changes to board stipends.
- Approved Goodhue County SSC membership.
- Approved the IEA contract.
- Approved the January 2022 Pool settlement.
- Approved DXC Remediation SOW.
- Made the SSC Board the governing board of SEMNET.

## August

- Approved the movement of funds from the unrestricted fund to the STEM Forward program for 2023-2024.
- Moved funds from the unrestricted general fund to the Mobile Science Lab program for 2023-2024.
- Removed the end date from Cheryl Wendt's employment status.
- Approved the contracts for the Project MOMENTUM subject matter experts.

- Approved the Claudia Tabini contract for Project MOMENTUM Engagement and Marketing Coordinator.
- Moved ahead with changes to the 23-24 employee benefits plan.
- Supported MN's Hope.
- Approve the Wilder Research contract for Project MOMENTUM.

## September

- Approved the executive director contract.
- Approved the contract with Holmes Murphy.
- Approved Albert Lea Public Schools as members in SEMNET.
- Approved Austin Public Schools as members in SEMNET.
- Approved the Otto Bremer Grant.
- Approved \$25,000 to WDI for Bluff Country Collaborative.
- Approved the employee health plan cost share rates effective January 2024.
- Approved the official election calendar and call for nominations.

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.*

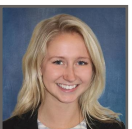
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*Connections* is a publication of the Southeast Service Cooperative, published three times per year for members, associates, and the general public.  
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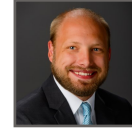
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