



Southeast
Service
Cooperative

Connections

September 2019

Creative Edge
Community

P2

ON THE EDGE
BLOG

Workforce
Development

P3



Cyber Security

P10



Strengthening
Relationships





YOU ARE INVITED

CREATIVE EDGE COMMUNITY

Dear SSC Members,

I am excited to announce a new, free resource that we've just launched—the **Creative Edge Community**! Learn, grow, and get resources to help you lead innovation in your organization.

The Creative Edge Community is your place to:

- Nurture creativity to unleash talent and connect with your staff.
- Get to know your own creative needs, preferences, and blockers to maximize your innovative potential.
- Grow as a leader. Get tools you need to manage the messiness of innovation.
- Explore systematic approaches to innovation - designed for small organizations and public agencies.

The Leading for Innovation Mastermind is the first project of the Creative Edge Community.

I'm looking forward to this adventure and hope that you will join the journey to find your "creative edge"! Watch your email inbox for updates.

Sincerely,

Katie

Katie Schmitt, Development & Innovation Specialist
kschmitt@ssc.coop

Do you want to connect with other leaders who are also guiding innovation efforts? Join the Leading for Innovation



[Learn More](#)

SEPTEMBER 2019

EXPLORE YOUR
CREATIVE POTENTIAL.

SUPPORT YOUR
INNOVATORS.

TACKLE BIG IDEAS AND
CHALLENGES.



The On the Edge Blog features:

- Inspiration from the latest research on creativity and insights from innovation practitioners.
- Exploration of BIG innovation strategies and how to scale them to your needs.
- Practical tools to work through innovative ideas.
- Creative challenges that help you stretch your skills and connect with your team.
- Free resources to ignite and sustain innovation.

Stop Admiring the Workforce Shortage and Join SSC To Do Something About It

By Sarah Ness



Unprecedented growth from initiatives like Mayo Clinic's Destination Medical Center are driving regional changes. The opportunities are exciting, but tempered by a significant workforce shortage. The increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of Southeast Minnesota's most significant barriers to future economic growth" (*DEED, Region 10 Profile, September 2018*). According to DEED, the struggle to find qualified workers is already felt strongly within the region, particularly in manufacturing, construction, healthcare, food processing, and K-12 education. As Rochester continues to draw the region's workforce, rural communities are challenged to attract businesses and residents and retain high school graduates from leaving the community. This led the SSC Board of Directors to identify workforce development as a priority focus area to work toward innovative solutions to reduce barriers, drive efficiencies, and create regional

support for education, government, and non-profit members.

To better understand the needs of our region, SSC members, staff, and community partners pored over labor market data, inventoried current initiatives happening within your organizations, identified gaps, prioritized needs, explored high impact and successful model solutions from neighboring regions, and developed a new solutions to meet the region's needs.

What Was Learned?

Retaining high school graduates is a logical entry point into workforce development for SSC as we can connect and positively affect all three SSC member groups with pipeline strategies implementation, connection amongst stakeholders, efficiencies in communication and reporting value of participation. According to Kelly Asche, DEED's Center for Rural Policy Development, "Most students, given the choice, would prefer to live in their hometown or at least near their home region if they thought they could." More importantly, according to DEED's Luke Greiner's survey of 700 southwest Minnesota 10th graders, "70% [of students] said they would choose a career over living in a place they preferred". These powerful study results support the notion that it is vital to allow access to local experiential learning for students to be aware of and engage in career exploration activities to validate career interest, potential and availability close to home. This population is vital to keeping vibrant and innovative citizens in our communities.

Despite the importance of experiential career connected learning and an understanding of the benefits, there are often limited resources available. According to an extensive needs assessment conducted in 2018 by SSC and its regional partners, employers and educators identified connectivity, resources, and time as the major barriers for participation. In addition to formal education resources, another key influencer in students' decision-making on what kind of work to do is heavily dependent on parents. The value that parents in rural areas place on attaining a higher education degree, combined with what they believe to be a lack of economic opportunities, greatly increases the likelihood that the child will leave. (*Kirckpatric, Wilder, & Stern, 2005*)

Schools also recognize that districts are in different stages of development and implementation of experiential learning, making it challenging to find a one-size-fits-all strategy across southeast Minnesota. Tack on complex issues like the teacher shortage and that our current teachers are expected to prepare students for jobs that do not exist yet, in industries they themselves are unfamiliar, it is not shocking that the concept of youth workforce development, as a whole, is viewed as daunting to tackle.

So What Can We Do to Help?

Southeast Minnesota communities are looking at new, unconventional approaches to help younger generations develop skills and gain

Continued on next page...

experience so they can reach their potential, preferably locally. Experiential career connected learning opportunities are proven to engage students and prepare them for the future. However, a high impact model requires the active involvement of local employers, educators gifted in partnership development, students with access to information and systems that incorporate parent education and awareness efforts.

As a region, we need to come together to develop strategies that address key barriers for all stakeholders to enhance participation and change the narrative for the top two key influencers of students, experiential learning opportunities and parent perception. Innovative solutions that connect educators and students with experiential learning opportunities offered by local and regional employers are essential to promote career awareness and recruitment, as well as application of coursework in real-world settings. These opportunities open doors for underrepresented students, raise awareness about lesser known labor markets, provide support for our educators and employers, and lead to graduates ready to enter post-secondary or the workforce with better interest awareness and alignment.

What Are The Key Components That Our Communities Need?

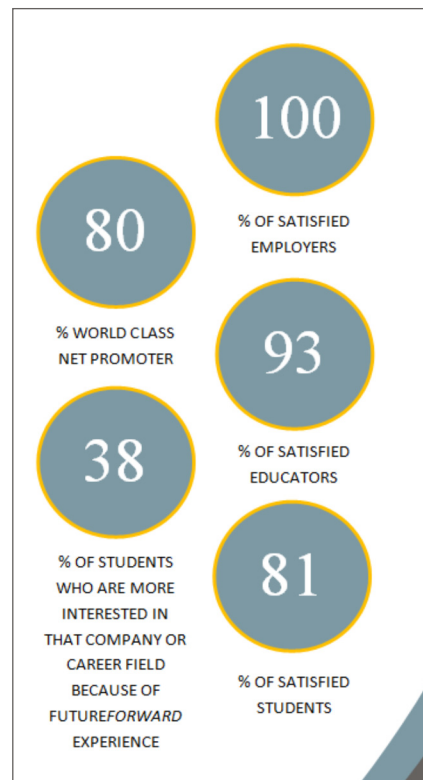
Educators, employers, and students need a streamlined process for implementing and sustaining career connected learning programs. The process needs to provide equitable opportunities for small and large school districts and for urban and rural communities to collaborate.

Employers need to be able to streamline communication and have the ability to participate in opportunities during non-peak seasons. The proposed work outlined below addresses identified barriers with the goal of developing a model for a sustainable framework. There is an opportunity to connect with what's already working using proven models from southwest and south central Minnesota, expand upon the programming already in place in some of our communities, share these best practices across the region, and replicate with options to customize for unique community needs.

New Community Career-Connected Initiatives



SSC's innovative new web-based portal leverages technology to maximize relationships and resources



to bridge crucial connections between employers, educators, and students. Specifically, FutureForward™ is designed to provide efficiencies to increase experiential learning for students to apply coursework in real world settings. The portal powers efficient coordination of opportunities such as classroom guest speakers, field trips and site visits, individual or group job shadows, internships and mentorships, industry-led events, career days, and teacher externships. The portal integrates feedback tools to ensure both student, classroom, and business needs are met. Learn more at www.futureforward.org.

Next Steps

Local government and non-profit members are able to create your FREE profile FutureForward today! Business partners are also invited to create a profile at www.futureforward.org.

Click the yellow login button, and the click the register tab.

School districts interested in using FutureForward should copy, paste, and update your information on your school's letterhead using the letter of commitment template [linked here](#). This will provide area partners and employers with a verified list of schools wishing to connect with employers. Your community will be added to a priority list to begin outreach strategies with your local employers to join the portal.

Continued on next page...

Career Navigators

Designed for communities and school districts looking to design and maintain career-connected learning programs, SSC is positioned to keep the process simple and streamlined by hosting and supervising a Career Navigator for your school. Or, pool your resources with a group of other communities and districts to hire a shared position to meet your collective needs. SSC will hire and host each position, but work is customized by and performed under the guidance of participating schools and stakeholders. This is a cost effective way to accomplish the following on behalf of your students and community:

- Provide strategic leadership and support for administrators, educators, employers, colleges, and other partners.
- Develop relationships with local and regional businesses willing to partner on student experiences.
- Build scalable systems, structures, and solutions that promote college and career readiness.
- Implement best practices learned as part of a regional cohort of Career Navigators.
- Build parent and community awareness about the changing workforce of tomorrow.
- Measure success to demonstrate student impact and return-on-investment.
- Leverage supports, resources, services, and funding opportunities available for career-connected learning.
- Develop frameworks for successful and sustainable experiential and work-based learning and career pathway programs.

Meet Heather, SSC's First Career Navigator

A new position at Southeast Service Cooperative is the Career Navigator – a shared position amongst five schools in the south central counties of SSC's region. Heather Schutte started this position in August. Prior to her accepting this role, Heather was a Work-Based Learning Coordinator and Special Education Teacher for SMEC and enthusiastically connected local businesses and special education students to career engagement and training opportunities. She worked with the state department to get a new transition program approved, developed and researched curriculum for the program, and helped promote the program to staff, parents, and the school board. Over the past three years, she has completed her Master's work in Special Education from the University of St. Thomas. Heather was also present for the initial formation of the Region 10 Transition and Work-based Learning Coordinator's Community of Practice. This group created the Work Skills Challenge Day for students with disabilities throughout southeastern Minnesota. Heather also served as a mentor to other Work-Based Learning Coordinators in transition program development. She is passionate about connecting students to an enriching and lasting career, which makes her a perfect fit for this role. *Read more about Heather on page 13!*



- Align existing student experiences with state and nationally recognized career clusters.
- Help your district navigate certifications, credentials, or concurrent enrollment options for students.

Next Steps

Interested school districts should **email Sarah Ness** with the following information:

1. What roles and responsibilities do you need this person to provide to support your district?
2. How much time do you need from this person for your district (ex: FTE, # of days per week, etc.)

Funding Available

Rural CTE Grant funds available by application to subsidize costs for FutureForward and/or Career Navigator positions. **Email Sarah Ness** to learn more.

Empower Your Employees to Become Brand Ambassadors

By Katie Schmitt,
Development & Innovation Specialist

Who in your organization plays a role in marketing? Is it your communications team, website manager, or maybe senior leadership? If you answered “everyone” – you are right! All team members have the power to make your brand come alive. Front line employees, in particular, are often the face of your organization and influence how people see, think, and feel about your organization every day.

Public agencies and non-profit organizations are paying closer attention to branding. Have you looked at your brand recently?

Free Resource

Brand Ambassador Readiness Assessment

Branding isn’t just your logo or the pantone colors you’ve selected. Branding is how your customers, clients, parents, students, community members, and stakeholders would describe your organization. So whether you are intentionally working on branding or not, your brand exists. If you neglect your brand, it may result in poor public opinion of your organization, reduced support or engagement, and decreased revenue.

Branding starts with people – your employees. They have the pulse on those you serve.

One of the best investments you can make in marketing is preparing your staff to be ambassadors of your brand. It doesn’t need to be an expensive undertaking. Simple onboarding procedures, training, and touchpoints at staff meetings can keep your brand strong. How well have you equipped your employees to represent your brand?

[Request the free Brand Ambassador Readiness Assessment](#)



Young Authors
Young Artists

Save the Date

9th Annual Young Authors, Young Artists
Middle School Conference

October 30 or October 31

Students in grades 6-8 are invited to join their peers in a conference where professional authors and artists will work with them on their artistic talents. Students will choose 4 sessions that spark their interest. Registration will be \$45 per student.

Information can be found at www.ssc.coop/studentprograms.
Please contact Katie Hartman if you’d like to be added to the email list. khartman@ssc.coop



A Fresh Start

By Steve Sallee,
SSC Executive Director



July turned out to be an unexpected, challenging time for all of us at SSC.

As you probably know by now, we were hit with a devastating flood on the morning of June 28. This forced us to close for the entire month of July. Fortunately, we did have flood insurance so the financial impact was minimal. The staff at SSC all pitched in to get us back up and running by August 5.

Everyone worked from home during that time and stayed on top of things remotely, which proved the value of our flexibility! We were lucky that our technology stayed up and running during the entire time.

The Wood Lake Meeting Center was forced to cancel several rentals in July. All but one were able to reschedule, which I thought was amazing.

I cannot praise all of our staff enough for battling through this tremendous challenge and getting us back to normal in just

over a month. We are so excited to be back together again and here to serve our members! We hope you get to stop in if you haven't already. We have new carpeting throughout the building along with fresh paint.

Several staff members commented that it was difficult not seeing each other in the office for an extended period of time. We are all back in our offices and ready to serve you in any way possible. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if we can offer any support.

We are staying very focused in the areas of curriculum support for schools, workforce development, and mental health. Those are the three areas that our board directed us to emphasize during our strategic planning session last winter. We still offer services in several other areas though, not just those.

If you would like me to come and visit with you and your staff to share what we have to offer, I am happy to do so. I am also willing to present at any of your board meetings to share your member value report and give them a refresher on what SSC has to offer.

Please let me know if I can be of assistance. We are excited about our fresh start at SSC and look forward to continuing to serve all of our members.

A very sincere thank you to the following businesses and people that stepped up on short notice to help with our efforts:

ServiceMaster Restore
Clean-up

AB Systems
General Contractor

Hiller Carpet
Carpet

Pompeii Painting
Painting

Superior Contractors
Drywall

Chosen Valley Electric
Electrical

Hartman Complete
Lawn Care
Outside clean up

Eric Walston,
Adam Grover
Moving furniture

Jean Roth,
Board Member
Moving and packing boxes the day of the flood



STEM Forward Grows to Record Setting 34 Partners

By Sarah Ness

STEM Forward is making great connections amongst schools, community organizations, and career pathways partners to better align educational opportunities that promote STEM excellence in our K-12 schools. These connections are so great that 50% of all SSC K-12 school members now participate in STEM Forward! This is a 38% participation rate increase of members over two years thanks to the intentional strategic planning of stakeholders, community partnerships, and world class Educator Forums. STEM Forward brings valuable connections and relationships, grant opportunities, career pathway support, and professional development to educators, students, and community partners.

Upcoming STEM Forward Events

Participating educators and administrators from STEM Forward schools please join us for these **free** events! Not yet a STEM Forward district? Click [here](#) to learn how to get involved!

Fall Educator Forum

**Wednesday, November 13, 2019,
4:30 - 8:00 PM**

Wood Lake Meeting Center, Rochester
Cost: Free for all STEM Forward Educators

This education forum provides engaging, peer-to-peer, hands on, practical, and relevant learning opportunities for educators, administrators, and interested community members.

Topics May Include:

- Building strong foundations for STEM literacy
- Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM
- Preparing the STEM workforce for the future
- The changing MN science standards
- Developing and enriching strategic partnerships
- Engaging students where disciplines converge
- Building computational literacy
- Parent engagement in STEM education and/or career pathways

[Register to Attend](#)

Outstanding Educator Awards and Annual Dinner

**Wednesday, January 8, 2020,
5:00 - 8:00 PM**
Castle Community, Rochester

You're invited to STEM Forward's Annual Outstanding Awards and Dinner to learn about the great work our southeast Minnesota educators are doing every day to build and promote STEM excellence in K-12 schools! This event will include a review of STEM Forward accomplishments over the year, a look into the future, and a celebration of our Outstanding Educators and nominees! Dinner is included.

STEM Forward is accepting [nominations](#) of your Outstanding Educators through Thursday, November 22, 2019.

Partnership and sponsorship opportunities available. Contact Sarah Ness for more information.

[Register to Attend](#)
[Nominate Educators](#)

Spring Educator Forum

**Wednesday, April 15, 2020,
4:30 - 8:00 PM**
Wood Lake Meeting Center, Rochester
Cost: Free for all STEM Forward Stakeholders

Forum Timeline

December 2019 - We'll distribute session topic applications

February 2020 - We'll review submissions and select break-out session topics

More information will be forthcoming.

[Register to Attend](#)

STEM Professional Development Opportunities

Transcending Boundaries: Connecting Schools, Career, and Community through STEM

University of Minnesota
Continuing Education and
Conference Center

Tuesday, December 3, 2019

Join colleagues from Minnesota's STEM learning ecosystem to consider the role of STEM education in providing inclusive environments, adequate resources, and career-connected learning that prepare the next generation for the future.

Conference attendees include:

- PreK-12, university, informal, afterschool, and community educators and leaders
- Industry partners, professional organizations, employers, and funders
- Policymakers and community members

Participate in hands-on workshops, information sessions, and panel discussions based on the conference strands:

- Transcending boundaries between organizations
- Transcending boundaries between learning landscapes
- Transcending boundaries between disciplines

[Register to Attend](#)



*Keynote Presentation:
Dr. Jayshree Seth, 3M
Corporate Scientist
and Chief Science*

Free Webinar! Amplify the TEAM in STEAM Education

When we focus on creating conditions for collaboration while integrating science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics across our students' day, we can better boost creativity and innovation. Join us for some practical ways to turn up the volume of your STEAM programming to not only prepare our students for the future, but to also increase the joy of learning.

Sponsor:

Teacher Created Materials – For over 40 years, Teacher Created Materials Library has published innovative, imaginative, and award-winning resources for teachers, parents, and students in all subjects for grades PK-8. We strive to develop resources that equip teachers with the



tools and strategies they need to motivate and empower students, making teaching more effective and learning more fun. We are excited about our collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute to develop 90 new leveled STEAM books for grades K-5.

[Register to View](#)

WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL REFERENDUM STRATEGY?

ICS | CONSULTING, INC

Passing a referendum is no easy feat. Tasks such as engaging your community members, developing options based on facility needs, identifying funding strategies, creating facility solutions, and implementing a successful communications campaign require a unique skillset. K-12 school districts need advocates to help guide them through this complex process. ICS team members have worked with school districts on passing referenda for decades, aiming to help students, staff,

and communities effectively address facility-related and educational programming needs. In the past decade, ICS has helped over 60 school districts to secure over \$1.7 Billion in voter-approved funds. These improvements have changed and will drastically change the educational landscape for generations to come. "Through our process, we impact the communities we live, work, and play in," says Jeff Schiltz, ICS Principal.

Based on the past two years, school referendum efforts have a 21% higher passage rate of at least one question with ICS as a trusted partner and advocate. A component to our success is that we begin with listening. We listen to the key challenges of a district and effectively assess their needs. We focus on communicating the process and gathering input, communicating the results and receiving feedback, and ultimately, communicating the plan and gaining support. If you would like more information on how to develop a successful strategy for your next referendum, contact Dave Bergeron at dave.bergeron@ics-consult.com or (701) 371-2948. Visit www.ics-consult.com for more information.

Cyber Security in Our Schools

By Kari Kubicek

According to a recent article in the *New York Times*, "...school districts have proved particularly enticing to hackers because they hold troves of private data and often lack the resources to fend off intruders." With the school year kicking off, and thousands of students and staff in southeast Minnesota returning to your school's cloud environment, protecting the massive amounts of data flowing in and out of that environment from hackers is a challenge faced by all of us.

Is your district prepared to prevent cyber security attacks? What are your rights and responsibilities as a district in protecting the tremendous amount of data you handle on a daily basis? To answer these questions and more, don't miss SSC's **Cyber Security Event** on Tuesday, October 15, from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

SEMNET (The Southeast Minnesota Network) is covering a portion of the expenses to offer the morning session to both SEMNET

and SSC members. In the morning session, **Legal Issues Involving School Technology: Data Practices,**



Student and Staff Rights,

John P. Edison, shareholder and attorney with Rupp, Anderson, Squires & Waldspurgen, PA law firm, will walk you through the laws applicable to data practices in schools and the rights of those individuals of whose data you manage.

In the afternoon session, **Cybersecurity, New Life Schools and Preparedness for the Future,**

Principal Security Architect and CISSP®, Ryan Cloutier, will equip you with the new skills and approaches you need to increase your ability to protect data and the humans who that data belongs to and how to effect immediate change in your schools,



community's and cybersecurity programs.

While we encourage you to register for the entire day, individuals have the option of registering for the morning session only or for the full day. For those individuals registered for the full day, lunch will be provided. Admin and general CEUs will be provided for both sessions.

Feel free to contact Kari Kubicek with any questions about the event.

Please click [here](#) to register for the entire day, OR [here](#) to register for the morning session only.

This day will be a fantastic opportunity for superintendents, principals, technology coordinators, and staff members who handle private data in your district to learn from the presenters and other participants, as well as have informed and effective conversations about your specific school and how you can protect the data and the humans who that data belongs to.

School staff receives cultural competency training

By Sarah Kocher, Albert Lea Tribune

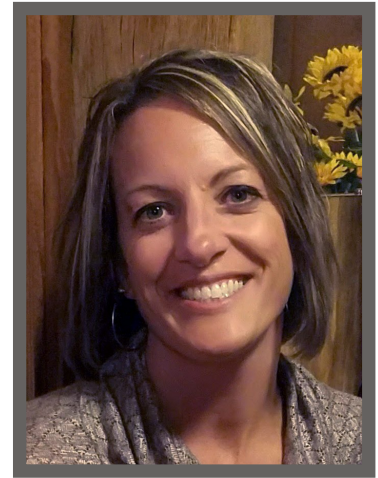
As Albert Lea school district teachers and staff prepare to return for the new school year, they also prepare to meet a student body that continually grows more diverse.

As of March, families in the district spoke 36 different native languages, said Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Mary Jo Dorman. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, over 36% of Albert Lea Area Schools students are Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, Asian, black or African American or two or more races.

Still, Dorman said diversity is about more than race. Presenter Angie Ellsworth, a behavior specialist for the Southeast Service Cooperative who also does consulting, reminded those attending that it touches on religion, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, education, generation, and nationality.

And everyone has an unconscious bias: beliefs, attitudes, feelings we cannot really control, Ellsworth said.

"They just come out without even thinking, and they're not good or bad," she said. "They just are."



Angie Ellsworth

But everyone is impacted, at some point, by bias, and students achieve more when their teachers are culturally competent and aware of their needs, Ellsworth said, citing the National Education Association.

To read more, please visit the *Albert Lea Tribune's* [website](#).

This article was originally published in the Albert Lea Tribune on August 12, 2019

Mental Health Behavior Systems Consultant

What mental health supports do you have in place for your students and staff? Do you feel they are effective? Is your staff practicing your building's behavior management practices with fidelity?

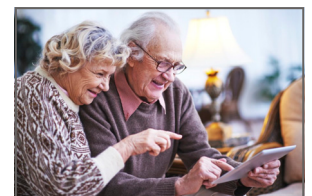
If you aren't sure of the answers to these questions or have different ones about how best to support the individuals in your building in the area of mental health and behavior management, contact Kari Kubicek at SSC to schedule a consultation with our Mental Health Behavior Systems Consultant, Angie Ellsworth.

Learn more about this opportunity and Angie by clicking [here](#) or [contacting](#) Kari at SSC.

Discounted Voluntary Long-Term Care Insurance Through the Minnesota Service Cooperatives

Demographic and societal changes have made long-term care planning a necessary part of the financial planning process. Regardless of age, you should not dismiss long-term care insurance without learning about it. Long-term care insurance can help protect your nest egg, maintain control over where you receive care, and reduce stress on family members.

Our partners at ACSIA Partners are offering free, informational webinars about this valuable benefit. Click the links below to register.



[October 3, 12:00 PM](#)

[October 8, 9:00 AM](#)

[October 9, 6:00 PM](#)

[October 15, 9:00 AM](#)

[October 17, 6:00 PM](#)

[October 23, 12:00 PM](#)

Program Manager Kirsten Kuehl To Retire From SSC

By Katie Hartman, with Contributions from SSC Staff Members

Because of the incredible length of Kirsten's service to SSC of over 37 years, she serves as our very own archivist. We can always go to her with a question about the past, and her amazing recall quickly brings up the story or information we had questions about. Kirsten ALWAYS makes time to help out her colleagues when they need her and her ability to maintain composure in stressful situations has been a lifesaver more times than we can count.

One of Kirsten's strengths is Consistency, and that cannot be more accurate of a description. This strength is said to be a problem solver, so when issues arise we are always able to depend on her to find a solution. Kirsten's meticulous nature and top-notch editing skills have saved many colleagues through the years from sending out less than perfect work. Possibly one of the best listeners on the planet,

Kirsten's calm and generous disposition has helped so many of us through challenging times at work as well as in our personal lives. Many of us feel a little lost right now, imaging an SSC without our beacon, our rock, our touchpoint.

Kirsten is most comfortable when she is working behind the scenes, and doesn't accept credit easily, but she is truly a role model to many of us and in many ways. She is one of the great ones and SSC will not be the same without her!

Executive Director, Steve Sallee commented, "She always has a smile on her face and a positive attitude. Her guidance and encouragement have helped me and so many other co-workers thrive in a very competitive environment, and we've been so fortunate to have her expertise to rely on. She will be sorely missed! May the next phase of her life bring her all that she seeks and more."



A Word From Kirsten...

I look forward to my retirement at the end of 2019! After 37-1/2 years, I will miss the people at SSC most. I have enjoyed getting to know so many teachers and administrators in southeast Minnesota, especially working with Knowledge Bowl, Spelling Bee and student conferences. I plan to travel, visit kids and grandkids, do more crafting and card making, and some projects around the house that I have been putting off (including downsizing). Since my husband has been retired for over 8 years, we will have more time to travel to see kids and grandkids (in the Twin Cities, Missouri and Texas) as well as new places.

MREA Bestows Honor on Standout PEM Science Teacher

Join us in congratulating Tony McGee for winning the 2019 MREA Educator of Excellence Award for southern Minnesota. [Watch this brief video](#) to learn more about just what makes Tony such a stellar educator. (Our own Amy Grover makes a brief appearance in it!) A frequent user of our Mobile Science Lab program, Tony is an inspiration.

From all of us at SSC, Congratulations, Tony!



SSC Welcomes Two New Staff Members

Jill Miller Administrative/ Communication Assistant

Jill began her career at SSC in April. Her primary roles include serving as an assistant to Executive Director Steve Sallee and supporting various other SSC programs. Jill has lived in Stewartville for the past 45 years. She has worked in medical and administrative support positions for almost 25 years. Jill began her career at Mayo Clinic, moving onto positions at several medical organizations, and most recently at Workforce Development, Inc. As the SSC staff soon found out, Jill is the most devoted and enthusiastic Vikings fan we've ever met! When not tuning into Vikings games, or attending them in person, Jill enjoys acrylic canvas painting, shopping, and spending time with friends in the Twin Cities. We're happy to welcome Jill to the SSC Team!



Heather Schutte Career Navigator

Originally from Wells, Minnesota, Heather moved to Rochester a decade ago. She and her husband Tony purchased a farm south of Kasson in 2013. Heather's background is in special education and work based learning. She was a stay at home mom for the past 2 1/2 years, busy raising she and Tony's young children; Malina, Penny, and Dax. Their family also includes 2 blue heelers, a cat, and four chickens. Heather's busy life also includes her role as a stylist with Stich Fix, which makes her an expert at online shopping! She also relishes her time spent in the garden and up north on the lake. Heather shared, "The Career Navigator position has been a long-time dream job of mine. I am so excited about all the opportunities this provides to the SMEC students and am glad to be back to work in SE Minnesota schools!" To read more about Heather's new position, see page 4.



Regional Transit Coordinating Council Update

By Katie Schmitt

A robust regional transportation and transit system is essential to support the economic growth, health, and vitality of southeastern Minnesota.

Over the past 9 months, Southeast Minnesota Together has been working to establish a Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC) with input from stakeholders across the region. The project is supported by funding through MNDOT to create the regional structure to pull together over 70+ transportation public and private service providers. The objective of the RTCC is to coordinate between transportation service providers to streamline access, increase travel options, and address gaps.



Southeast Minnesota Together will be applying for the next round of funding from MNDOT to support Phase Two: Implementation. Olmsted County will be the administrative agent for the grant. Details are being developed with Olmsted Planning Department and will be submitted to the Zoning Commission for approval. Get on the SE MN Together [mailing list](#) to stay informed about regional transit.



Greater Minnesota Transit Plan

As economic activity, health care services, government services, and educational facilities become more concentrated in regional centers, the need to travel to and within these centers continue to increase. One of the strategies to maintain a desirable level of regional accessibility is an improved transit system – this also provides a modal choice option. A network of bus, light rail and commuter rail services combined with bike trails and highways provides for such a multi-modal, integrated transportation system. ~ MNDOT

View the Greater Minnesota Transit Plan [Executive Summary](#)

Facts and Fictions About the Affordable Care Act

By Bill Colopoulos

One of the goals of the ACA was to lower the number of Americans without health insurance. In fact, back in 2008 when the ACA was being promoted, then-President Barack Obama repeatedly stated that “53 million Americans are without health care” – equating lack of health care with lack of health insurance. That made the ACA a compelling solution for many Americans struggling without health insurance.

More than a decade later, the ACA has cut that number by more than half – it is estimated that “only” 23 million Americans are currently without health insurance; many of them voluntarily so.

One of the reasons why so many remain uninsured is that they know that should they need it, they have a chance every year to enroll in the health insurance exchanges. They also know that it is currently illegal for any program offered by the exchanges to impose a pre-existing condition limitation on them – provided they enroll during the appropriate open enrollment period.

As the next presidential political season heats up, many candidates are crediting the ACA with the elimination of pre-existing conditions – even for employer plans. That’s not entirely true. Long prior to the ACA – back in 1996 – the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 imposed practical restrictions on pre-existing conditions for employer-sponsored plans. Basically, under HIPAA, an employee leaving one group plan and then joining another could not be subject to a pre-existing condition limitation unless there was a break in coverage of more than 63 days. The ACA eliminated that break in coverage gap rule.

HIPAA also required insurers selling small group market policies (generally, those groups with fewer



than 50 employees) that their policies must sell to all such groups policies without health status restrictions. However, since small group insurance law is generally covered under state law, this was already a rule in most states by 1996. But it did close a gap in some states.

HIPAA also failed to address the individual market and did not require employers to offer health insurance. The ACA did both; the latter at the arbitrary cut off of employers with 50 or more full-time and/or full-time equivalent employees (calculated by a somewhat curious formula) which not so conveniently left the majority of Americans working for small employers who are not obligated to provide them with health insurance.

But since most small employers do offer health insurance, the ACA has successfully introduced a prohibition on pre-existing conditions limitations to all insurance markets, while mandating coverage for employers with 50 or more employees. Thus, the ACA can take credit for dramatically decreasing the number of uninsured Americans while sharing credit with the HIPAA of 1996 for helping eliminate pre-existing condition limitations.

Bill Colopoulos is a health care economist currently serving SSC as a health and benefit consultant.

Controlling Mold Growth

By Dan Fitch, IEA

You've probably heard the saying, "moisture is mold's best friend". Well, unfortunately moisture issues are common in schools, especially during the summer months when humidity levels are high and HVAC system usage is reduced. The high humidity levels and lack of air movement can cause condensation which can lead to mold growth. Higher rainfall can also cause roof leaks or water intrusion due to poor drainage. Anytime a building material or furnishing is wet for more than 48 hours, there is a potential for mold growth.

Every school contains some mold. So do homes, offices, and even the outdoor air we breathe. However, when live mold spores encounter moisture from building problems like water intrusion, leaks, or high humidity, they can grow and establish colonies that can spread if enough moisture is available.

Molds can cause adverse health effects when they are inhaled in large numbers. The number of mold spores needed to cause health problems is unknown and varies from person to person. Some people can be in an environment full of mold and have no issues, while others who are allergic to molds may be affected by just a few spores.

Symptoms of Mold Allergies

- Sneezing
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Cough and postnasal drip
- Itchy eyes, nose, and throat
- Watery eyes
- Skin irritation

Remember, the key to controlling mold growth in indoor environments is to control the moisture. The



EPA recommends schools control moisture by implementing the following practices:

- Conduct maintenance as scheduled and perform regular building inspections for signs of mold, moisture and leaks
- Report all water leaks and moisture problems immediately to your maintenance staff
- Clean and dry damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours after a leak or spill to prevent mold growth
- Keep indoor relative humidity levels between 30% and 60%
- Avoid installing carpet in areas with perpetual moisture problems:
 - ⇒ Near drinking fountains and classroom sinks
 - ⇒ On concrete floors in contact with the ground and subject to frequent condensation
- Cover cold surfaces, such as cold-water pipes, with insulation
- Establish policies that restrict moisture generating activities such as carpet cleaning, during vacation, unless moisture removing equipment is operating
- Consider cycling the air conditioning system several hours every day or running portable dehumidifiers

For more information on avoiding mold, contact Dan Fitch at the Institute for Environmental Assessment at (507) 281-6692 or Dan.Fitch@ieainstitute.com.

SSC Upcoming Events

October

Regional Coaching Cohort: Making the Most of Your Instructional Coaches
October 1

SSC's Cyber Security in Our Schools Event
October 15

SAC Meeting
October 22

MASA Region 1 Fall Session
October 23

Board Meeting
October 23

Annual Local Government Pool Meeting
October 28

November

SSC's Wellness Forum: Current Trends
November 1

Educator Forum
November 13

SAC Meeting
November 19

9 Essential Skills for the Love and Logic Classroom Series: Module 3 Empathy
November 19

Board Meeting
November 20

December

Cultural Competency: Beginning the Journey
December 4

Suicide Prevention: Doing Something
December 4

9 Essential Skills for the Love and Logic Classroom Series: Module 4 The Recovery Process
December 10

SAC Meeting
December 17

Board Meeting
December 18

Get Fit Your Way

Work your body when and where it works for you to earn your reward.

The new Fitness Incentive program counts all your physical activity toward your reward not just your gym workout. Just meet the required level of activity and earn a \$20 Marketplace reward. It's that simple.

Earning Your Award

Track an average of 10,000 steps per day for at least 21 days of the month. Prefer yoga or swimming? That counts too. Just track the number of minutes you're active and convert it into steps using a supplied chart. Even shoveling snow counts! *The Sharecare Fitness Incentive is a benefit available through Blue Cross Blue Shield. SSC is proud to offer this program to our members on the MHC Insurance Plan.*

[Learn More Here](#)

 sharecare

SSC Board Actions and Information

In addition to routine fiscal and routine 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.

April

- Approved three new open positions for District/School Advocates.
- Approved hiring of Jill Miller for the Administrative/Communication Assistant.
- Approved the quote from Tierney to replace the audio/video conferencing equipment.

May

- Approved and accepted \$1,500 from the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust.
- Approved and accepted Lori Mack's resignation.
- Approved the Personnel Committee's staff compensation recommendation.
- Approved the recommendation of staff, local, and state-wide consultants for the September 1, 2019, school pool renewal.
- Approved the IEA/SSC change order.
- Approved membership fees for 2019-2020.
- Approved Amy Grover as this year's MSC Outstanding Service Award recipient.

June

- Approved and accepted SAC continued terms, new SAC member, and Abdo Eick & Meyers 2018-2019 audit.
- Approved and accepted \$100K from the Otto Bremer Trust.
- Approved and accepted Jennifer Klein's resignation.
- Approve the hiring of Isa Anderson Eggen, Joe Jezierski,

Melanie Lawrence-Smith, Keitha-Gail Martin-Kerr, Shana Moses, and Sarah Zeigler as new School/District Advocates for RCE.

- Approved the posting for the SMEC Shared Position.
- Approved the contract with WDI and the Chamber for Lori Wright's shared position for 2019-2020.
- Approved the SSC Employee Benefits Plan.
- Approved the 2019-2020 Budget.
- Approved and accepted the Apriton contract to create a web-based portal to connect employers, educators, and students to communicate and coordinate efforts to participate in experiential and work-based learning opportunities. The portal, called *FutureForward*, will have a go-live date in mid-July for businesses to start registering and will be rolled out to all schools in August.
- Approved and accepted the change in Package Policy Insurance and agent.

August

- Approved the recommendation as proposed by the CCOGA Formula Committee.
- Approved the 2018 Settlement Recap of the Local Government Pool Self-Insured Policy Year.
- Approved the hiring of Heather Schutte for the Career Navigator position to be shared amongst five school districts.
- Approved and accepted the Executive Director Evaluation Summary.
- Approved the Second Reading of the SSC/WLMC Emergency Preparedness Document.

SSC Service Consultants



Bill Colopoulos
Health and Benefits
Consultant
bcolopoulos@ssc.coop



Angie Radel
Regional Manager, IEA
angie.radel@ieasafety.com



Dave Thompson
Facilities Management
Consultant
dthompson@ssc.coop



Karen Olson
Regional Manager,
Coop Member Services, ICS Consulting
karen.olson@ics-consult.com

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

Southeast Service Cooperative
210 Wood Lake Drive SE
Rochester, MN 55904
Phone (507) 288-1282
Fax (507) 288-7663

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
www.ssc.coop

Shaping the Future
for communities of leaders and learners

SSC Board of Directors

Theresa Arrick-Kruger, Chair
Houston County

Mary Blair-Hoeft, Vice-Chair
City of Byron

Lynn Gorski, Treasurer
City of Owatonna

Brein Maki, Clerk
Lewiston-Altura Public Schools

Karla Bauer
Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools

Jean Roth
Plainview-Elgin-Millville Public Schools

Don Leathers
Austin Public Schools

Jason Marquardt
Mabel-Canton Public Schools

Rob Mathias
Stewartville Public Schools

Jean Roth
Zumbrota-Mazeppa Public Schools

Monica Sveen-Ziebell
Plainview-Elgin-Millville Public Schools

About Southeast Service Cooperative

Southeast Service Cooperative Staff



Steve Sallee
Executive Director
ssallee@ssc.coop



Alicia Bredesen
Organizational Assistant
abredesen@ssc.coop



Donna Dickison
Meeting Center Coordinator
ddickison@ssc.coop



Amy Grover
Director of Planning
agrover@ssc.coop



Chris Hancock
Bookkeeper
chancock@ssc.coop



Katie Hartman
Program Manager
khartman@ssc.coop



Kari Kubicek
Program Manager
kkubicek@ssc.coop



Kirsten Kuehl
Organizational Manager
kkuehl@ssc.coop



Nicole LaChapelle-Strumski
Program Manager
nlachapelle@ssc.coop



Jill Miller
Administrative/Communication Assistant
jmiller@ssc.coop



Sarah Ness
Program Manager
sness@ssc.coop



Katie Schmitt
Development and Innovation Specialist
kschmitt@ssc.coop



Heather Schutte
Career Navigator
hschutte@ssc.coop



Dale Walston
Director of Operations
dwalston@ssc.coop

Regional Center of Excellence Staff



Jane Drennan
SE/Metro Director
jdrennan@mnce.org



Jeff Aamot
RCE Systems Improvement Specialist
jaamot@mnce.org



Isabella Anderson Eggen
Advocate
ieggen@mnce.org



Erik Durand
Advocate/Math Specialist
edurand@mnce.org



Joe Jezierski
Advocate
jjezierski@mnce.org



Ashley Karlsson
Advocate/Graduation/ELD Specialist
akarlsson@mnce.org



Melanie Lawrence-Smith
Advocate
mlawrencsmith@mnce.org



Keitha-Gail Martin-Kerr
Advocate
kmartinkerr@mnce.org



Shana Moses
Advocate
smoses@mnce.org



Cindy Mullins
Advocate/Graduation Support Specialist
cmullins@mnce.org



Carol Swanson
Advocate/Reading Specialist
cswanson@mnce.org



Perry Wilkinson
Education Equity and Systems Data Specialist
pwilkinson@mnce.org



Sarah Zeigler
Advocate
szeigler@mnce.org