

Cooperative Connection

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Mabel-Canton's Hard Work Pays Off

by Nicole LaChapelle

Many people assume that once a school has been singled out for not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) it is destined to remain this way.

Teachers and administrators at Mabel Canton schools have dispelled that belief with their plan and their team approach to implementing it.

Mabel Canton was identified in 2006 2007 as not meeting AYP in secondary math. With assistance from Southeast Service Cooperative's School Improvement Coordinator, Heidi Knepper, Mabel Canton formulated a plan that included an extra 2 3 days of math for those students who were identified through progress monitoring for not meeting the standards

on the MCA II test. The staff also adopted a new math curriculum and participated in the 6 A's process, which is facilitated by SSC.

They also worked in depth with the elementary school math program, as so much high school knowledge and learning patterns are a result of a student's experience in elementary school. Teachers increased time spent on math in the lower grades which achieved an excellent result.

In fall 2008 the third grade class was 100% proficient in meeting their standards on the MCA II test and the high school also met their goals, and made AYP.

Mabel Canton's Hard Work Pays Off continued on page 2

SE Math-Science Teacher Academy Hits the Ground Running

by Heidi Knepper

The MSTA Academy, a program made possible through collaboration between Southeast Service Cooperative and Winona State University, had its Kick Off and Summer Academy at Winona State University August 10 13, 2008. This training opportunity is based on the statewide focus: Grades 6 8 Algebra Connected to Number. Participants learn from various specialists, work in teams, have a coach to guide them, develop lessons, and pilot those lessons. They will analyze the curriculum and instructional strategies from their pilot projects.

The Academy will enhance the mathematics and pedagogy fluency of the participants to prepare them to help extend the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) throughout their districts. One attendee



Teachers in a learning session at the Academy.

commented, I thought all the topics could be used with varying levels of students, it was not scary at all, I think I could introduce all of these lessons and topics. School districts will use these teacher scholars to effectively implement changes in curriculum and instruction.

SE Math Science Teacher Academy Hits the Ground Running continued on page 2

Mabel Canton s Hard Work Pay Off continued from page 1

This news made the school district, the community, and Heidi Knepper very happy. She explained, I was really very proud of them, as implementing their plan, which included an extra math class, was really quite a collaborative effort. Schedules for some students had to be juggled in order to find time for additional math instruction. (Mabel Canton s new schedule now has extra mathematics instruction incorporated into it.) Heidi added, I am so glad for their success. They worked really hard, and the teachers saw the pay off in the end.

It takes two years for a district to be given the all clear and be taken off the list, and as long as they can keep up their great test scores, Mabel Canton will be removed in 2009.

Mabel Canton is not the only success story. There are many other southeast districts doing wonderful jobs writing and implementing effective plans.

SE Math Science Teacher Academy Hits the Ground Running continued from page 1

The Minnesota Department of Education has assigned each regional Math and Science Teacher Academy across the state to develop an additional mathematics professional development module. In early fall 2009, the instructional team will begin planning the second module, grades 9-12 Data Analysis and Probability. Delivery of professional development will be similar to the Year 1 academy with training partly during the school year and partly in summer institutes.

The 2008 Summer Academy began on the afternoon of August 10th, with teachers taking the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC), which will give them a picture of their instructional practices, as well as how well their current content is aligned to the Minnesota Math Standards.

On Monday morning the participants began in depth sessions with their Instructors/Mentors. Some of these session topics included, Patterning, The Lesson Study Process and The Lesson Study Model. One teacher exclaimed, I can see the connections with grade 7 & 8 Algebra and the need to do my part to prepare students for this new material.

Mathematics teachers are participating from the following districts:

- Dover Eyota
- Grand Meadow
- La Crescent Hokah
- Lake City
- Lanesboro
- Mabel Canton
- Plainview Elgin Millville
- Red Wing
- Triton
- Zumbrota Mazeppa

MDE s Deputy Commissioner Chas Anderson, Ellen Iverson of Carleton College, and WSU President Dr. Judith Ramaley kicked off the Academy, hailing this partnership of K-12 and higher ed. Educators from two southeast STEM Cohort Schools, Lake City and Winona Public Schools, addressed the MSTA participants on Monday evening.

Tuesday began with more sessions on topics such as Proportionality and Arithmetic Sequences, as well as sessions for the Administrative representatives

I can see the connections with grade 7 & 8 Algebra and the need to do my part to prepare students for this new material.

from each participating district. Tuesday evening the participants were given the opportunity to analyze their individual SEC results.

On Wednesday, the final day of the Summer Academy, there were two morning sessions followed by an afternoon spent working on the planning and development of research lessons.

The good work that has begun during this Summer Academy will continue with each site receiving 4 visits throughout the school year from their Academy Mentor. Each participating cohort also has a Site Mentor who will guide the PLC work that happens on site throughout the year.

We will continue this year long learning experience by coming together for lab sessions November 19-20 and March 4-5 in Rochester. One attendee summed up the overall groups feeling of the Academy when they shared, Great Sessions! I am hoping to make a difference in my students understanding of Algebra.



SchoolCenter provides a database driven website management system to meet your online resource needs (including podcast posting) and make web presence maintenance a snap.

SchoolCenter will easily allow you to build and update your district, school and teacher sites. Plus, SSC members receive a free upgrade in design services! Learn more at one of the upcoming webinars or visit www.schoolcenter.com for more information. If you would like to schedule an individualized demo, please contact Bill Reynolds at 888 642 4448.

Introducing the Mobile Science Lab Program ...

Creating the Connection Between Classrooms and Health Care Careers

HealthForce⁺ Minnesota

Transforming education. Advancing practice.



In partnership with the Mayo Clinic, SSC was awarded a \$75,000 grant by HealthForce Minnesota (affiliated with the Minneapolis City Planning and Center of Economic Development Office, Winona State University, and a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities) to develop and coordinate a mobile science lab trailer. Special appreciation is due to Guy Finne, with the Mayo Clinic and Rick Roy, with the Department of Employment and Economic Development for their leadership during the conception and proposal writing process.

This program will complement and support the existing Mayo Clinic Educator Academies and will strengthen the individual school districts efforts to implement their STEM initiatives by bringing relevant science advancement into the classroom. The Academies not only provides high quality professional development opportunities, but it encourages teacher to teacher

interactions and fosters development of a long term molecular and genomics collaboration and instruction group.

Ross Aleff, Mayo Clinic Molecular Biology Core Faculty and Graduate School Instructor, teaches the hands on Molecular Biology Educator Academy. Each summer, three groups of 8-9 teachers are accepted into the program, so the program grows by 24-27 teachers per year. The program began 10 years ago. Each cohort attends an intensive one week summer Academy, where they study such things as the BioRad pGLO system, DNA necklace, mitochondrial DNA purification, PCR, subcloning, DNA sequencing and genetically modified organisms (GMO).

In addition, the cohort continues to meet four times throughout the school year. The Mayo Clinic has always generously covered all costs for the training program, including the instructional costs, overhead, materials and supplies, and graduate credits. And, the program has been hugely successful.



The new traveling trailer.

Now, with the addition of the traveling trailer, the final dimension of direct support for classroom will be met by bringing state of the art scientific equipment directly to the classroom by means of the new traveling trailer. This funding will allow for the purchase and set up of one trailer, coordination of the promotion and scheduling, replenishing of the supplies, and provide teachers with the full array of supplies and equipment that they need to be successful. We have found that there is no substitute for hands on learning and engaging young adults into modern Molecular Biology.

If you have participated in the Mayo Clinic Educator Academy and would like to schedule trailer rental, please contact Dick Riley at driley@ssc.coop or 507 281 6666. For questions about the program, please contact Amy Grover at agrover@ssc.coop or 507 251 7410.

Larry Stacy of Stewartville Wins Service Award



Larry Stacy with Southeast Service Cooperative Executive Director Suzanne Riley.

Larry Stacy was awarded the Southeast Minnesota Service Cooperative Outstanding Service Award on Thursday, July 18 at a statewide event in Mankato.

Larry has been a strong advocate for educator and student achievement regionally and statewide.

Student Academics Coordinator Kirsten Kuehl stated, Larry has given extraordinary time, expertise and knowledge to promote and contribute to student academic programs locally, regionally and statewide.

Larry's primary contribution to southeast Minnesota student achievement has been to serve as advisor and pronouncer for southeast Minnesota Spelling Bees for over twenty years. Kuehl said, His

knowledge of our language, pronunciation, and willingness to spend countless hours reviewing and studying words to ensure that Spelling Bee continues to be a great experience for students is evidence of his love of the language and student academic progress.

She added that Larry has volunteered and served on a state judging panel for the recognition of outstanding teachers, using his education background to help find the best of the best to honor with the WEM Foundation's annual state award

Teaching American History 2008 Summer Institute

by Kari Kubicek

The third year of the Blufflands and Prairies: Southern Minnesota's Place in the Fabric of America's Story project programming was kicked off with a four day Summer Institute in early July. This project is part of a



Cohorts working with archival materials at the Immigration History Research Center.

four year (2006-2010) federal Teaching American History Grant project awarded to SSC in partnership with Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative (SW/WC), Winona State University (WSU) and the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). Programming for the third year of the project will focus on immigration, American identity, commerce, industrial development, and World War I.

Thirty one cohort members from both the southeast and southwest portions of the state participated in the Summer Institute each cohort group spending the first two days of the Institute in their own region, followed by the groups meeting up in St. Paul for the remaining days.

Days one and two of the Institute were workshop days for each cohort group. Guest speakers Louise Edwards Simpson, Assistant Professor of History at the College of St. Catherine and Pam Brunfelt, Instructor at Vermilion Community College, presented at both SSC for the SE cohort members and at SW/WC for the SW cohort members.

Edwards Simpson focused on immigration to the United States between the years of 1860-1920 and led a discussion based on suggested readings related to sweatshop girls. Brunfelt provided an overview of industrialization in the United States from the 1860s to the 1920s and led a discussion on suggested readings related to women and housework during this period.

Continuing from last year with a focus on the component of the Lesson Study Process, both SE and SW cohort members worked in small groups to plan, gather primary sources, and develop lesson plans to teach in their classrooms this coming fall and winter. Follow up discussions to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the lesson plan will take place at next year's Cohort Networking event.

The final components of the first two days of the Summer Institute programming included: 1) the opportunity for a few cohort members to present lessons which they had developed during last year's grant programming to their peers, and 2) a Minnesota Industries Lesson presented by MHS staff for the 6-12 classroom. Evaluation comments were extremely positive and enthusiastic in regard to the cohort lesson plan sharing and the lesson presented by the MHS staff.

The two cohort groups met in St. Paul for the final two days of the Institute. During the morning of the third day, the teachers were introduced to the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) by SSC staff member and SEC facilitator Amy Grover. The SEC process helps to quickly identify gaps in curriculum and instruction and engages teachers in objective dialogue about what and how they teach. The SEC is a research based, online tool that helps teachers identify and visually



Cohorts enjoying a scenic ride through the St. Croix River Valley in an antique rail car on the The Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway.

display the content taught, the cognitive demand, and the instructional approaches used in classrooms and across grade levels.

The cohort members also visited the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) and participated in the IHRC's Primary Sources in Ethnic Studies Program. The IHRC is an interdisciplinary research center in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota. Founded in 1965, the IHRC promotes research on international migration with a special emphasis on immigrant and refugee life in the U.S.

The fourth and final day of the Summer Institute began with a tour of the Mill City Museum which also included an introduction to their school programs, the movie,

Minneapolis in 19 Minutes Flat Flour Tower Show, and a self-guided exhibit visit. For the final leg of the trip, the cohort members traveled by bus to Osceola, Wisconsin, and boarded the Osceola and St. Croix Valley Railway to journey through the St. Croix River Valley on a passenger steam engine much like immigrants from the past.

The program planning for the upcoming year has been finalized and is listed on the page 5.

Teaching American History 2008/2009 Program and Session Dates



The sessions listed below are available to all service teachers unless indicated otherwise.

Lesson Planning & Digital Resources: (Cohorts only)

Oct. 7 (Tuesday) in Marshall
Oct. 9 (Thursday) in Rochester

Introduction to History Day

Oct. 29 (Wednesday) in Rochester

Topical Workshop #1:

Civil War & Reconstruction

Nov. 5 (Wednesday) in Marshall
Nov. 7 (Friday) in Rochester

Topical Workshop #2:

Dakota War & American Indian Policy

Jan. 6 (Tuesday) in Marshall
Jan. 8 (Thursday) in Rochester

Topical Workshop #3:

The Emergence of Modern America 1900 1920s

Jan. 24 (Saturday morning) in Marshall
Jan. 24 (Saturday morning) in Winona

Topical Workshop #4:

America Becomes a World Power

Feb. 10 (Tuesday) in Rochester
Feb. 12 (Thursday) in Marshall

Northern Lights Workshop: (Cohorts only)

Date & Time TBD

*SSC will contract directly with Suzi Gran (MHS) to offer a Northern Lights workshop for cohort members.

Archival Research & Networking Days (Cohorts only)

March 3 (Tuesday) & 4 (Wednesday) in Twin Cities
SE & SW cohort groups together

Evaluation Day: Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (Cohorts only)

Required for all cohort members

June 9 (Tuesday) in Mankato? SE & SW together

To find out more about upcoming seminars through the TAH grant, please visit our website:

www.blufflandsandprairies.org

Working Toward Meeting Member Needs

As you may have heard, SSC will be launching its new website on September 1, 2008! Totally redesigned and created with the user in mind, this site should be easily navigated and will help you find the information that you need faster. In addition, it will allow us to target content to our different member groups so that you access only what is relevant to you. After the initial launch, we will continue to improve the site so that it best meets your needs. Be sure to check it out this fall and give us your feedback!

This summer at SSC, we have also been working diligently to upgrade and update our contact database. Our goal is to get the right information to the right people. We certainly don't want to burden your staff members with non relevant information, so the more

targeted we can be in our announcements and mailings, the better it will meet your needs. In the coming months, we will be contacting our members to ask them to help us with the final updating process. We ask for your understanding and cooperation with these activities which will ensure the highest level of communication with you, without filling your inbox with information that is not pertinent to you.

In our quest to best serve our members, we will also be initiating several needs assessment and satisfaction surveys, which will be distributed to our member contacts. These surveys will be brief and concise and will not require too much of your time. But, your responses will help us look forward toward new programs



A sneak peek at SSC's redesigned website.

and services that might meet your needs. It will also give you the opportunity to provide input and suggestions regarding how we can potentially improve the programs and services that you currently use. We'll appreciate your feedback!

Health Insurance Renewal Planning



by Bill Colopoulos

Optimal renewal planning prioritizes those actions that will have the greatest positive impact on

your health insurance program now and in the long term. Here is a list of what needs to be addressed in order of relative importance:

1. Plan design

This is the single most important factor that drives your health insurance costs. Making plan design changes will provide the greatest impact on lowering premium.

2. Choice of plan designs

If you provide a multiple plan program, the choice and type of plans you provide and their relative value will be your second most significant cost driver.

3. Your contributions

It is critical that your plan enrollees represent an adequate cross section of the risk profile of your group and they won't unless they find the plans you offer affordable. This means you need to provide plans which you can afford to pay most of the premium cost. If you find yourself having to pass 30% or more of the cost on to your employees, you need to re-think what kinds of plans you are offering. Low contributions will lead to low participation which will very quickly lead your plan costs up at an abnormally high rate due to adverse risk selection.

4. Pooling vs. individual coverage with an insurance company

What are the advantages of being rated as a member of a pool vs. individually by an insurance company? Overall, pooling flattens out rate increases best over time and delivers other economies of scale, such as lower administrative and fixed costs and access to high value programs. Being a pool

member usually means access and input with the board that runs the pool; usually composed of fellow group participants. Keep in mind, too, that participating in the Service Cooperative pool also provides you with routine bidding of services, satisfying your obligations under public program bid law requirements.

5. High claims cost management

Making sure you are limiting your exposure to high claim costs and funding the appropriate amount of reinsurance protection is an important driver of your health insurance premium. This is another area where being protected within a pool can reap dividends.

6. Administration and fixed cost charges

Claim costs are the main components that drive the formula determining your premium rates. However, the ratio of claim costs to administration and fixed costs impacts your rate increase formula. The lower your administration and fixed costs, the greater percentage of your premium dollar is available to fund claims, which lowers your renewal.

7. Selecting an insurance company

Picking the right insurance company is important, but for many reasons that are not necessarily related to cost. It rarely makes sense to change carriers based on cost alone.

Here is a list of the most critical factors for evaluating your insurance company:

- a) Do they pay claims timely and accurately?
- b) Are your insurance company's services appreciated by your employees? Do they believe they are getting high quality assistance?
- c) Is your insurance company's provider network providing competitively priced healthcare services?
- d) Are your insurance company's administrative fees and reinsurance costs competitive?

To the extent your insurance company scores high marks in all of the above categories, the greater the quality of care and cost efficiency your health insurance program will deliver to your employees over time.

Note that cost considerations rank last on the list. This refers to the typical bid process, which is usually done far too often and for the wrong reasons: looking to save a buck with the hot carrier; the insurance company who is apparently willing to lose money to get your account. These deals never provide savings for long and usually end up costing groups more; even in the relatively short period of one or two years. The true financial test of a competitive arrangement will address how it will provide cost stability over temporary rate discounting.

Southeast Service Cooperative is dedicated to helping you do the hard work; the heavy lifting of plan design and communications work, etc., that will provide you greater cost stability over the long term. We also provide expert consulting service that will help you create effective strategies for managing your renewal in the proper form and order to maximize results. At the same time, we leverage our pool strength and economies of scale to provide your group with the most competitive structure for your health benefit program. We also satisfy your legal obligation to bid your program every five years as part of our by laws and rules per MN statute.

Please contact us to schedule a time when we can meet with you to discuss how to best manage your next renewal and how we will create a sound renewal strategy and process for you and your employees.

You can contact Bill Colopoulos to discuss how to best manage your best renewal at (612) 987 4155 or

bcolopoulos@schoolmanagementservices.org

How Did the MNTAAB Cash Flow Borrowing Perform in 2008?

Jim Schmitt, Vice President and Client Representative

The Service Cooperatives and the Minnesota School Boards Association co sponsor the MNTAAB (Minnesota Tax and Aid Anticipation Borrowing) program with Springsted serving as the financial advisor. MNTAAB is a program where school districts can come together and pool their borrowing needs in order to make the aid anticipation certificates more attractive to buyers and to reduce their up front costs and administrative responsibilities.

In the past our advertising and promotion of the MNTAAB pool has concentrated on comparing participation in the pool versus doing a stand alone borrowing. Basic information about the pool has been included in the information we provided, however; it was not always readily discernible. This year we are providing some basic facts about how the pool performed in a clear, concise manner.

The sale of the MNTAAB certificates was held on Thursday, August 7. There were 42 school districts who participated in the pool and together, they borrowed \$51,600,000 in aid certificates. Piper Jaffray purchased the certificates and was able to resell the certificates at a very favorable rate. The yield on the certificates was set at 1.65%.

In addition, school districts that participated in the pool had the option to invest the proceeds in our GIC (guaranteed investment contract) which was set at 2.5%. The spread between these two figures will allow school districts to earn some money on the investment of the certificate proceeds if they invest in the GIC.

The municipal market in 2008 has been quite volatile. Recently the municipal market as a whole was inching upwards in terms of a bond interest rate. Because of that, we were very pleased with the yield on the MNTAAB certificates. We are confident that part of the reason for the favorable rate was the size of the pool made it attractive to bidders. Based on



information from Piper Jaffray, we expect the cost of borrowing in terms of interest rates to be 40 to 50 basis points better than most stand alone transactions

In addition, the investment market has been moving down, especially for short term investments, so we are very satisfied with the spread between the investment rate and the rate being paid in the certificates. Many bonds that have been issued this year have resulted in the bond proceeds being invested at a lower rate than the rate being paid on the bonds, so seeing this result for the pool is very positive.

We are pleased with the results of the 2008 MNTAAB pool and hope that the school districts involved feel the same. We have a commitment to continue to work hard to make the MNTAAB pool a great option for school districts that need to borrow money to meet their cash flow needs.

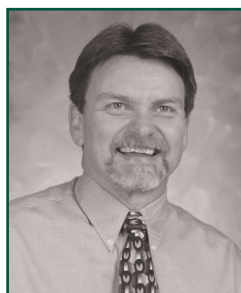
SSC Welcomes Administrators and Staff to a New Year

SSC extends a special welcome to these chief administrators, in their new positions, as well as educators, and other staff in our member organizations.

A special welcome to these new chief administrators



*Bruce Anderson
Austin Public Schools*



*Gary Kuphal
Plainview Elgin
Millville Public Schools*



*Mark Roubinek
Glenville Emmons
Public Schools*



*Steve Sallee
Southland Public
Schools*

Not pictured: David Johnson, Wabasha County Administrator

Cat's Story: From Holy Spirit School to the National Spelling Bee

by Catherine (Cat) Cojocar

The 2008 Scripps National Spelling Bee was the most amazing week of my life. I had participated in the bee in 2007, but I had been eliminated in the fourth round.

Nervously, I took the online preliminary test. I knew most of the words, but I wasn't sure if I would pass. I guessed it was all up to the word I got on Thursday.

Thursday came, and I was the very last speller of the first group in the oral round of the Preliminaries. After waiting for almost two hours, I held my breath and stepped up to the mike. Dr. Bailly greeted me, and then presented me with the word *philistine*. I knew I had heard of it before, but I was unsure of one letter. After prying for information, he informed me that there were six alternate pronunciations! The very last one helped me spell it. I breathed a sigh of relief.

Soon afterwards, I became nauseous and had a horrible headache. I couldn't even make it down to the ballroom for the announcement of the quarterfinalists. I felt so sick. My dad and brother went there for me, and luckily, I passed with a score of 23.

Round Three began with a word I knew, *heliophobous*, and was able to pick it apart by its Greek roots. Now Round Four my personal hurdle was next. *Smalto*. Dr. Bailly enunciated. It was a type of Italian glass. I racked my knowledge of Italian. It sounds easy enough, I thought I gave it a shot, and once Mrs. Brooks nodded, I squealed. I was going to be on ESPN!

The next day I was informed that my whole school system was going to watch the broadcast. I was glad for their support, but now I was even more worried. Round Five began, and the words were obviously much harder than in previous years. My turn came and I was faced with an unknown word *sporangiphore*. I gave it my best shot by figuring out the pieces of the word, and I was right!

In Round Six, I really had no idea how to spell *redoppe*. I asked every question I was allowed, and even one they couldn't answer. Are there any alternate words you can give me? That drew chuckles from the audience, but the clock was ticking and I knew I had to hurry. I thought of an embellished French spelling, and I was right!

At the end of Round Six, there were sixteen of us left. I approached the microphone, shaking and praying under my breath. *Anticum*. I sighed. With the hot ballroom lights beat down on my face and the knowledge that thousands of people were watching me, I could hear the bell ringing already. It was Latin, and after using all but three seconds of my regular time, I gave the simplest spelling I could think of. After I repronounced the word, I shut my eyes. I didn't want to see the look on the judges' faces as I heard applause?

I was floored. I got the word *right*?! I walked back to my seat, still in shock. The round ended, and exactly twelve of us remained.

About twenty minutes before the ABC broadcast, the twelve of us were escorted backstage. I looked around at all of us. We were very different, but we and our families had already become close knit over the past two days. I suddenly felt that, no matter what would happen tonight, everything would turn out all right.

Round Eight was actually pretty easy. Almost all the words were from the Consolidated Word List, which I had studied thoroughly. I completely guessed on my Round Nine word, *Huguenot*, and was right. I felt pretty good.

In Round Ten I was faced by the obscure Russian word *bogatyr*. I had never studied Russian, so I spelled it *bogateer*. The dreaded ding echoed throughout the whole ballroom. I sighed when I heard the correct spelling, smiled at the thundering applause I got, and went to sit with my parents. During

the commercial break, I ran to the bathroom. As I began to cry, a speller I didn't even know gave me a hug and consoled me.

But when I turned around to see who it was, they were gone. That brought me back to my senses. What was I doing here, feeling sorry for myself? I needed to go back in there and cheer on my friends! I wiped off my makeup, let my hair down, mustered up my courage, and went back to the competition.

The words got much harder after I was out. I couldn't believe how good the other spellers were! By the very late rounds, everyone was exhausted.

After many standing ovations, tears, and even some laughs, winner Sameer held the trophy high. But the applause was for all of us. Saturday night was banquet night. Everyone was dressed in their best, and I felt great happiness as I sat on the dais and looked at all the people I loved sitting around me. The twelve of us were swarmed for autographs at the banquet. It was all so surreal; it took a while for me to understand that people actually wanted *my* autograph!

My experience at the National Spelling Bee has taught me many things. It taught me that winning isn't everything. It showed me that, with hard work, I can do better than I ever imagined. And lastly, that money and ranking aren't the most important things in this competition or in life. Your friends and family are what matter most. That was the week I will never forget.



Cat on stage at the Bee.

SSC Online Learning Project: Southeast Teachers as Online Learning Facilitators

*A program provided through the Minnesota Service Cooperative (MSC)
Online Learning Project, an approved online provider with the Minnesota Department of Education*

by Kari Kubicek

SSC is excited to invite your district to participate in our new online learning program. The SSC Online Learning Project provides expanded educational opportunities, promotes online coursework among consortium members, improves the effectiveness of online learning, and assures a quality learning environment for students and teachers

SSC Online is provided through the Minnesota Service Cooperative (MSC) Online Learning Project, an approved online provider with the Minnesota Department of Education certified to offer online curriculum to students in grades 9-12. The program has been designed to provide challenging educational opportunities for students who need credit recovery, advanced, additional or specialized courses, and/or a flexible learning environment. Most importantly, because the program is a part time, non diploma program, students will remain enrolled in their own districts while taking courses with SSC Online.

Southeast teachers can become online learning facilitators through SSC Online. Two teachers in a district can start by completing the Facilitating Online Learning course and developing instructional plans for using the SSC Online Learning Project resources. Instructors who successfully complete the Facilitating Online Learning course can teach fully, as well as blended online courses. Online instructors from the MSC Online Learning Project are also available to facilitate courses offered through SSC Online.

Students enrolled in SSC Online will benefit from several opportunities available through the program, including:

- The ability to take courses that meet their needs for flexibility and individualized instruction;

- The options of making up credits, completing college entrance requirements or expanding their learning opportunities to meet their own interests;

- The capability to learn at their own pace and within their own schedules; and



An opportunity to develop the technology and learning skills they will need for a lifetime of learning.

In addition, teachers and districts can earn stipends by submitting courses they develop that are accepted by SSC Online.

Participation is now open for member districts for 2008-2009. This is an excellent opportunity for schools to move with the times in meeting our students' needs.

Contact Kari Kubicek, kkubicek@ssc.coop, or Nicole LaChapelle, nlachapelle@ssc.coop, with questions and to subscribe.

Online Teacher Training Course

The Facilitating Online Learning course is an inquiry based, hands on course through which participants will review and reflect upon examples of best practice in online learning. This process will take place in both face to face and online learning environments using Moodle course management tools. Participants will have one day of face to face training, followed by three weeks of online training where they will participate in and facilitate threaded discussions and online chats. The course will conclude with a final face to face session. The training course schedule is as follows:

Initial Face to Face Session
Tuesday, September 23
9:00 AM to 3:30 PM
Wood Lake Meeting Center at SSC

⇒

Three Week
Online Coursework

⇒

Final Face to Face Session
Tuesday, October 14
9:00 AM to 3:30 PM
Wood Lake Meeting Center at SSC

Another Successful Young Authors Young Artists Conference



Sage Hoy, proudly displays the masterpiece she created at the conference. Sage is the daughter of SSC Program Coordinator, Kari Kubicek.

The 2008 Young Authors Young Artists conference was a big hit with over 750 students and their chaperones!

On May 21 22, 2008 students in grades 4 6 from across southeast Minnesota attended the conference. Twenty presenters (authors, artists, illustrators, poets, and book crafters) mesmerized, stimulated, and excited young people at the Rochester Community and Technical College.

Look on our website (www.ssc.coop) to find stories submitted by some of the creative attendees.

The 2009 conference will be held on **May 20 and 21, 2009**. Mark your calendars!

SSC Acquires Additional Mobile Laptop Lab



Southeast Service Cooperative has acquired an additional mobile laptop lab. It features 24, high capacity computers. This new lab joins SSC's other lab, which also features 24 computers. The cost for a two week rental is \$250. For more information, or to reserve a lab, contact Dick Riley at (507) 281 6666.

2008-09 Knowledge Bowl About to Begin



The 2008 09 Knowledge Bowl season begins with an advisors meeting on Thursday, September 18 from 4:00 5:30 pm at the Southeast Service Cooperative.

The junior high season starts with Round Robins in October and ends with Regionals in January. The senior high season begins in December and ends with Regionals in March. Five teams will advance to State Senior High Knowledge Bowl competition April 22 23, 2009. Dates for both seasons have been tentatively set and will be finalized at the advisors meeting.

The 2007 08 season involved participation by 52 junior high teams and 91 senior high teams. The five teams representing southeast Minnesota that advanced to the 2008 state competition were from Cannon Falls, Dover Eyota, Houston, Northfield, Rochester Mayo.

For more information on Knowledge Bowl, contact Kirsten Kuehl at kkuehl@ssc.coop or (507) 281 6670.

2008 09 Spelling Bee Dates

Register with Scripps....by October 15, 2008 (www.spellingbee.com)

Regional....February 17, 2009

Multi Regional (tentative)...March 10, 2009

Schools should receive information directly from Scripps National Spelling Bee soon. Information will be sent to schools in the region by the Southeast Service Cooperative in September. Schools will also register with the Southeast Service Cooperative.

If you have any questions or if your school district's coordinator has changed, please contact: Kirsten Kuehl, (507) 281 6670 or kkuehl@ssc.coop.



Welcome to New Members



St. Charles Public Schools



Minnesota State
Academies
for Deaf and Blind

Wrapping Up the Inquiry-Based Science Project

by Amy Grover

The third and final year of a collaborative project between SSC and the Rochester Area Math Science Partnership, entitled the Southeast Minnesota Inquiry Based Science Project (IBScience), brought to fruition the work plan put into place during year two, and served our K-8 science teachers in a much deeper and long-lasting manner. The four key components of our MSP grant proposal included professional development, curriculum development, assessment, and resource sharing. Each of these core areas is summarized below and expanded upon in the Project Performance narrative.

This year, our primary focus was to provide high quality professional development opportunities that included differentiated inquiry-based instruction, grade-appropriate content and pedagogy, alignment to standards, practical classroom application, and real-world relevance. We worked with Lee Schmitt and Peggy Knapp from Hamline University to conduct two Professional Learning Communities. One was for a new cohort of science teachers joining the program for the

2007-2008 school year, while the second was a continuation cohort for teachers that had participated in the PLC experience during the 2006-2007 school year. In addition, we contracted with Jeff and Jacquie Burgard to conduct a professional development workshop entitled Gateway to Mastery.

The continuation cohort consisted of Lorraine Aaland (4th grade teacher from Pine Island), Tressie Bach (5th grade teacher from Rochester), Ramona Back (4th grade teacher from Rochester), Kari Donze (7th grade teacher from Plainview Elgin Millville), Sharie Furst (3rd grade teacher from Kasson Mantorville), Patty Nelson (5th grade teacher from Stewartville), Christy Noble (4th grade teacher from Kingsland), Denine Voegeli (7th grade teacher from Plainview Elgin Millville), and Amy Woxland (6th grade teacher from Triton). We applaud the dedication and on-going commitment made by these teacher leaders.

The new cohort starting this year included Emily Biske (6th grade teacher at Kingsland), Jane Brandt (8th grade teacher at Rochester), Lisa Bronk (4th grade teacher at Kasson Mantorville), and Andreanna Harmon (2/3rd



grade teacher at Rochester), Silke Horihan (4th grade teacher at Dover Eyota), Heidi Howe (6th grade teacher at Stewartville), Kerri Koenigs (4th grade teacher at Chatfield), Lois Lackore (3rd grade teacher at Rochester), Chrissie McKinnon (5th grade teacher at Rochester), Ann Miller (Elementary Implementation Specialist at Rochester), Jill Scheid (6th grade teacher at Rochester), Laura Shearer (6th grade teacher at Stewartville), Ann Steffen (3rd grade teacher at Pine Island), Nancy Thornton (3rd grade teacher at Triton), and Amy Wix (6th grade teacher at Kasson Mantorville).

A comprehensive website was created for the project to provide a clearinghouse of information for science teachers in southeast Minnesota. This website will shift in focus in the future to include other projects, but the resources will always be accessible at <http://www.ssc.coop/science>.



Space Explorers, Inc. (www.spaceexplorers.com) will host a website open house event from September 15-20. All interested educators can utilize these programs at no cost! This includes access to mission simulations to the Moon, Mars, asteroids, and suborbital space; a Mars Rover program that allows students to drive rovers across a three-dimensional Martian terrain while completing mission objectives; an online space encyclopedia, the Space Library®; and Interactive Applets using the concepts of launch windows, aerobraking, asteroid impacts, and trajectory corrections. Educators will also have access to lesson plans about various science topics including: Kepler's Laws, magnetism, gravity, and rocketry. Please email sales@spaceexplorers.com or call 800-965-3763 to request your username and password valid for a week of free unlimited access.



InfoSource Learning is offering a FREE technology literacy assessment for K-12 students. They will set up a testing site for your students (100 minimum) with their 60-question Simple Assessment Test based on the NETS standards for one year at no cost. This tool is designed to help you meet NCLB requirements that urge school districts to certify that your students are technologically literate by the 8th grade. For more information, check out www.simpleassessment.com.

SSC Staff Wellness Program Proves Popular

by Nicole LaChapelle

Making wellness a part of their workplace experience is not something the staff at Southeast Service Cooperative just talk about, it is something they actively participate in and enjoy.

Thinking up new programs for the staff to participate and get involved in is a fun challenge. Committee head Nicole LaChapelle shared, Finding activities that the entire staff will want to partake in makes us work a bit harder. We've had very high participation numbers.

The committee likes to keep the challenges varied, and they offer various rewards for participation. Most of the time awards are given to the top three or four winners of the thirteen member staff, but occasionally everyone who participates receives an incentive. Prizes include gift cards to restaurants that include healthy food choices, book stores, gas cards and other enticing rewards.

The staff has also received an hour of paid time off work, which demonstrates the commitment SSC Executive Director Suzanne Riley has for the wellness programming.

SSC staffer Shelley Rinkel shared, I think it is great that the leadership here values the importance of wellness and makes it a priority to include all of the staff.

Many challenges include step counting using SSC supplied pedometers. These challenges are very popular, and have very high participation. Walking is something all staff members do, and by tracking their numbers they are not only encouraged to get their step total higher, but it also gives them an idea of how much activity they are partaking in each day.

There are many ways to create challenges using pedometer numbers. Sometimes they are team efforts, with participants all walking toward a common goal, and other times, they consist of a race toward a particular destination. To make participation as easy as possible, all staff members need to do is turn in their steps at their convenience to the wellness committee. The steps are then tallied and displayed on a chart in the staff room.

Many different wellness programs are scheduled for the coming year. They include a fruit and vegetable consumption contest to encourage



SSC staff member Shelley Rinkel working on the Walking Workstation.

healthy eating, a contest to track time spent in the outdoors and different three person team challenges to increase teamwork. A contest has also been created to encourage use of SSC's new WalkingWork station.

The SSC Wellness program is not entirely made up of challenges. Plans have been made to bring in a yoga instructor to teach an introductory class to staff in the fall. Winter plans include bringing in a masseuse for two hours to offer 10 minute stress reducing massages to staff.

Program Assistant Katie Sue Cunningham summed up the SSC wellness program by saying, I love the contests because it encourages me to exercise when I don't feel like it. It's also very encouraging to see the whole staff participating in the wellness initiatives.

Lead in Toys Testing Update

By Diedra Hudgens EPDM Project Manager

IEA owns a Niton X ray Fluorescence Analyzer (XRF) that provides instantaneous readings for lead content. In the hands of a skilled IEA staff member, this device allows for the testing of lead in a short period of time. IEA can give on the spot answers to whether toys contain dangerous amounts of lead, as well as cadmium, arsenic and mercury.

IEA has provided lead in toy testing to many school districts and organizations. Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

programs have focused efforts on testing all toys within their facilities. Some school districts have also sponsored Get Out the Lead events. These events allow parents to bring toys from home to their community schools to have the toys tested for lead.

Below are some statistics on IEA's lead in toy testing program:

- Over 20 Minnesota School Districts have participated to date.
- Over 100,000 toys have been tested.
- On average, 5-10% of toys were found to contain lead, cadmium, arsenic or mercury at levels above the Consumer

Product Safety Commission thresholds.

Red, yellow, and orange colored toys were most likely to contain lead.

Toy kitchen food, small animals and counting game pieces most consistently contained lead.

For more information on IEA's lead in toy testing program or how to sponsor a Get Out the Lead event. Please contact IEA's expert, Diedra Hudgens, at 763 315 7900.



Sign up now for EmbodyHealth - your personal health resource FREE for SSC Insurance Pool members and offered at a discounted rate to SSC Non-Insurance Pool members



SSC is excited to provide you the Mayo Clinic Health Assessment and EmbodyHealth online health resource absolutely FREE as an SSC Insurance Pool member.

EmbodyHealth features several valuable health programs and tools from Mayo Clinic. The program offers you the ability to connect to reliable resources to take control of your health and feel more confident in health care decision making for you and your family.

Features of the EmbodyHealth site include:

- Assessment tools to help you identify your own health strengths and weaknesses, along with advice on how to improve your health;
- Health lifestyle programs on topics such as weight control, exercise, tobacco cessation and stress management that let you set personal goals, track your progress, overcome barriers and guide you toward successful change;
- Tools and information to help you better manage conditions such as asthma, headaches, high blood pressure and diabetes
- Prevention and self care tips on hundreds of common health concerns



- Practical information, such as healthy recipes and ideas for balancing work and family

With a resource like this right at your fingertips and free! there is no reason for your staff to miss out.

Even if you are not a health pool member, as an SSC member you can offer this program to your members.

Contact Kari Kubicek, kkubicek@ssc.coop or visit our website.

Health and Safety Reminders for Fall 2008

by Bob Tweten



Here are a few tips and reminders for school facility managers.

- ♦ Take a look at your Health and Safety Projects Web Site as soon as it is restored for access. (*Web Site is scheduled to be restored August 29.*)
- ♦ Check through district H & S projects for approvals, non approvals, NMI (Needs More Information) and PPL/PPB (Provisional Projects for Levy or Bond). Any project that has received a NMI will need additional information provided to Audrey Bomstad at the State Department of Education by September 12, (651) 582 8793, audrey.bomstad@state.mn.us.
- ♦ Health and Safety projects that have a PPL or PPB have until November 7 to provide necessary documentation in support of the project.
- ♦ Any additional Health and Safety projects that a district needs to add to this year's levy must be submitted by September 12th to qualify for this '09 levy. Districts must inform Audrey Bomstad or their Regional Health and Safety Management Assistant's Consultant (me, Bob Tweten) of the new project, so it will receive a project number and an evaluation for an approval.
- ♦ Indoor Air Quality Certification The final IAQ training will be held on October 16, in St. Paul. Contact Dan Tranter at the Minnesota Department of Health for additional information or to register, (651) 201 4618.
- ♦ The only scheduled Machine Guarding Certification Workshop will be held in St. Cloud on October 8, 2008 starting at 8:30 AM. Individuals will need to contact Cindy Bernier at (612) 638 1512 or email her at cindy.bernier@metroecu.org for additional information and to register.

Please feel free to contact me regarding Health and Safety questions as they apply to your school district. I can be reached at (507) 281 6663, or btweten@ssc.coop.

Recent Board Meeting Actions and Information

May 2008

- ◆ Adopted service fees for 2008 2009.
- ◆ Adopted revised SSC common/preferred health plans and health insurance pool rules and guidelines as recommended by the Pool Planning Committee.
- ◆ Accepted proposed policy on disposition when a pool rate stabilization reserve is over 100% of minimum for first reading.
- ◆ Named Larry Stacy as Southeast Service Cooperative's regional honoree in the 2008 MSC Outstanding Service Awards.
- ◆ Authorized SSC memberships in several state and national organizations.
- ◆ Adopted the 2008 2009 Annual Plan.
- ◆ Approved the membership of St. Charles Public Schools ISD 858 as an active Education Member, effective July 1, 2008.
- ◆ Approved 2 year appointments to the Administrative Advisory Council

Area 1: Mike Moriarty, Caledonia
 Area 2: David Thompson, Stewartville
 Area 3: Bruce Klaehn, Dover Eyota
 Area 3: Gary Kuphal Plainview Elgin Millville, changed from At Large into Area 3 complete term of Eric Bartleson
 Area: 4: Robert Kelly Triton
 At Large: Myrna Luehmann

- ◆ Accepted Health Force Minnesota grant for \$75,000 to implement a Teacher Science Equipment Trailer Program in partnership with Mayo Clinic.
- ◆ Accepted grant for \$278,232 from the Minnesota Department of Education to implement the Southeast Minnesota Math and Science Teacher Academy.
- ◆ Accepted the Personnel Committee's recommendation as submitted, including wage and benefit adjustments and the Executive Director's salary.

June 2008

- ◆ Adopted the proposed 2008 2009 Budget.
- ◆ Approved contract with Adbo, Eick & Meyers to perform SSC's fiscal audit for 2007 2008.
- ◆ Transferred accrued health insurance operating funds to the general fund and authorized staff to resume periodic assessment of the pools rate stabilization condition and transferring health operating funds to the general fund balance as the Executive Director deems appropriate.
- ◆ Increased SSC's mileage reimbursement rate to 58.5 cents per mile effective July 1, 2008.
- ◆ Approved 1 year appointment of Stan Slessor of Red Wing Public Schools to the At Large position of the Administrative Advisory Committee.
- ◆ Referred the recommendation of the Administrative Advisory Committee to the Policy Committee for further consideration and recommendation to the Board of Directors.
- ◆ Approved a one year consulting agreement with Creative Benefit Consultants, LLC under the same terms and fee as 2007 2008.
- ◆ Approved contracts with Lindquist and Vennum and Capitol Hill Associates for lobbying services not to exceed \$25,000 in cost.
- ◆ Accepted the settlement report for the 2007 City/County Health Insurance Pool.
- ◆ Accepted the settlement report for the 2007 City/County Health Insurance Pool.
- ◆ Approved the credit of calculated excess claims funds to the following groups: City of Kasson \$65,612.65; City of Harmony \$10,251.84; Austin Housing and Redevelopment Authority \$6,246.25.

- ◆ Accepted the withdrawal of the Rushford Peterson ISD #239 and Lewiston Altura ISD #857 groups from the school health insurance pool effective September 1, 2008.
- ◆ Information: Nancy Lack Wiitanen from Kasson Mantorville High School named the regional honoree for the 2008 WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Award in the category of Teacher Achievement.
- ◆ Information: Southeast Service Cooperative accepted the 2008 national Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility award.

July 2008

- ◆ Designated Wells Fargo Bank of Rochester as the official depository of the Southeast Service Cooperative Board of Directors, investment deposits in Wells Fargo Investments and MSBA Liquid Asset Fund for the 2008 09 fiscal year, and to designate Galliard Capital Management to manage the IBNR funds in investment
- ◆ Scheduled the September meeting on Wednesday, September 24, 2008 on its regular date (change from previous schedule).
- ◆ Adopted the 2009 City/County Health Insurance Pool renewal rating formula and plan was adopted as recommended by the Renewal Committee.
- ◆ Accepted Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and Deaf as an Associate Member effective August 1, 2008.
- ◆ Approved position promotion of Kirsten Kuehl to Instructional Services Coordinator.
- ◆ Information: Mark Packard, Mike Hammes, Don Andring, Tom Heise reported on the Minnesota Service Cooperatives Conference July 16 18 in Mankato.

Calendar

September

Wednesday, September 3

8 AM 4:30 PM

MDE NCLB Fiscal Management Training

Tuesday, September 9

1:00 PM 1:30 PM

HVED Superintendents Meeting

Monday, September 15

9:00 AM 11:30 AM

Tax and Levy Certification Workshop

Tuesday, September 16

1:00 PM 1:30 PM

HVED Superintendents Meeting

Thursday, September 18

4:00 PM 5:30 PM

Knowledge Bowl Advisors Meeting

Tuesday, September 23

9:00 AM 3:30 PM

Online Teacher Training

Wednesday, September 24

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

MDE A Standards Driven Approach

Wednesday, September 24

5:00 PM 8:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting

October

Monday Wednesday, October 6 8

9:00 AM 4:30 PM

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins

Wednesday, October 8

8:00 AM 4:00 PM

Using Numbers & Operations Concepts

Wednesday, October 8

4:00 PM 8:00 PM

Best Practices of Reading Instruction

Thursday, October 9

1:00 PM 1:30 PM

HVED HS Principals Meeting

Thursday, October 9

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

Teaching American History Workshop

Friday, October 10

1:00 PM 1:30 PM

HVED HS Principals Meeting

Tuesday, October 14

9:00 PM 5:00 PM

Online Learning Teacher Training

Wednesday, October 15

10:00 AM 3:00 PM

MDE NCLB Fiscal Management Training New or Newer Users

Wednesday, October 22

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

MDE Professional Learning Communities: Essential Skills for Team Work

Wednesday, October 22

5:00 PM 8:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting

Thursday, October 23

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

MDE Teacher Leadership: Essential Skills for Teacher Leaders

Thursday, October 23

8:00 AM 1:30 PM

Health Promotion Forum

Wednesday, October 29

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

History Day Workshop

Wednesday, October 29

11:30 AM 3:00 PM

MASA 1 Fall Session

November

Monday Wednesday, November 3 5

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins

Thursday, November 6

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

MDE Formative Assessment: Essential Skills for Teacher Leaders Day 1

Friday, November 7

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

MDE Formative Assessment: Essential Skills for Teacher Leaders Day 2

Friday, November 7

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

Teaching American History Workshop

Tuesday, November 11

1:00 PM 1:30 PM

HVED Superintendents Meeting

Tuesday, November 18

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

MDE Connecting Teacher Development and Student Learning

Tuesday, November 18

1:00 PM 1:30 PM

HVED Superintendents Meeting

Wednesday, November 19

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

MSTA Academy

Thursday, November 20

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

MSTA Academy

Wednesday, November 19

5:00 PM 8:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting

December

Monday Wednesday, December 1 3

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins

Thursday, December 4

8:00 AM 4:30 PM

MDE Professional Learning Communities: Facilitation Strategies for Improved Student Learning

Monday, December 8

9:00 AM 2:30 PM

ELL Learning Strategies Day 1

Thursday Friday, December 11 & 12

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

Senior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins

Monday, December 15

9:00 AM 3:00 PM

Senior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins

Monday, December 29

5:00 PM 8:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting



SSC is a 2008 Recipient of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility.

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

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Southeast Service Cooperative direct dial phone numbers, e-mails, and 800 #...

Call toll free, 1-800-657-6996, then an option:

- 1 . . . Cooperative Purchasing
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- 4 . . . EHSM
- 5 . . . Student Academics & Conferences

We want to be there when you call, so try dialing us directly at the numbers below. Our voice mail system allows you to leave a detailed message if the person you're calling isn't able to answer right away. If you don't know who you need to talk with, dial (507) 288-1282 and one of our staff or our auto-attendant will direct you from there.
To send a fax dial (507) 288-7663.

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