



Southeast  
Service  
Cooperative

# *Connections*

February 2018

Spelling Bee  
Results

P3



Creating a  
Makerspace

P5



New Professional  
Development

P8



New

# *Beginnings*



# Meet Steve Sallee, SSC's New Executive Director



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Steve Sallee and I have been hired as your new Executive Director of the Southeast Service Cooperative. I have thirteen years of administrative experience, the most recent ten years as a superintendent of schools. I spent six years as the Superintendent at the LeRoy-Ostrander and Southland School Districts, and the last four years as Superintendent at St. Louis County Schools in northeast Minnesota. Prior to that, I spent three years in the LeRoy-Ostrander School District as a Principal, and before that, I taught middle

school for eight years in Ellsworth, Wisconsin. My wife's name is Shelly and we've been married for 23 years. We have a 12-year-old daughter named Riley who is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

I am very pleased to be selected as Executive Director. I plan to be very involved in every aspect of the coop and will be very visible as well. There are many great things happening at the coop, but we can always improve. We will stay focused on listening to our members and providing great customer service. Our goal is to serve our members in a responsible, efficient, and collaborative way. One of the many great initiatives taking place, even before I started, is called Voice of Customer (VOC). We have been on the road, meeting with several of our members to listen to what your needs are and what we can do better. It's amazing what we can learn through listening and observation. Listening to our

members improves understanding, builds trust, and strengthens relationships. That's why we are taking the time to visit with our members. If we haven't met with you yet, we will.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions, suggestions, or concerns. I have had a chance to meet a number of people so far, and I will make an effort to meet more as the year progresses.

"Listening to our members improves understanding, builds trust, and strengthens relationships. That's why we are taking the time to visit with our members. If we haven't met with you yet, we will."

# Local Students Advance to Southeast Minnesota Final Spelling Bee

By Katie Hartman

Two Regional Spelling Bees were held on Tuesday, February 13 at SSC's Wood Lake Meeting Center. 75 students participated in the two Regional Spelling Bees. Students from 35 districts throughout southeast Minnesota advanced to compete in the Regional competitions coordinated by SSC.

The top 12 spellers (six from each Spelling Bee) now advance to the Final Spelling Bee on Tuesday, February 27, at 9:00 AM at SSC. The event is anticipated to be done before 12:00 PM. The Grand Champion of the Final will advance to the annual Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C. on May 27-June 1, 2018.



*The morning winners (L to R) Joseph Passe, Caden Strampe, Neha Thawani Nanda, Isaac Nerstad, Lukas Singer*



*The afternoon winners (L to R) Skyler Stone, Allie Hoffert, Andrew Ryden, Josie Koenigs, Ava Becken, Lexi Vander Pol*

## Students advancing to the Southeast Minnesota Final Spelling Bee are:

School	Speller Name	Grade
Austin	Caden Strampe	8
Chatfield	Josie Koenigs	7
Grand Meadow	Ava Rech	7
Northfield	Ava Becken	8
Northfield	Allie Hoffert	6
Northfield	Andrew Ryden	8
Pacelli	Neha Thawani Nanda	7
Red Wing	Skyler Stone	7
Rochester Catholic	Lukas Singer	8
Rochester Public	Lexi Vander Pol	7
Spring Grove	Isaac Nerstad	6
St. Felix	Joseph Passe	5

*Save the date!*

31st Annual  
Young Authors,  
Young Artists  
Conference



On May 15, 16, and 17, over 900 students in grades 3-5 from public, private, and home schools across southeast Minnesota will converge in Rochester for a conference that promotes student enthusiasm and competence in written and visual communication. Students will learn from and work with authors, poets, illustrators, artists, journalists, book crafters, sculptors, and others in sessions that expose them to the art and joy of writing and creating.



**Click [here](#) to learn more.**

(Website will be updated as information becomes available.)



# Top Ranking 2017-18 Area Junior High Knowledge Bowl Teams

By Katie Hartman

Sixty-eight teams from 19 area districts participated in 2017-18 Junior High Knowledge Bowl. Teams competed in Round Robin competitions in October, November, and December. Each team then competed in the Sub-Regional competitions in January and the top nine teams from each of the three tiers advanced to Regional.

The Junior High Knowledge Bowl Sub-Regional Competitions were held on January 4, 5, and 8 at SSC. The Tier AAA teams were from: Kasson-Mantorville,

Northfield, and Red Wing. The Tier AA teams were from: Caledonia, Chatfield, Dover-Eyota, Goodhue, Kenyon-Wanamingo, Pine Island Plainview-Elgin-Millville, and Rushford-Peterson. The Tier A teams were from: Fillmore Central, Grand Meadow, Houston, Kingsland, Lanesboro, Mabel-Canton, Southland, and Spring Grove.

The Junior High Knowledge Bowl Regional competitions were held on January 16 at the Southeast Service Cooperative in Rochester.

The Minnesota Service Cooperative Knowledge Bowl competitions are

interdisciplinary academic contests for students. Junior High Knowledge Bowl is for students in grades 6-9.

During the contest, teams compete in written and oral rounds by answering questions related to all areas of learning, typical of secondary educational programs. Questions test students' recall, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. This competition provides a format for student growth centered around academics.

## Teams Placing at Regional

### Tier A



1st place - Spring Grove 1



2nd place - Rushford-Peterson 2



3rd place - Fillmore Central 1

### Tier AA



1st place - Plainview-Elgin-Millville 1



2nd place - Plainview-Elgin-Millville 2



3rd place - Dover-Eyota

### Tier AAA



1st place - Northfield 1



2nd place - Kasson-Mantorville 2



3rd place - Northfield 3

# Transform Your Outdated Media Center Into a Functional and Welcoming Makerspace

By Sarah Ness

If I told you that you could change your outdated and non-functional media center from the 1980s into a functional and welcoming environment with a makerspace in two weeks during the summer with only two resources, a team of three people and a budget of \$1,000, would you believe me?

Not only is it possible, it has been done by our friends at Austin Public High School. The amazing team of Amy Thuesen (Technology Coach), Alexa Dolan Peterson (Instructional Coach), and Anne Christopherson (Tech Coach/Media Integrationist), took their outdated and unused media center and turned it into a central hub of activity in less than two weeks.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves here, planning and preparation made that timeline possible. In the fall prior, the team lead focus groups with students and staff to identify pain points, needs, and a wish list of what

Do you want to learn more about Austin's Makerspace? Join Amy and her colleagues at the RAMSP Spring Educator Forum on April 11<sup>th</sup> at SSC for Makerspace 101! They will share their findings of what have a makerspace means based on much research, things to consider when designing one for your school or community based on their personal experiences, how to get started, and other insightful information to create a foundational knowledge of a makerspace.

**Register to attend!**

the space could be used for. The students said the space was drab and uninviting, the space was undefined so students didn't know what to do in most areas, and there was nothing for them to do in their free time, contributing to some students exhibiting borderline behavior issues.

The focus groups offered many great ideas to update the media center, such as adding a coffee shop, colorful paint and decorations, game centers, comfortable seating, and televisions.

Given that the structure of the space was not going to change and the limited budget available of just under \$1,000, the team decided to dive into the focus group feedback and prioritize the reorganization of the space as their main objective. For two weeks in August, the team painted walls, added white boards to the back of book cases and castors to the bottom of bookshelves, found old and unused tables in the basement and brought them to the media center, decoupaged table tops, and moved furniture around to create a more functional flow. Throughout the year, student projects became decor used throughout the space. Now the media center has a line of students waiting for the door to open every morning and is consistently used throughout the day.

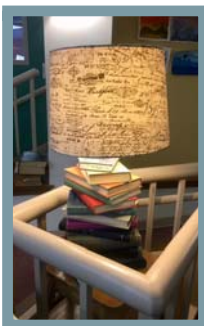
## Tips For Remodeling Your Media Center/Makerspace on a budget

### A Little Paint Can Go a Long Way

Using color helps to define spaces and compliment other looks throughout the building for cohesiveness.

### Use Old and Outdated Materials Or Furniture to Decorate New Spaces

Decoupage ancient or ugly tables with old atlas maps, paperback book covers, or book pages. Allow students to use old books no longer in circulation for makerspace projects.



These projects can not only decorate the space, but allow students to showcase their work created within that space.



### Rearrange Books for Checkout By Genre and Then Again by Style

In the area where books are still available to check out, "genre-fy" your books. Instead of having a Fiction A-Z section where students are overwhelmed by choices, classify books by the style of fiction such as historical fiction, science fiction, etc. Creating this system helps students to narrow down and identify what kind of books they enjoy reading and encourages continued reading.

### Top 5 Sources For Makerspace Inspiration

Twitter  
Pinterest  
Makerspace.com  
Make Magazine

(Continued on next page)

# Top 5 Spaces to Design in Your Media Center/Makerspace

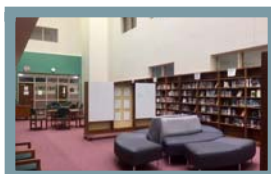
## Quiet Space

This space allows students and educators to use a combination of traditional furniture and comfortable seating to work quietly and independently. *Quick Tip: Innovative Office Solutions offers up to 56% off list price on furniture through [CPC contract #16.11-OFS](#)*



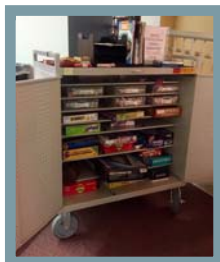
## Collaborative Space

Using a combination of flexible/moveable, and hard/soft seating make for an inviting collaborative space. Tables with rounded edges are friendlier! Position furniture so teachers can be easily accessible and intentionally positioned to cut down on student noise. Use bookcases as makeshift room dividers and flexible learning stations equipped with various sized whiteboards for group or personal activities. *Quick Tips: Pull all outdated books and place them in your makerspace for other projects. Shop for inexpensive casters, white boards, interactive projectors, markers, and erasers on [Express](#), [SSC's Cooperative Purchasing Connection's online marketplace](#), from competitively bid furniture and office supplies.*



## Brain-Break Space

Creating a fun space where students can go when all their work is completed is important. "Kids use this all the time. We were worried about how this space was going to be used and how appropriate students were going to be with it, but we have had zero problems. They pick up after themselves and they are appropriate when they are down here." said Amy Thuesen. *Quick Tip: Provide pencils, rulers, games, coloring books, chess sets, games, cards, puzzles, etc., available through [Express](#).*



## Design Thinking Space

A design thinking space doesn't have to be centered around technology, but this space can be part of the design. Projects or challenges that are changed out every few weeks such as origami, Marble Run, K'nex, are just a few examples of projects that can be incorporated that do not include technology. If you must include technology, provide 3D printers



in this space. Austin's empowering team asks students who use other individual's designs to pay for their own filament as a way encourage the use of students' design thinking abilities for the creation of their own ideas. *Quick tip: [Tierney Brothers](#) offer state of the art technology solutions from virtual reality to 3D printers.*

## Breaker Space or Tech Café

Where do broken or old motherboards and computers go to live after they are no longer useful? Why not send them to the Tech Café where students can break them down and build them



back up again? Students can use this space to learn about the parts that make up a computer or use the parts to make other things. Incorporate career pathway exposure and mentorship/internship opportunities by creating a space where students and staff can come with technology device issues. In Austin, most students can tear down and rebuild a computer by the end of a semester. Start with a pilot program for one hour per day and build up capacity with students and staff over time. Incorporate one project per year during this hour. Projects can focus on coding skills, learning to develop an app, 3D printing, or an opportunity to explore their own interest.

## 3 People to Follow on Twitter for Forward Thinking Makerspace



**Colleen Graves -**  
**@gravescolleen**

Colleen is a high school librarian, obsessed with Learning Commons transformations, Makerspaces, technology education and making stuff. Always a maker, Colleen brings a passionate artistic energy to the school library world.



**Laura Fleming -**  
**@LFlemingEDU**

Best-selling author, #worldsofmaking, #makingGREATmakerspaces, NSBA '20 to Watch', The world is your platform @blockchainmm.



**Rafranz Davis -**  
**@RafranzDavis**

Dreamer, Blerd, Educator, Mincrafter, Author, Disruptor of Ridiculousness, STEM & Digital Access Advocate.



# We Know What “STEM” Stands For, But What Does It Mean?

## Rochester Area MATH SCIENCE Partnership RAMSP

By Sarah Ness

SSC members from education, local government, and non-profit sectors have all heard of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), but do we really understand STEM and what it truly means to our region? Are these just subjects that we teach to K-12 students or is this truly an approach to teaching and learning? Why does it matter to employers in our region? What community impact does it have on businesses, parents, and students?

Join the Rochester Area Math Science Partnership (RAMSP) and STEM education pillars, like Lee Johnson from Hamline University, to unpack the concept of STEM at the Spring Educator Forum happening on Wednesday, April 11, at Southeast Service Cooperative. This event is free for participating RAMSP members (\$75 for non-RAMSP members).

Forum sessions and keynote speeches will tentatively address the following topics:

- Defining/Redefining STEM Educator
- STEM Badging 101: What is it, why do I want it in my school, and how do I get it?
- “Computational Thinking” A Gentle Introduction
- Makerspace 101
- Makerspace Nights to Connect with Community
- They Why and How of Google Educator Certification
- 2018 STEM Symposium Recap: A Regional Look at Findings and Execution of STEM Tenants

[Save My Seat](#)

### Registration Now Open for 2018/2019 RAMSP Participation

Do you want to learn more or join RAMSP? Contact [Sarah Ness](#) for more information or register today!

#### FY18 Participation Agreement

(Registration fee prorated)

#### FY19 Participation Agreement

## A Year in Review



It’s hard to believe that this time last year, RAMSP morphed from a standalone non-profit into a thriving and exciting program of Southeast Service Cooperative. Over the past year, RAMSP has added seven new members, worked on countless collaborations for workforce development within STEM career pathways, celebrated Outstanding STEM Educators nominees, delivered two Distinguished Service Awards, and much more.

To see all the accomplishments of RAMSP, view future goals, and learn more about RAMSP take a look at [RAMSP: A Year in Review](#).



# Why Wouldn't You?



*By Kari Kubicek*

Feeling the pressure yet in planning and budgeting your staff development for the 18-19 school year or even for the remainder of this school year? Stumped on how to train multiple staff members without having to interrupt the daily routine in your organization? Wondering how you can make learning opportunities relevant and valuable to each of your staff members.

SSC has the solution for you! We currently have 13 highly qualified, experienced faculty members whose role is to travel to our member organizations' locations and facilitate learning opportunities that they design in specific alignment to your organization's needs and interests. These faculty members can cover multiple content and topic areas including Behavior Management, English Language Learners, K-12 Reading and Writing Strategies, PLC support, Mindfulness, STEM, Standards Aligned Assessment, Math Across the Content Areas, Leadership and more! They can meet with your staff once, twice or even multiple

times during the year to support them in implementing what they learn.

And not only are we able to provide the expert facilitator to work with your staff in the topic areas, the location and at the time you specify, but we also handle ALL of the contracting, communications, accounting, evaluation and CEU process as part of our service.

So why wouldn't you utilize SSC to plan the professional learning offerings for your organization? You know us. You know we provide quality products and services. You know we have a history of partnerships and collaborations in our region and are always building these relationships. You know our work is customer designed to most effectively meet our member needs. And (obviously) if you are still reading, you must like us to some extent and value our commitment to being responsible, accountable, and ethical in our work.

So, make a change that will benefit your organization and staff, will lower coordination and planning costs, will support you to strategically plan your staff's professional development AND will provide you the opportunity to connect with SSC and our brilliant PD Faculty members!

Please contact Kari Kubicek, Professional Development Team Lead, at [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop) to learn more about how SSC can take the pressure off in the planning and coordination of your organization's professional learning.



# SSC Professional Development Gains Another Faculty Member

By Kari Kubicek

SSC is excited to announce that we continue to grow our professional development faculty with the addition of Nate Walbruch! Nate is currently the Principal at Plainview-Elgin-Millville High School. Recently, he has served as an administrator for Rochester Public Schools at John Marshall High School, and in the past has been an administrator and teacher for Union County Public Schools in North Carolina at the secondary and elementary levels. Nate is a practiced innovator; eager to share his successes and failures with other educators. These experiences include implementing PLCs, creating/maintaining intervention systems, using standards-based grading/assessment systems to



guarantee student learning and making actionable plans that yield powerful results for districts and schools.

Interested in bringing Nate to your district/school to work with your staff? Reach out to Kari Kubicek, Professional Development Team Lead, [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop), and get it on the calendar!

**Educators working with Nate  
will leave his session with  
actionable plans!**

## *Our New PD Catalog is Here!*

SSC's Spring 2018 Professional Learning Catalog for Education Members is now available to view and download on our website at [www.ssc.coop/catalog](http://www.ssc.coop/catalog). This comprehensive resource showcases our Customized Professional Development program opportunities and highly engaging faculty members and includes a list of the learning opportunities scheduled at SSC's meeting center in the upcoming months.

Have additional ideas for staff development? Reach out to Kari Kubicek at [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop) to discuss ways we can support you in turning your ideas into high-quality professional learning opportunities!



# Wabasha-Kellogg and City of Spring Grove Victorious in Annual Member Challenge

By Nicole LaChapelle-Strumski

Winning teams have been announced in SSC's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Walking Challenge, in which nearly 600 individuals from 21 SSC member organizations competed. 13 Southeastern Minnesota School Districts and eight Local Government Members participated in two separate steps-based challenges.

Winners in the School District Challenge included: **Wabasha-Kellogg** – 1<sup>st</sup> Place, **Grand Meadow** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, **Goodhue** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place. The remaining teams, which each received an honorable mention, are listed in the order of their ranking: Zumbrota-Mazeppa, PEM, Red Wing, Rochester, LeRoy-Ostrander, LaCrescent-Hokah, Lewiston-Altura, Fillmore Central, Kasson-Mantorville, and Stewartville.



*Four of the City of Spring Grove's champion walkers.*

easily see if we each met our individual goal. When we saw each other throughout the day talking about our steps was very common. Many Falcon Steppers pushed themselves to go the "extra mile" as they often said, "I don't want to let the team down!" We are very grateful for this friendly competition as it builds camaraderie and motivates us to get a little more exercise into our day which helps in all aspects of health!"

The City of Spring Grove was the winner in the Local Government Division. The rest of the rankings were as follows: **The City of LaCrescent** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, **Goodhue County** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place. The honorable mention placements included – Steele County, City of Kasson, Freeborn County, Workforce Development, and Rice Steele 911 Center.



*Members of Wabasha-Kellogg's winning team.*

Wabasha-Kellogg School District Wellness Coordinator Ashely Scheel shared, "The Falcon Steppers had 18 participants. Many of which look forward to this competition every year and have been fighting for the gold the past 3 years. Last year we were in the lead and lost the race in the final week. This year we were not going to let that happen! After week 2 our IT/Stats teacher, Mike Schumacher, did some calculations with our averages and Grand Meadows averages, as they were gaining on us, and set individual goals for each Falcon Stepper to keep us in the lead. We kept a Google sheet with our stats and Mike color coded it so we could

"Stephanie Jaster, Wellness Coordinator at the City of Spring Grove, stated, "We had 7 total walkers. We look forward to this competition every year to keep us moving through the winter time instead of finding reasons to sit more. The weekly updates how we are doing as a group and getting positive messages to keep walking is also an incentive."

The contest, which ran the month of January, was based on the number of steps walked by participating members. A trophy will be awarded to Wabasha-Kellogg School District and The City of Spring Grove during the February 22 Wellness Forum at SSC. Certificates will be presented to all teams who participated.

# In Demand Careers: Water and Wastewater Operators

By Katie Schmitt

Clean water is essential for communities to thrive. As Baby Boomers retire, cities across Minnesota need to replace key positions including water and wastewater operators. Many cities in our region are already experiencing challenges in finding qualified water and wastewater operators. The demand for water and wastewater operators has outpaced the supply of applicants. One of SSC's member cities, Blooming Prairie, is currently hiring a Class B Water Operator. [Check out the job posting here](#)



Gregg Kropp, Water Environment Technologies Instructor  
[Gregg.Kropp@sctcc.edu](mailto:Gregg.Kropp@sctcc.edu)  
(320) 308-5952

In January, Gregg Kropp from St. Cloud Technical & Community College provided a presentation about water and wastewater operator training for the Minnesota Service Cooperatives. St. Cloud Technical & Community College offers a one-year, intensive Water

Environment Technologies (WETT) program in two program locations: St. Cloud and Eden Prairie. Courses are offered in a variety of science and technology areas, including: chemical, biological, physical and mechanical water and wastewater treatment processes, and techniques being applied today. Upon completion of the WETT program, students qualify to sit for their Class D Water or Wastewater License. Graduates can expect a

starting salary of \$18-\$30 per hour.

St. Cloud Technical & Community College is not the only training program in the state. Vermilion Community College, located in Ely, offers a [Water Quality Science Associate in Applied Science degree program](#).



Do you know a student looking for a great career opportunity, who would like to make an impact and protect one of Minnesota's greatest resources – water? Maybe you know someone looking for a career change? Learn more by viewing SSC's [Public Service Workforce Development Brief](#) which highlights water and wastewater operator careers.





# SSC Staff Gaining Facilities Management Input from Member Districts

By Dave Thompson



During December, SSC staff traveled to Red Wing, Houston, Albert Lea, and St. Charles for Facility Management Cluster meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to reach out to member school districts to present pertinent Facilities Management information. Meeting presentation topics included cyber security issues such as

security passwords, phishing, spoofing, and WIFI access, mock OSHA audit/compliance review, and trends and issues in facilities management. These regional meetings were attended by superintendents, business managers, buildings and grounds directors, and school maintenance staff. Thank you to everyone who attended these productive meetings!

## Facilities Management “Voice of Customer” Meetings

This winter, SSC’s staff has been visiting schools for Facilities Management *Voice of Customer* meetings. The purpose of these visits is to listen and learn from each specific school district to meet their specific needs to collect school specific information to help SSC plan for future strategic planning for our organization.

**These school district visits normally last 1.5 hours and are focused on the following topics:**

- Introduction of new SSC Executive Director, Steve Sallee
- Current Trends and Issues
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Mock OSHA Audits / Reports
- Physical Security
- Cyber Security
- Professional Development
- Master Planning
- Other School Specific Topics

## Visiting Our Members



*Pictured Left to Right: Dave Thompson, Steve Salle, Sarah Ness, Jeff Elstad, Bob Olson, and Amanda Heilman*



*Pictured Left to Right: Deb Meeker, Dave Hagen, Brett Joyce, Steve Sallee, and Dave Thompson*



*Pictured from left to right: Steve Sallee, Sarah Slaby, Kevin Flies, William O’Laughlin, and Rich Dahman*

# Single Payer: Changing Consumer Focus

## *Third article in the series The Road to Single Payer*

By Bill Colopoulos, SSC's Health & Benefits Consultant

In the last issue of *Connections*, we concluded that we need to revise how consumer and provider price incentives work in order to control high and rising health care costs. In this issue, we will examine how to create a provider and consumer focused single reimbursement system that can accomplish that task.

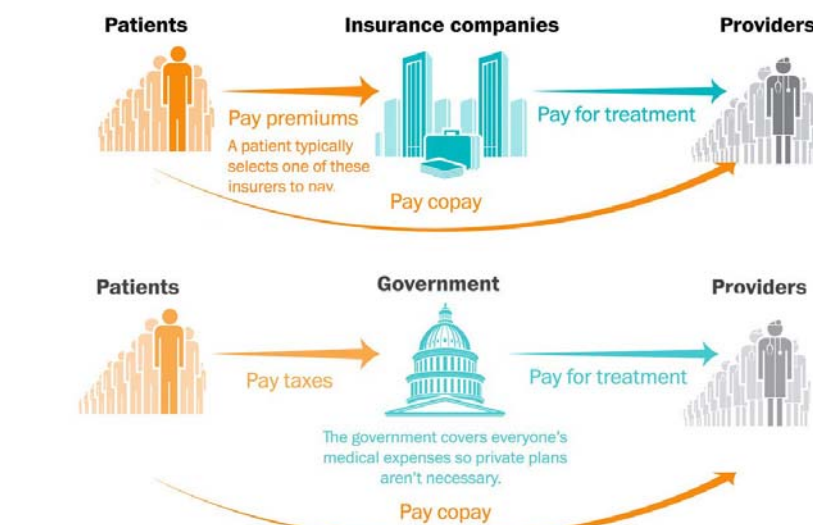
The goal is to create a market for health care where patient services are sold directly by the providers of health care. How can this be accomplished?

In most sectors of our economy, goods and services are sold to consumers through retail intermediaries. Reimbursement usually comes directly from the consumer. Consumers may use financial intermediaries to represent them (via loans, mortgages, etc.) but are ultimately paying the whole cost of whatever it is they are purchasing.

In our current health care system, consumers are given interest free loans via their employers or insurance companies to pay for health care expenses they may or may not incur. Their perception of the cost of their health care services is whatever their insurance costs happen to be:

- What they pay in premium for their insurance.
- What they pay in cost sharing when they incur medical expenses (e.g., deductibles, copays, etc.)

Traditionally, third party reimbursements have isolated the consumer from being aware of the actual cost of their health care services. And for the most part, consumers have had little practical need for such information; focusing



This graphic shows the difference between the current U.S. health care system (top) and single-payer health care. (Washington Post)

entirely on their out of pocket costs per episode of care – and what they must pay for their health insurance.

This economic isolation from what health care services actually cost has enabled providers to assign the health care resources they are prescribing for their patients, irrespective of what they cost. For example, when you visit your doctor at your neighborhood clinic, your doctor prescribes not only the care she is giving you, but also any lab work, specialty care, etc. that she also prescribes within the health care system in which she happens to operate. You go to her choice of lab, specialist facility and any subsequent care you may receive – including hospital and pharmacy. Moreover, who provides your care – and what it costs – is prescribed for you by your doctor on an episode of care basis; with no price accountability to the patient. In fact, no attention is paid to price – either by you or your doctor.

Insurance intermediaries have been ineffective controlling prices; even when cast in the role of “managed

care” advocates. This is not surprising when one remembers their function as being retailer distributors for the health care industry. Like any retailer, the insurance company’s goal is to make money. The more altruistic non-profit insurers supposedly return their “profits” (called “margins” in the non-profit world) back to their policyholders. But that rarely translates to lower health care costs.

In general, for both for-profit and not-for-profit health insurers, the intent and outcome is the same: the higher the price, the greater the retailers’ profits/margins.

The only true motivation a retailer has to lower prices is for the purpose of competing effectively with another retailer. But as any marketing expert will tell you, retailers go to great lengths to compete with each other on any basis other than price that they can. This is why branding is so important to the retailer. It is equally important to the retailer to be able to

(Continued on next page)

## Single Payer continued...



corner the market in any way possible. For example, take the recent merger between Aetna and CVS. Make no mistake about it, this is merely a merger of retailers – in this case, a retail distributor of health care (Aetna) and a retail distributor of drugs (CVS). Their mutual goal: to exert even more leverage in the market against their retail competitors. Will this result in lower prices for health care and/or drugs? To quote the Zen master, “we’ll see”. However, lower prices is by no means intrinsic in the mere occurrence of a merger between a large health insurer and drug retailer. Historical trends in the health care industry have resulted in oligopolies leading to higher, not lower, prices.

In fact, what we have under a third party, fee-for-service reimbursement system is a “coincidental symbiosis” between health insurers and health care providers that has perpetuated high and increasing costs.

**Solutions:** Recently, Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway, and J.P Morgan Chase companies announced the formation of a new company dedicated to selling health care services direct to consumers. This is hardly a new idea; Kaiser Permanente is an existing version of the concept that has been operating on the West Coast for several decades now. In the absence of competition from like-minded provider organizations, Kaiser’s costs are not significantly different from the other health insurers in the market.

What’s new about the recent announcement is the potential threat of these companies doing what Kaiser has so far been unable to do: create a competitive cost model where health care providers must compete with each other for their patients’ business based on the cost, as well as the quality of care they deliver.

That is a new approach. But whether Amazon, Berkshire, and J.P. Morgan’s new company can pull it off with a mere half a million of their combined employees (sounds like a lot, but in reality is not) remains to be seen.

Again, to quote the Zen master, “we’ll see”. However, the health insurance industry’s negative reaction to the announcement of the new company is a good sign – at least from Wall Street’s perspective.

The complete dedication of the health care market to become direct sellers to their patients is a concept long overdue; especially in a nation where so many aspire to a single-payer system where cost control is so critical to the efficacy and sustainability of an affordable health care system.

Eliminating third party payers – all of them; private and public – and require that providers charge their patients directly for the services they provide will create a competitive marketplace for health care.

*Bill Colopoulos is a health care economist who has conducted studies in the single payer systems currently operational in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Japan. He has taught classes on international health care systems and is the author of a new book, **Single Payer America**. He can be reached at [bcolopoulos@ssc.coop](mailto:bcolopoulos@ssc.coop).*

## Mandatory School District Lead Testing

In 2017, legislation was passed in Minnesota requiring school districts and charter schools to test for the presence of lead in water. The legislation requires school districts and charter schools to develop and adopt a model plan by July 1, 2018. The plan reflects a testing schedule to determine the presence of lead in water in public school buildings serving students from prekindergarten through grade 12. The model plan should be based on the standards established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and can be modeled from the technical guidance in the document,



["Reducing Lead in Drinking Water: A Technical Guidance for Minnesota's School and Child Care Facilities"](#)

The lead in water legislation requires each school building to be tested at least once every five years. A school district must begin testing school

buildings by July 1, 2018, and complete testing of all buildings that serve students within five years. The results of the testing shall be made available to the public for review and parents must be notified of the availability of the information.

**For more information about lead in water testing or about creating a model plan for lead in water, contact Angie Radel at IEA, Inc. at (507) 281-6682 or [angie.radel@ieasafety.com](mailto:angie.radel@ieasafety.com).**



# SSC Upcoming Events

## February

### **Out of This World Customer Service**

February 21

### **Wellness Forum: Motivation and Mindfulness**

February 22

### **Personalized Learning Leader Cohort - Leading Personalized Learning - Session 3**

February 26

### **Personalized Learning Teacher Cohort: Supporting Student-Centered Classrooms - Session 3**

February 26

### **MASA Region 1 - Winter Session**

February 28

### **Board Meeting**

February 28

## March

### **Section 504 Training**

March 5

### **Effective Boards: Working Together to Create Meaningful Impact**

March 10

### **Visual Thinking: Using Images to Promote Critical and Creative Thinking**

March 12

### **Strategies and Supports for Advanced Tiers**

March 12

### **“Reading” the Internet**

March 12

### **Board Meeting**

March 28

## April

### **Personalized Learning Leader Cohort - Leading Personalized Learning - Session 4**

April 10

### **Personalized Learning Teacher Cohort: Supporting Student-Centered Classrooms - Session 4**

April 10

### **STEM Educator Forum**

April 11

### **Adding Depth and Complexity**

April 13

### **Creating an Induction/ Mentoring Program**

April 13

### **Title I, II and III Overview**

April 18

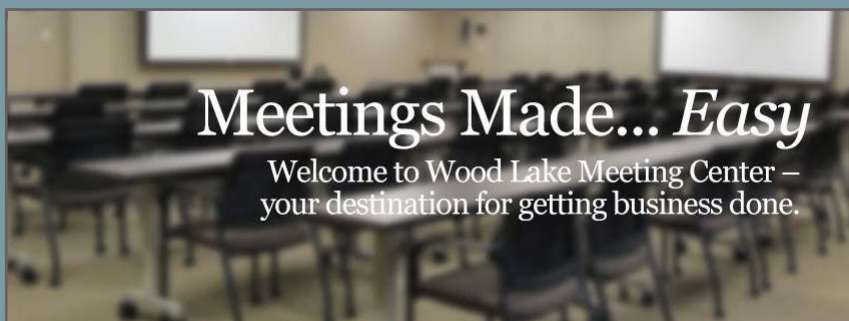
### **Board Meeting**

April 25

## May

### **Bridging Divides: What To Do When People Disagree**

May 24



Are you looking for the perfect location to host a School Board or City Council retreat this summer? SSC's Wood Lake Meeting Center is the ideal solution. Need a place to do some multi-sector collaboration? SSC's Wood Lake Meeting Center is the ideal solution. Hosting a regional training or meeting? SSC's Wood Lake Meeting Center is the ideal solution. Contact us at (507) 281-6666 to learn more about discounts available to SSC members!

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

## November

- Accepted the 2016-2017 fiscal audit report from Abdo, Eick & Meyers.
- Accepted the withdrawal of South Country Health Alliance group, City of Lewiston, and City of Spring Grove from the Local Government Health Pool effective January 1, 2018.
- Accepted the proposed set of HIPAA policies for first reading.
- Accepted a donation from Kwik Trip for teacher appreciation prize drawings through the SSC Professional Development Program.
- Extended the deadline for nomination for the new Local Government term to Wednesday, November 29 and extended the balloting deadline to Wednesday, December 27, after which the Canvassing Committee will count ballots and announce the elected candidate for this position.
- Authorized the Executive Director and RCE Director to

conduct a search and selection process and fill the position of graduation specialist/school advocate position.

## December

- Approved the 2018 Local Government pool health promotion support guidelines as recommended by staff and the Local Government Pool Advisory Committee.
- Adopted the proposed set of HIPAA security policies as amended for second reading.
- Approved the proposed contract between the Collaborative for Learning and Community and SSC to cover costs to administer and coordinate teacher training and use of the Teacher Advisor with Watson tool.
- Approved to accept a grant from IBM for RAMSP 2017-18 membership.
- Approved a lateral position change for Sonia Smith from Special Education Specialist to Graduation Specialist/Advocate and open the position of SE/Metro RCE Special Education Specialist/Advocate, directing staff to conduct an immediate search and hiring process.

## January

- Tess Arrick-Kruger was voted as Chair.
- Bree Maki was voted as Clerk.
- Mary Blair-Hoeft was voted as Vice-Chair.
- Mike Christensen was voted as Treasurer.
- Extended the current contract with health and benefits consultant Next Generation Benefits Solutions, LLC (Bill Colopoulos) under the same terms and conditions.
- Accepted a grant from the Olmsted County United Way to support the RAMSP project with IBM.
- The following Committee appointments were announced:
  - Finance – Karla Bauer, Mike Christensen, Lynn Gorski, Mary Blair-Hoeft, Tess Arrick-Kruger
  - Personnel – Carol Cravath, Rob Mathias, Lynn Gorski, Bree Maki, Tess Arrick-Kruger
  - Policies – Carol Cravath, Karla Bauer, Rob Mathias, Jason Marquardt, Bree Maki
  - Bylaws – Karla Bauer, Rob Mathias, Mike Christensen, Mary Blair-Hoeft, Don Leathers
  - Canvassing – Lynn Gorski, Bree Maki

## SSC Board of Directors

**Theresa Arrick-Kruger**, Chairperson  
*Houston County*

**Mary Blair-Hoeft**, Vice-Chair  
*City of Byron*

**Mike Christensen**, Treasurer  
*Red Wing Public Schools*

**Bree Maki**, Clerk  
*Lewiston-Altura Public Schools*

**Karla Bauer**  
*Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools*

**Carol Cravath**  
*Plainview-Elgin-Millville Public Schools*

**Lynn Gorski**  
*City of Owatonna*

**Don Leathers**  
*Austin Public Schools*

**Jason Marquardt**  
*Mabel-Canton Public Schools*

**Rob Mathias**  
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