

Cooperative Connection

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StandardsInsightMN™

Strengthening core initiatives; unpacking the MN Standards

by Suzanne Riley

Southeast Service Cooperative is pleased to offer you **StandardsInsightMN™**... an online tool that helps educators become familiar and comfortable with the newly adopted English Language Arts standards and the Minnesota Mathematics standards. This software provides professional interpretation of each standard in a dynamic database tool, jumpstarting dialogue and collaboration among your staff.

With Minnesota's renewed emphasis on increasing student achievement in literacy, reading,

StandardsInsightMN™

Minnesota

state standards
unpacked

writing, and mathematics, teachers are increasingly under pressure to fully comprehend as well as align curriculum and instruction with the standards. In fact, the law states that the new ELA standards must be taught across the content areas, requiring that ALL teachers develop an understanding of the literacy standards.

StandardsInsightMN™ continued on page 2

SOLO – Southeast Online Learning Options

SSC gains certified online provider status for its online learning program

by Kari Kubicek

SSC is excited to announce that its online learning program, Southeast Online Learning Options (SOLO), has been approved as a certified online learning provider by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). SOLO's application, submitted in February 2011, involved a site visit by MDE staff and follow-up clarifications. Final approval was received from MDE on February 29, 2012.



Southeast Online
Learning Options

SOLO was established to create and deliver 21st century learning experiences to students with these primary goals: equip students with the technological tools needed to thrive in today's market; provide a barrier-free, personalized education; and to expand educational options for students. SOLO also provides teachers with interactive and collaborative

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StandardsInsightMN™ continued from page 1

How well is your district preparing educators to become teachers of literacy across all disciplines?

How well is your district supporting teachers as they develop a deep understanding of the standards?

How well is your district ensuring a K-12 vertical learning progression to guide your work?

How well is your district preparing students for testing the new standards on the MCA-III in 2013?

Is your district ready? Turn to **StandardsInsightMN™** - An easy to use web-based tool that streamlines the complicated process of alignment, helps manage



core initiatives, ensures fidelity, saves time and resources, and provides customizable architecture for local curriculum work.

This high-powered vehicle not only offers a user-friendly way for teachers to sort and study the standards themselves, but it provides five fields of high-quality

unpacked content developed by subject-area experts that identify:

- Evidence of student attainment,
- Key vocabulary for the teacher to use in the classroom,
- Student skills, knowledge, and understandings expected to meet the standard

It also provides six “custom” fields that your district can use as needed to support your core initiatives.

One license (one-time fee, plus annual hosting fee) provides access for your entire staff. For more information contact Amy Grover agrover@ssc.coop or Lori Mack lmack@ssc.coop or Diane Schwinghammer dschwinghammer@ssc.coop.

SSC to offer a Formative Assessment Workshop with nationally-renowned educational speaker Chris Jakicic

SSC will host a Formative Assessment Workshop with Chris Jakicic on June 11 and 12. Jakicic recently released a new book (with a foreword by Rick and Becky DuFour) titled *Common Formative Assessments: A Toolkit for Professional Learning Communities at Work*.

The agenda for this two-day workshop will include:

1. Making the case for formative assessments
2. What makes a quality assessment?
3. Designing quality assessments
4. Creating an assessment plan
5. Writing quality items
6. Using assessments effectively
7. Student involvement in the assessment process

Chris Jakicic, EdD, served as principal of Woodlawn Middle School in Long Grove, Illinois, from its opening day in 1999 through the spring of 2007. Under her leadership, the staff shifted toward a collaborative culture focused on learning and implemented assessment for learning practices to shape their instructional strategies.

Through her work with teachers and administrators across the country, Dr. Jakicic emphasizes that effective teaming is the heart of PLCs. She also shares practical knowledge about how to use data conversations to interpret classroom information for effective instruction.

Dr. Jakicic has written articles for the Journal of Staff Development and Illinois School Research and



Development Journal detailing her experiences with common assessments and PLCs. She has worked as an adjunct instructor at National-Louis University as well as Loyola University Chicago, where she earned a doctor of education.

Click [here](#) for more information on the session or to register.

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learning opportunities, web-based resources, and professional development opportunities which translate into student success.

SOLO's program objectives include the following:

- Provide a cost-effective online learning option for member districts,
- Expand course offerings available to students in member districts,
- Train teachers in online course development using national standards,
- Train teachers in online course instruction using national standards; and
- Provide credit recovery services.

Initially, SOLO online course opportunities will be offered to students in grades 9-12. Online course offerings will be provided through Florida Virtual School including core subjects, world languages, electives, honors, and Advanced Placement courses. Future offerings will include online courses developed by southeast Minnesota district teachers upon approval by SOLO and MDE.

More information will be coming soon about SOLO programming including program fees, course offerings, the SOLO website, and more!

Distance Learning Programming at SSC

SSC provides distance learning programming options to meet the various and ever changing needs of our district staff and students. Below is information about program options.

Moodle Course Hosting

Members of SSC's distance learning program are offered unlimited Moodle server space for hosting of online coursework. SSC provides administrative support including creation of course shells, user enrollments, and technical support. Moodle space is also available to districts who are not members of the distance learning program at a per course per year charge. Individuals utilizing SSC Moodle space must complete an SSC hosted Moodle training.

Moodle Training

SSC offers training in the use of Moodle in the facilitation of online coursework. Contact Kari Kubicek at SSC to schedule training at your school district. Hosting trainings at your own location allows several of your teachers to learn and develop their online teaching skills in Moodle and supports ongoing Moodle user networking in your district and with educators in other districts.

Online Teacher Training

SSC provides this three week online teacher training to assist teachers in being effective and successful online course facilitators. Teachers interested in facilitating online courses through SOLO must complete this training. Individuals who have completed a comparable training in the past, offered through SSC's distance learning programming, are pre-authorized to teach courses through SOLO. The online teacher training will be offered in summer 2012 and periodically throughout the year.

Online Course Options

SSC online program member districts access SSC administrative

services in purchasing Aventa courseware. Districts that utilize this service are required to provide an individual at the district to serve in the role of an Aventa Mentor to provide support to their students who enroll in Aventa courses.

SSC also partners with Southwest West Central Service Cooperative (SW/WC) in offering teacher developed online and ITV course to our distance learning program member districts. SW/WC currently offers approximately 44 online courses and 15 ITV courses.

Next Steps in Distance Learning Programming

SSC is thrilled that we have attained online certification for SOLO, and we continue to strive to meet our districts' needs in distance learning programming based on their input. A survey will be distributed to obtain updates on SSC member districts' distance learning programming – both the current offerings in our districts and identified needs.

Included in this survey will be a request for individuals to serve on a Distance Learning Advisory Committee to assist in the ongoing development of our program.

The results of this survey and the input we receive from members of the Distance Learning Advisory Committee will inform us in the continued delivery of a successful, cost-effective program that meets the needs of our districts.

Please contact Kari Kubicek at kkubicek@ssc.coop with any questions related to distance learning programming and services.

SSC welcomes Lori Mack, Regional Educational Specialist



The Southeast Service Cooperative Board and Staff are pleased to introduce Regional Education Specialist Lori Mack to our member districts. Lori joined the Southeast Service Cooperative staff on February 1. After 18 years of teaching, Lori brings recent classroom experience to our staff here at Southeast Service Cooperative. Lori taught in Roseville, Minnesota for 7 years, and has just completed 11 ½ years in our member district, Triton.

Originally from Austin, Minnesota, Lori completed her B.S. degree

in English Education at the University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse. She earned her Master of Arts degree in Education from St. Mary's University of Minnesota – Minneapolis, and most recently returned to St. Mary's University of Minnesota – Winona to earn her K-12 Reading Certification. Lori is passionate about helping kids become competent, efficient, life-long readers, and is excited to help teachers support best practice literacy instruction in their classrooms!

Lori can help guide your educators, unpack the new ELA standards, and she looks forward to working with content area teachers as they implement the standards in their instruction. She'll show you how to use a simple yet dynamic, web-based collaboration tool that SSC is launching in the next month - StandardsInsightMN™ - to streamline the complicated process of alignment, encourage fidelity within grade levels and content areas, and manage core initiatives.

If you'd like facilitation assistance in developing your District K-12 Literacy Plan, due for submission to the MDE by June 30, Lori is ready and willing to provide this assistance. She will offer onsite training in your district as well as sessions here at SSC. Lori also looks forward to working with SSC's Nicole LaChapelle and our Gifted and Talented network of teachers.

Lori shared, "I am thrilled to join the wonderful staff of Southeast Service Cooperative, and I look forward to growing with, and learning alongside, our area educators."

Lori and her husband Shawn live in Kasson and have four children and one grandchild. Besides spending time with her family, Lori greatly enjoys travel, especially to Germany and North Carolina, specifically to the Biltmore Estate.

Lori can be reached at lmack@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6691.

Advanced Placement Teachers: Training in June

Providing high school students access to advanced coursework has long been considered an important means of preparing students for success after high school. Now, thanks to a \$15,490 Advanced Placement Professional Development grant from the Minnesota Department of Education, SSC will launch the Southeast Minnesota Advanced Placement (SEMNAAP) Project.

Aimed at helping districts in southeast Minnesota launch vertical teams for their AP teachers,

SSC will work with College Board to coordinate the delivery of the two-day Pre-AP®: Setting the Cornerstones™ of the AP Vertical Team training workshop in mid-June. Applications will soon be accepted for participation in this project. We will select six districts dedicated to improving their AP programming, supporting their AP teachers, improving student AP exam scores, and providing time and resources to ensure ongoing success. These districts will each send teams of five to the training and will commit to scheduling four



additional team meetings during the 2012-2013 school year.

To learn more about this opportunity, please contact Amy Grover at agrover@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6693.

Speaking of literacy...

by Lori Mack

Literacy is not for the faint of heart! Jeff Zwiars is quoted as saying, "Reading is like rocket science – only harder." The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) defines literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society." Literacy is the core of the new Minnesota English Language Arts (ELA) standards which integrates literacy into all of the content areas of instruction.

The National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices (NGACBP) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO; 2010c), collaborated and wrote the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts, and released their work in 2010. Minnesota, along with 48 other states adopted the CCSS, however, each state was able to add an additional 10% to these standards that were specific to each state. Minnesota's additional standards include Minnesota Native American literature and Media Literacy.

Integrating literacy into all content areas is no small task. Over the years educators have heard the message loud and clear that *every teacher is a reading teacher*, but have wondered, what does this actually mean? Content area teachers are often not equipped to

teach basic, beginning reading skills; however, they can help students become familiar with content area reading frameworks, vocabulary, understand and interpret diagrams and maps, and help students develop skills and strategies for critical reading of subject area texts. For the first time in Minnesota, 10 reading and 10 writing standards are specifically required to be mastered in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. This new literacy responsibility is both exciting and overwhelming for educators!

Speaking of Literacy... is a new biweekly e-newsletter for educators. I write this column for the purpose of helping educators think about their part in literacy instruction. Topics will be as varied as is the broad definition of literacy. Issue 1 focused on **World Read Aloud Day**, which was celebrated on March 7th, and encouraged educators in every grade level and

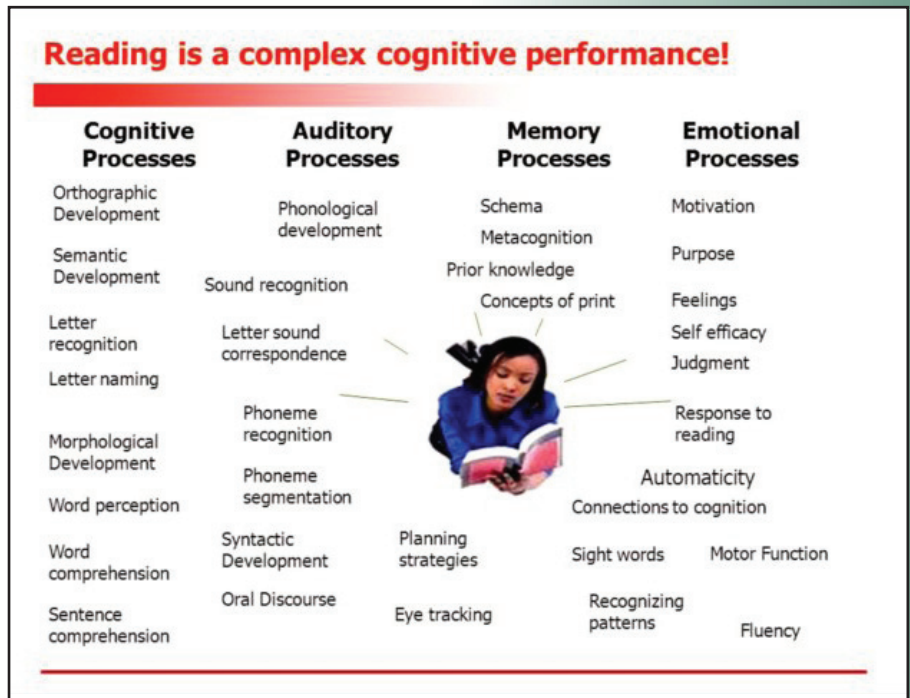
discipline to read aloud with and to students. The next publication will focus on the use of poetry and choral reading to complement informational science texts!

Through **Speaking of Literacy...**, I hope literacy conversations brew in the hallways of schools with all teachers exploring new ways to engage students in the wonderful world of words....reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing printed material.

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."
- W. B. Yeats

["The Plurality of Literacy and its implications for Policies and Programs"](#). UNESCO Education Sector Position Paper: 13. 2004.

Image courtesy of MDE, Reading Well by Third Grade.



SSC hosts Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder event

by Kari Kubicek

SSC hosted its first Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder (VREP) Training Institute on February 15 and 16 at the Wood Lake Meeting Center. 53 students and 24 adults from ten SE Minnesota school districts participated in the two-day event including individuals from: Dover-Eyota Public Schools, Fillmore Central Public Schools, Goodhue County Education District, Houston Public Schools, Kasson-Mantorville Public Schools, Kingsland Public Schools, Plainview-Elgin-Millville Public Schools, Randolph Public Schools, Stewartville Public Schools, and Zumbrota-Mazeppa Public Schools.

VREP is a partnership between government, education, and industry creating an ever-growing consortium of schools and businesses committed to bringing a new kind of learning and teaching to schools across the country. VREP works by capturing student interest through the use of Virtual Reality and 3D technology. Students gain valuable 21st Century skills, including study, computer, and technical reading skills, as well as the ability to research, communicate, problem solve, work in teams, collaborate, manage their time, and access resources to accomplish important goals and objectives.

VREP was begun in Iowa in 2006, and currently, through a scale up plan with the vision of being a national consortium, has expanded its membership to include districts in the states of Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.



The program is self-directed, giving students the freedom to decide what areas are of interest to them and what technologies to use. Working with peers within their own school and across the VREP consortia, students complete projects, research and design their own virtual programs, and create 2D and 3D imaging that is then transferred into stereoscopic displays to create immersive virtual environments. Students and other viewers can then interact with the virtual environments, providing learning opportunities that engage today's learners.

Although self-directed, student success with VREP is largely dependent on teacher facilitation. Teachers serve as mentors to students, guiding them in conceptualizing projects that will meet standards, producing teachable resources for teachers and more. Teachers' content expertise serves as the basis for their students' experiences, as they lead their students by asking probing and guiding questions and working side-by-side with them as they work through problems and questions that have real meaning to them. Teachers can also use VREP as another strategy for engaging students who may not be

motivated in the teacher's subject area.

Another significant aspect of the VREP program is the requirement that students provide project presentations and be able to clearly articulate what they have learned. SE Minnesota students who participated in the recent VREP Training Institute may also have the opportunity to become VREP Guides and travel to other districts to train students in the use



Students work on their equipment during the Training Institute

of both the equipment and Blender software used in the program.

A Virtual Reality Showcase was held as the culminating event to the two-day training institute. Community members, local businesses, parents of the participating students, and participating district administrators and staff were invited to attend to hear from the VREP trainers and event participants. Students were then invited to share with the guests what they had learned and developed using the software and equipment during the two-day event.

Winners of SSC's Member vs. Member Walking Challenge announced

by Nicole LaChapelle

Kingsland Public Schools and Freeborn County were declared the champions of SSC's 2012 *Member vs. Member Walking Challenge*, which saw over 500 members from seventeen of its member organizations compete. Thirteen southeastern Minnesota school districts and four city and county members participated in two separate pedometer-based challenges.



Members of Kingsland's winning team

Winners in the School District Challenge are as follows:
Kingsland – 1st Place, **Cannon Falls** – 2nd Place, **Dover-Eyota** – 3rd Place. The rest of the teams, which each received an honorable mention are listed in the order of their ranking: Lake City, Plainview-Elgin-Millville, Zumbrota-Mazeppa, St. Charles, Stewartville, Fillmore Central, Grand Meadow, LeRoy-Ostrander and Medford.

Kingsland's Wellness Coordinator Paula Rueskink stated, "Everyone did an awesome job for our team! Those of us at the bottom half



SSC Member vs. Member Walking Challenge Coordinators display their organizations' awards

now realize that we need to "step it up" a bit. Although some on the bottom half walked well over 10,000 steps a day, which is the recommended amount for optimal health. I thought I was doing o.k. by taking my dog for a nice long brisk walk every day after school, but now realize that Igor and I need to go further! I was 3000 mere steps short of averaging 10,000 a day."

Kingsland Middle School employee Rick Rowe added, "I stepped on the scale and discovered that the bonus from making sure I walked 10,000 steps every day was the fact that I had lost five pounds too!"

Freeborn County was the winner in the City/County division. The rest of the rankings are as follows: **City of Albert Lea** – 2nd Place, **City of Byron** – 3rd Place and **Fillmore County** – Honorable Mention.

Cheryl Lonning, Wellness Coordinator at Freeborn County, noted, "The Freeborn County



A group of Freeborn County's challenge participants with their first place trophy

team was excited to take part in the SSC challenge. For many, it was a great motivator to get their exercise routine going in these quiet winter months. Others shared that wearing the pedometer really made them aware of how much they move during the day and felt motivated to work towards those 10,000 step days." Cheryl added, "We really do work with wonderful people here at Freeborn County and the Wellness Committee is just excellent in their commitment to bringing opportunities for bettering our health status to our employees."

Successful first year for SEMLAC regional consortium

by Amy Grover

The innovative regional consortium referred to as Southeast Minnesota Learner Achievement Collaborative (SEMLAC) is wrapping up a very successful first year. Seven districts participated from the launch of the program, including Dover-Eyota, Fillmore Central, Kingsland, Lanesboro, Mabel-Canton, Plainview-Elgin-Millville, and Wabasha-Kellogg. The intent was to develop inter-district Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and provide high-quality regional professional development. Activities were designed and implemented by a planning committee and an SSC program coordinator. To meet our goals, SEMLAC's agenda for the first year sought to provide a) teacher-to-teacher collaboration opportunities, b) district leadership team training, and c) a PLC for principals.

SEMLAC offered a **Professional Development Day** on October 24 that brought 410 teachers together from the seven participating districts. Jane Kise, an expert on creating a coaching culture for PLCs was the keynote speaker, and break-out sessions covered PLC functioning levels and action planning, instructional practice and strategies, use of data, formative assessments, and support for building principals. The day culminated with a Teacher Meet-and-Greet session, during which time teachers began networking in job-alike groups, matched up by grade level or content-area focus. Following this event, SEMLAC offered additional **Teacher-to-Teacher sessions**. These were designed to promote

meaningful conversation about best practices and standards in their discipline. This spring, these half-day sessions focused on the content areas that often only have one teacher in the entire school or district: Industrial Technology, Physical Education, Spanish, Music, Art, and Business/Career and Technical Education. A total of 55 teachers participated in the job-alike sessions and enjoyed the opportunity to talk and network. A content-area specialist was on hand to facilitate the conversation, as well as provide specific information about best practices in the content area. A special thanks to these facilitators:

- **Music** – Nyssa Brown, Perpich Center for Arts Education
- **Physical Education** – Mary Thissen Milder, Minnesota Department of Education
- **Spanish** – Glen Irvin, Wabasha-Kellogg Schools
- **Business/Career & Technical Education** – Jean Jyle, Minnesota Department of Education
- **Art** – Jeremy Holein, Perpich Center for Arts Education
- **Industrial Technology** – John Rapheal, Minnesota Department of Education

The second focus for SEMLAC was to develop trained leadership teams in each district, with the internal capacity to implement and sustain the efforts of the regional group. The 50 individuals that comprised these teams spent four full days together, engaged in processes to build a common understanding of the philosophy and structures of PLCs based on the research of Dr. Richard DuFour. Guided by Linda Harvieux of Metro ECSU, teams explored

the differences between a PLC and a traditional team meeting, the six traits of PLC teams, roles and responsibilities of team members and structures that support meetings. Nancy Gould from Metro ECSU also provided some training related to formative assessment.

Finally, a group of principals participated in a regional **Professional Learning Community** to address the importance and type of leadership support necessary for effective PLCs. Linda Harvieux worked with principals to understand the roles and responsibilities of facilitators, participants and administrators, examine effective leadership behaviors that play an integral part of successful PLC's, examine effective leadership behaviors that are necessary for first and second order change, and understand the impact of school culture on PLC implementation as well as the role of the leader in developing or changing a school culture.

Plans for year two of SEMLAC include a Professional Development Day featuring speaker Thomas Many (a nationally recognized expert on leadership, implementation and change, and Professional Learning Communities at Work™ strategies and concepts) on September 24, 2012, and Teacher-to-Teacher sessions on February 11, 2013, as well as a continuation of the Leadership Team Training.

For more information, contact Amy Grover at agrover@ssc.coop or (507) 288-6693.

Are wellness programs worth it?

by Bill Colopoulos

Most employers use wellness programs to curb health care costs, reduce absenteeism, presenteeism (at work, but performing at lower productivity due to poor health) and improve overall productivity. However, many employers feel that in order to justify the expense of their wellness plans, they must be able to measure wellness program outcomes in definitive, cost-savings terms.

Measuring “Return on Investment” (ROI)

The success of worksite wellness programs is measured by identifying numbers of employees who become healthier **as a result of the program’s interventions**. Wellness program ROI quantifies the savings value of each program vs. the cost of the wellness programs.

Measuring How Wellness Programs Reduce Risk

Measuring employee health improvement begins by stratifying employees into low, medium and high risks; with low risk being those employees having fewest adverse health factors, high risk being those with the most. Each stratum is assigned a median cost value that includes:

- Health care services
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Productivity

The values of worksite **wellness programs are measured by their ability to shift employees from higher to lower health risk strata⁽¹⁾**. Savings are calculated by

the resulting change in cost values associated with the shifts:

For example, if a 200 employee populations’ stratified risk cost values were . . .

- High risk: \$10,000
- Medium risk: \$7,500
- Low risk: \$5,000

. . . and if at the beginning of the wellness program the risk classes were thus arrayed . . .

- High risk: 40 employees
- Medium risk: 100 employees
- Low risk: 60 employees

. . . and if the wellness program caused the following shift . . .

- High risk: ▼ 28 employees (minus 12)
- Medium risk : ▼ 85 employees (minus 15)
- Low risk: ▲ 87 employees (plus 27)

. . . the resulting savings attributable to the wellness program would be approximately **7% of the group’s total costs prior to the program’s implementation**. In this example, wellness savings are quantified by a **reduction in total costs from \$1.45 million to \$1.35 million**. Please note that this calculation assumes 100% of the shifts were caused as a direct result of the wellness program. This assumption is a cornerstone issue – and challenge – for many popular wellness program components; Health Risk Appraisals (HRAs) in particular.

In our example, wellness ROI is measured by comparing the total savings (\$100,000) vs. the cost of



the wellness program. If the cost of our hypothetical wellness program was \$25,000, its ROI would be 3:1; i.e., three dollars saved for every one dollar spent.

The value of the shifts must also be verifiably linked to the wellness program. For example, using a base number of smokers as a reference prior to the engagement of a smoking cessation program, the success of the program is easily measured by the net reduction in the number of smokers attributable to the use of the program. Using reliable data sources that itemize the adverse impact of smoking re: health care costs, absenteeism, presenteeism and productivity loss, the value of the smoking cessation program can be quantified; in terms of savings and then compared directly to the cost of the program. The smoking cessation program’s value becomes one element of the group’s overall risk shift formula savings and overall ROI calculation.

The standard of wellness savings and ROI measurement requires a high level of due diligence in data accumulation, making valid comparisons and confirming that the shifts are directly attributable

Wellness programs continued from page 9

to the wellness program. To the extent such precision is not achieved in wellness program data quantification studies, the accuracy of the savings data is compromised. However, such compromises do not necessarily indicate the wellness program is not worthwhile, but rather that its purpose needs rather to be articulated in terms of the benefits of achieving and maintaining a healthier population. Within the context of an employer wellness program, the important considerations of employee satisfaction and other non-quantifiable engagement values have their own merits that should also be considered.

Wellness Opportunities

On the other hand, the logic of using wellness programs is easily established by the significant opportunities for health improvement that can be found among most populations. A recent U.S. DHHS⁽²⁾ study of employer group health plans showed that for every 100 employees:

- ✓ 25 have cardiovascular disease
- ✓ 12 are asthmatic
- ✓ 26 have high blood pressure
- ✓ 30 have high cholesterol
- ✓ 38 are overweight
- ✓ 21 smoke
- ✓ 31 use alcohol excessively
- ✓ 24 don't exercise
- ✓ 44 suffer from stress

All of these adverse lifestyle factors translate to measurable health care, absenteeism, presenteeism

and productivity losses – and corrective opportunities for wellness programs. Looking only at health benefit plan costs, 88% of health care benefit claims are due to poor individual lifestyle choices⁽³⁾. This proves that most health care insurance cost problems track back to individual lifestyle choices; far more so than any other factors.

How much is at stake? According to a 2007 Milken Institute study, implementing primary wellness and health promotion programs to keep healthy people healthy and to improve the health of less healthy people would **reduce the economic impact of disease by 27%; saving \$1.1 trillion annually by 2023 and eliminating 40 million cases of chronic diseases**⁽⁴⁾.

Measuring Results

Naturally, some wellness program opportunities are more easily – and more objectively – measured than others. Results also vary by group and by different employee populations; depending on data availability and program participation. Measuring results based on participation alone can also be problematic, as we will see.

Health Risk Appraisals (“HRAs”)

The participation results of HRAs are based on the numbers of employees taking them. HRA participation in the first period is used as a baseline for a comparative classification of employees taking the HRAs in the 2nd period. HRAs savings value is measured by noting the movement of those employees who took the HRAs *twice* and who, as a result of taking the HRA, migrated from a higher to a lower health risk strata.

The health risk strata movement is based on the comparative number of self-reported health risk factors, such as high cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, obesity or tobacco use reported in the two HRA periods. These latter measurements provide relatively objective ways to assess progress towards health improvement.

On the other hand, rather than rely on self-reporting tests that can be subjective, employers could simply provide their employees with the will – and the way – to learn their actual health status numbers. That is why **biometric testing** has become an important part of wellness planning for many employers. Having employees *definitively* “know their numbers” has produced significant results; in many cases, dramatically lowering health care costs, reducing



absenteeism, presenteeism and improving productivity.

In both cases, the growth of HRAs and biometric testing has been impressive: In 2011, 73% of employers offering wellness programs offered HRAs (62%) and/or biometric testing (56%); both up by 5% and 10% respectively, since 2008⁽⁵⁾. Clearly, both kinds

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of programs are popular; however, biometric testing is often the process “behind the numbers” when describing wellness ROI focused on HRAs⁽⁶⁾.

Reaching those who need the most help

HRA/biometric testing participation must get as close to 100% participation as possible to produce optimal results. Even a “high” level of participation of 80% means it is likely that the highest risk segment of the population would not be consistently measured. That is where the really big opportunities exist, since 20-30% of a group typically incurs more than 70%-80% of the group’s total health care services.

Employers are cautious about wellness ROI

While most employer plan sponsors tend to embrace the logic of worksite wellness programs, many remain cautious about up-front program costs, which can be considerable. Many employers remain skeptical of wellness ROI claims applying to their group.

The source of wellness ROI data is also somewhat suspect. ROI claims have often been optimistically high and poorly supported with quantifiable data; relying instead upon rather complex data studies that pointedly shy away from articulating “hard dollar” savings. In many cases, ROI data has been shown from specific employer groups; claims that certain employer wellness programs have achieved certain results. Naturally, different employer studies have produced dramatically different results⁽⁷⁾. For example, some employer surveys have proclaimed



HRAs ROI to be 3:1; others as high to 6:1.

Increasingly, wellness advocates, researchers and employer groups are increasingly turning to biometric testing-based wellness incentive programs to measure accurate, verifiable wellness results.

Biometric testing and ROI

Biometric testing means that employees have their blood pressure and chemistry tested. Their health conditions (and risk factors) are then measured against empirical norms and compared on whatever frequency of testing the wellness program employs – typically annually – to show if the testing process has improved results.

Group biometric testing often results in significant reductions in the employees’ use of *major* health care services. While biometric test results usually cause a temporary uptick in primary care services, the savings produced by avoiding the larger, more serious health care incidences more than offset those expenses.

Overall, biometric testing leads directly to lower health care claims and reduced insurance premiums – savings that can be tracked and

measured at the group level⁽⁸⁾. First year health care benefit trend savings alone for biometric testing can vary from 5% - 20%, depending on the group’s general awareness of their own health numbers prior to the testing process⁽⁹⁾.

Wellness Incentives Drive Optimal Results

In order to produce optimal results, employers are providing their employees with incentives to participate in biometric testing programs. Studies show that participation approaches 100% as the combined economic value of the incentives reach \$1,000 per year, per employee⁽¹⁰⁾.

Current HIPAA regulations stipulate that employers must offer all employees an opportunity to participate in their wellness program and that employee incentives may not exceed in value 20% of the total cost of their health benefit program, including the administrative cost of the wellness program⁽¹¹⁾. Starting January 1, 2014, the PPACA enhances such wellness discounts by permitting group health plans to give reductions of up to 30% of the cost of premiums to employees who participate in such wellness programs. This may be expanded to 50% subject to the discretion of the Secretary of HHS⁽¹²⁾.

Integrated Prevention Plans

Studies have also demonstrated that personal prevention plans that integrate biometric testing with a personalized, overall health risk appraisal consistently produce significant reductions in each employee’s specific health risk factors⁽¹³⁾.

Wellness programs continued on page 12

Wellness programs continued from page 11

Outcome	Savings
Short Term Disability	28%
Workers Comp	20%
Absence	13%
Medical/Rx	30%

Conclusion

Wellness studies prove that prevention is a necessary and worthwhile investment tool for promoting better health. In the context of employer sponsored wellness programs, their value is measured by their ability to transform employer focus from sick care expense, to health care investment management.

Bill Colopoulos is a healthcare economist and consultant serving the Southeast Service Cooperative's health insurance pools. He is an active member of the American

Economic Association. Bill is available to present this material to all groups who are current members of the Southeast Service Cooperative.

Footnotes:

- (1) "Emerging Research: A View from One Research Center" by Dr. Dee Edington, from the American Journal of Health Promotion, 2001: Issue 15 pp. 341-349.
- (2) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007.
- (3) Indiana and Purdue Universities study, 2006.
- (4) Devol R. Bedroussian. "An Unhealthy America: The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease" Santa Monica, CA. Milken Institute, 2007.
- (5) "2010 Employer Health Care Survey", Price Waterhouse Cooper, published March, 2011.
- (6) "Emerging Research: A View from One Research Center" by Dr. Dee Edington,

from the American Journal of Health Promotion, 2001: Issue 15 p 275.

- (7) "Impact of the Prevention Plan on Employee Health Risk Reduction", Ronald Lepke, MD, MPH, Dee W. Edington, PhD., Sami Beg, MD, MPA, MPH from Population Health Management, vol. 13 no. 5, 2010, pp. 282-283.
- (8) U.S. Preventive Medicine, Inc., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- (9) BeniComp, Inc. employer group results comparison data: 2007 – 2011.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Register Vol. 71, No. 239, 2006.
- (12) Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (PPACA), Section 2705.
- (13) University of Michigan, JOEM, v 44 n 12, Wright, Beard and Edington, 2002.

Groups in SSC's Health Pools access biometric testing equipment

Groups in SSC's Health Insurance Pools have the added benefit of receiving free rental of SSC's biometric testing equipment. Training on the equipment is also free. Groups are only responsible for the cost of testing supplies, which are offered at cost.

SSC has four Cardiocheck PA units which test both cholesterol and glucose levels.



For more information or to reserve the equipment, contact Nicole LaChapelle at nlachapelle@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6674.

Challenge continued from page 7

The contest, which ran the month of January, was based on the number of steps walked by participating members. Steps were turned in weekly to each site's coordinator who in turn reported the steps to SSC.

A short awards presentation was held at SSC's March 14 Health Promotion Forum. The two winning teams each received a trophy, and framed certificates were presented to all teams who participated.

Another *Member vs. Member Walking Challenge* will be held in January 2013. It is the hope of SSC that even more member organizations will participate in the challenge. There is nothing like a little competition to motivate your employees to make fitness a priority.

Contact Nicole LaChapelle at nlachapelle@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6674 for more information.

Free Biology courses offered through Mayo Clinic: Graduates eligible for Mobile Science Lab use

Mayo Clinic Rochester is sponsoring an educational program intended to strengthen the content knowledge of high school biology teachers in the areas of molecular biology and genomics. Teachers are eligible to attend one or more of three separate low stress, one-week courses. The courses, taught by Ross Aleff, include hands-on training in molecular biology theory and laboratory techniques.

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology courses include:

[Innovation in Agriculture and Science for High School Teachers](#)

June 18-22

[Molecular Biology and Genomics for High School Teachers](#)

June 11-15

Also offered this year is a new Food Science course, June 25-29 (*Teachers must have completed the Molecular Biology or Agriculture course prior to taking the Food Science course. Preference will be given to teachers who have previously completed both courses.*)

Participants must attend one of the one-week classes (1 credit), incorporate a portion of the science unit in their classroom during the academic year or use of the Mobile Science Laboratory (1 credit), and either take a summer refresher course or use the Mobile Science Laboratory a second time during the 2012-2013 academic year (1 credit). Three



graduate credits from the Mayo Graduate School will be available to participants who complete all sections of the

year-long program. Teachers only attending the one-week summer session will receive 1 graduate credit. There will be no charge for the classes or graduate credit.

The long-term goal of this program is to develop an interactive group of teachers who will incorporate molecular biology and genomics instruction into their classrooms. Teachers will be expected to interact with Mayo Clinic staff and other teachers in the program to enhance the instruction of the curriculum unit during the academic year. Instructional support by Ross Aleff will be available to facilitate implementation of the concepts and activities learned in the courses.

This summer's classes are open to high school teachers with an on-going biology or agriculture

assignment in any Minnesota, Wisconsin or Iowa school. Classes can accommodate a maximum of eight teachers.

Upon completion of one of the courses, teachers will also be eligible to use the [Mobile Science Laboratory](#). The mobile laboratory contains all the necessary equipment and consumable items to perform all the experiments used in the Mayo summer program. The laboratory contains enough equipment for 30 students to be trained in one session.

The deadline to respond is April 27.

Click the previous links for more information on the courses and for information on how to apply.

Cooperative Purchasing contract updates

By Katie Schmitt

The Minnesota Service Cooperatives have made several national and statewide contract awards and renewals. Below is a listing of those actions, as well as a listing of regional SSC contract additions and changes. Stay up-to-date by visiting www.purchasingconnection.org and following us on [@kschmitt](https://twitter.com/kschmitt)! If you have recommendations for additional cooperative purchasing categories, please call me at 507-281-6676 or email kschmitt@ssc.coop.

Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA) The AEPA is a nationwide group of educational organizations in 25 states working collaboratively to save school districts time and money. The Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC) participates in the AEPA bid process and implements national contracts on a statewide level. SSC members, regardless of organizational size, benefit from lower pricing based on national purchasing volume.	
<u>New Contracts:</u> Hardwood and Synthetic Flooring - Sports Surfaces Furniture - Spectrum Industries Mobile Learning - TBA School Messaging - School Reach Scoreboard and Marquee Signage - Daktronics Small wares - MD Holdings Tracks and Courts - Field Turf and Sports Surfaces Turf - Field Turf <u>Expired/Terminated Contracts:</u> Athletic supplies - BSN/US Games	<u>Contract Renewals FY12:</u> CDW-G Konica/Minolta Business Solutions Kyocera-Mita Midwest Technology Products MNJ Technologies Polaris Industries School Specialty Weatherproofing Technologies/Tremco
Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC) The Minnesota Service Cooperatives is a joint powers organization comprised of statewide educational service agencies. Southeast Service Cooperative works with seven other cooperatives to coordinate statewide purchasing contracts. By pooling purchasing volume and resources, we establish best value contracts for members.	
<u>Recent RFP Awards:</u> Classroom Audio - LightSpeed Technologies Family and Consumer Science supplies - NASCO Playground equipment - Midwest Playscapes Recycling - Retrofit Science supplies - NASCO (supplies and equipment) and BioCorp (specimen) <u>New Contracts FY12:</u> Commerce Bank - Control Pay Advanced K2 Logistics Mid-State Auto Auction Nasco Physical Education <u>Upcoming RFPs:</u> Copy Paper School Furniture <u>Expired/Terminated Contracts:</u> Energy Audits - Energy Services Group Student Notification Systems - Honeywell School Furniture - Scholastic Equipment	<u>Contract Renewals FY12:</u> Acme Electric Archipelago Learning - Study Island, Reading Eggs, Education City BG Innovation CDI Computers General ASP - Applitrack Kinetic Leasing LanSchool Nelson Auto Center Nasco Physical Education OfficeMax Partstock Computers NASCO - Ag, Health, Reading NASCO - Math, Early Learning NDR Cables and Networking Reason Computers Scott Electric Tech Depot Tierney Brothers
Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC) SSC conducts RFPs and establishes contracts based on members' needs. If there is not a national or statewide contract in place or if one cannot be established providing members with significant discounts and value, SSC solicits a regional RFP or a pre-ferred vendor agreement.	
<u>Recent Contract Awards:</u> Custodial supplies - Martin Bros. Distributing Co. Inc. <u>Upcoming RFPs:</u> Interior Wall Paint Pottery Supplies - Clay and Glaze Summer Group Buy	<u>Expired/Terminated Contracts:</u> Custodial supplies - Arnold's Supply and Kleenit

VREP continued from page 6

Dover-Eyota Superintendent Bruce Klaehn attended the Virtual Showcase and remarked, "I was most impressed by what I saw in the faces and voices of our students who attended the training. I was present for the showcase at the end of the training, and they were so eager to show me what they had learned and done, as well as what they were planning to do once we got the system into our school. At that point, there was no question in my mind that this was going to be a very good addition to our educational program."

SSC's future plans for the VREP Program includes providing continued support to Southeast Minnesota districts in the form of opportunities for district



Students sporting their 3D glasses at the Training Institute

administrators and/or teachers to serve on an advisory committee to assist with the development and implementation of a VREP user network, the development of a page within the SSC website with multiple tools and resources for assisting VREP teachers and students in the use of the equipment and software, and

additional training institutes and showcase events allowing students to present their work to others.

We invite you to visit the [VREP website](#) to learn more about this program. You may also visit [SSC's website](#) to learn more about the program being offered through SSC or contact SSC's VREP Program Coordinator Kari Kubicek at kkubicek@ssc.coop.

SSC offers Moodle training for your staff at your site

For districts looking to have their teachers trained in using the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS), SSC offers the option of sending a Moodle trainer to your location to facilitate the training. These trainings can be scheduled as full-day trainings or as two half-day trainings, providing time between the two sessions for participants to explore the LMS and experiment with the tools available. Having multiple teachers from the same school/district trained at the same time in the use of the LMS allows the participants to provide support amongst each other after the training is over, and helps keep the momentum going for using the LMS to deliver coursework.

If your district is interested in scheduling Moodle training at your location, please contact Kari Kubicek, Distance Learning Program Coordinator at SSC, at kkubicek@ssc.coop.



2012 Young Authors, Young Artists Conference - Register now!

By Katie Sue Cunningham

Spring is right around the corner and with it comes Southeast Service Cooperative's 25th annual Young Authors Young Artists Conference. Each year, hundreds of students in grades 4-6 from public and private schools across southeast Minnesota descend on the Rochester Community and Technical College campus for an exciting opportunity to learn and work with professional authors, poets, playwrights, composers, lyricists, illustrators, novelists, journalists, book crafters, and others.

SSC's Young Authors, Young Artists Conference promotes student engagement in the areas of written and visual communication, and is often an out-of-classroom experience that students remember for an entire lifetime. The upcoming conference is scheduled for May 17 and May 18.

Session topics range from illustrating your own story to book arts to watercolor to storytelling.

Presenters this year are a mix of individuals who have presented at the conference in the past and several individuals who are brand new to the conference.

We welcome back the following presenters from past conference years: Linda Back McKay, Julie Bowe, Amy Christie, Angela



Gustafson, Blake Hoena, Ryan Jacobson, Margie Kiefer, Katie McKy, Deb Mercier, Scott Rolfs, Tom Spense from the MN Center of Book Arts, Shannon Steinfeldt, Kathryn Sullivan, and Greg Wimmer.

We also look forward to getting to know our new presenters, including: Mary Bleckwehl, Mike Kalmbach, and Melanie Schmidt.

The Book Shelf in Winona will once again be organizing our book sale. They will have a wide selection of reading material for students and adults to purchase, including books published by our distinguished presenters.

YAYA t-shirts will also be available for purchase at this year's conference. Shirts cost \$10 and sizes will range from youth medium to adult large.

All schools in southeast Minnesota are invited to bring a group of 4-6th graders to the conference for an experience

unlike any other. To download a copy of the 2012 Conference brochure, please visit the SSC website at www.ssc.coop/Page/122.

If you have any questions please contact Katie Sue Cunningham at (507) 281-6667 or via email at kcunningham@ssc.coop.



Rochester Public Schools 8th grader is the Southeast Minnesota Spelling Bee Champion - Wins trip to Washington D.C.

By Katie Sue Cunningham

Fifty-seven students from 38 districts throughout the southeast Minnesota region advanced from their respective District Spelling Bees to the Regional Spelling Bees. Twelve spellers (six from each Regional Spelling Bee on February 14, 2012) competed in the Final Spelling Bee on Tuesday, February 28, at the Southeast Service Cooperative in Rochester.



Roshini Asirvatham - Southeast Minnesota Spelling Bee Champion

Roshini Asirvatham, an 8th grade student from Rochester Public Schools-Friedell Middle School was declared the champion after correctly spelling the word *dihedral*. Roshini was also champion in 2010 as a 6th grade student.

Roshini advances to the 85th annual Scripps National Spelling Bee on May 29 - June 2, 2012. She won an all-expenses paid trip (for herself and one adult) to Washington, D.C. (donated by Southeast Service Cooperative and KM Telecom). She also received a first place trophy,



First runner-up, Shane DeSilva (L) and 2nd runner-up, Josh Nelson

Webster's Third New International Dictionary (provided by Scripps National Spelling Bee), a one-year subscription to Britannica Online Student Edition, a \$100 Series EE Savings Bond (donated by Jay Sugarman, Chairman and CEO of iStar Financial in honor of his father, Samuel Louis Sugarman) and *Valerie's Spelling Bee Supplement Booklet*.

Shane DeSilva, a 6th grade student from Austin Area Catholic Schools, was the 1st runner-up. Shane received a trophy, a *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition* and *Valerie's Spelling Bee Supplement Booklet*.

John Nelson, an 8th grade student from Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools, was the 2nd runner-up. John received a trophy along with a one-year subscription to *Britannica Online Student Edition*.

Other students participating in the Southeast Minnesota Final Spelling Bee were:

Marisa Alvarado

Kasson-Mantorville Public Schools
7th grade

Claire Colby

Rochester Public Schools
8th grade

Nayelli Guerrero

LaCrescent-Hokah Public Schools
8th grade

Hannah Mahr

Northfield Public Schools
8th grade

Devon Nerstad

Spring Grove Public Schools
7th grade

Rachel O'Shaughnessy

Rushford-Peterson Public Schools
8th grade

Olivia Riggins

Northfield Public Schools
8th grade

Megan Vehrenkamp

Dover-Eyota Public Schools
8th grade

Larissa Wendland

Winona Public Schools
7th grade

The Spelling Bee competitions in southeast Minnesota are sponsored and coordinated by the Southeast Service Cooperative and co-sponsored by KM Telecom.



KM Telecom

LightSpeed Technologies: Improving student academic achievement through sound

by Katie Schmitt

Are you striving to improve student academic achievement? Have you considered classroom amplification? Research shows that classroom audio not only enhances the learning environment, but it also improves academic performance. Ambient noise, including outdoor traffic noise, HVAC systems, hallway noise and sound from other classrooms, can be a significant distraction in the classroom. LightSpeed classroom audio systems are designed to overcome ambient noise, poor acoustics and mild hearing loss from common ear infections. Classroom audio is not just for special education students or students with hearing loss. All students benefit from amplification in the learning environment. With 75% of a child's school day activities involve listening, hearing is the main path to learning. Classroom audio improves the environment so that all children can be fully engaged in learning.

What is Classroom Audio?

- Infrared systems may be installed or portable.
- The teacher wears a lightweight wireless microphone that transmits the signal via infrared lid to the receiver/amplifier.
- The voice is amplified through speakers and distributed evenly throughout the classroom.
- The amplified voice is easily heard regardless of background



noise, poor room acoustics and/or mild hearing loss.

- Integrates with other classroom technology, including: interactive whiteboards, assistive listening devices, mp3 players and more.

Selection of Independent Research Findings

- Significant improvement on test scores when teachers used classroom audio to present new information (Howell, 1996).

Kenyon-Wanamingo has successfully integrated LightSpeed classroom audio systems into every elementary classroom.

- Higher reading test scores were attained by students with minimal/mild hearing loss in amplified classrooms (Schermer, 1991).
- The MARRS project demonstrated that students with minimal hearing loss and learning disabilities in amplified classrooms made significant academic gains at a faster rate, to a higher level, and at one-tenth the cost of students in un-amplified resource room

settings (Sarff, 1981; Ray, Sarff & Glassford, 1984).

- Improved speech perception scores were achieved by students at distances of 12 and 24 feet when using sound field amplification (Crandell, 1996).
- Significantly higher word recognition scores were achieved by students at distances of 12 and 24 feet when using sound field amplification (Crandell, 1993).
- Students with high middle ear pathology (MEP) risk in amplified classrooms were able to listen better in competing noise than peers with MEP in unamplified classes (Carlson-Smith & Nelson, 1995).
- Student distractibility and request for repetitions decreased and on-task behavior increased significantly (17%) with sound field (Allen & Patton, 1990).
- Student attentiveness to verbal instruction and activities, as well as ability to hear classroom instruction, improved when using sound field amplification (Gilman & Danzer, 1989).

Resources: [The Benefits of Classroom Audio Technology](#) and [Summary of Sound Field Amplification Research Studies](#)

Lightspeed continued from page 18

Benefits of Classroom Audio

- Children maintain better focus when they can hear the teacher.
- Reduce teacher voice fatigue and related illnesses.
- Even distribution of teacher voice helps overcome ambient noise and distractions.
- Improved classroom management due to even, calm speaking tones.
- More class participation and presentation experience

through use of handheld microphone.

- Classroom audio has proven to increase word recognition of ELL students by 20-30%.

The Minnesota Service Cooperatives recently awarded a new purchasing contract to LightSpeed. SSC members save at least 22% off list price and \$125 trade-in credit on used equipment - working or not. Quantity discounts are available. Free equipment trials are available for your classroom.



For more information on [LightSpeed](#), contact:

Ken Engstrom

888-573-7887

ken.engstrom@lightspeed-tek.com

Predatory and sex offenders in your community: Safety and risk management

By Katie Schmitt

SSC is offering a [new predatory and sex offender training](#) opportunity for member organizations and community groups. Allan Kuehl conducts training to increase understanding and improve safety management practices regarding predatory and sex offenders.

Mr. Kuehl covers the following topics in a three-hour presentation that includes resource materials, case studies, and facilitated discussion:

- The MN Registry and its history.
- Public agencies – responsibilities relating to predatory and sex offenders.
- Understanding the offender level assignment process and how offender risk is assessed.



- Explore why MN has different levels of community notification.
- Discuss what “grooming” is and identify risky behaviors.
- Start planning what you can and should do to manage this risk in your setting.

Training is tailored to the following groups: 1) School staff and officials, 2) Local government officials, 3) Daycare providers, 4) Private employers, 5) Parents and neighborhood groups.

Keep your students, staff and community members safe! [Contact me](#) for more information or to schedule a training session at your worksite.

About Allan Kuehl:

- Served as Predatory Offender Coordinator for Rochester, Minnesota Police Department
- 35-years of law enforcement experience
- Certified as a Content Expert by the Minnesota Center for Professional Development

Recent Board meeting actions and information

Note: Complete SSC Board of Directors meeting minutes are available on the SSC website at www.ssc.coop.

Future meetings of the SSC Board of Directors were scheduled during the January meeting.

In addition to routine fiscal actions, the Board took the following actions in recent meetings:

December 2011 Regular Meeting

Finalized SSC Board Elections with reporting by Canvassing Committee Members Tess Kruger and Don Andring. The Board accepted the committee's report. Elected were Stephen Rosenthal in the 4-year Education Position January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2015, and Susan Phillips in the 4-year Government Position January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2015.

Authorized staff to develop and implement a new service for the purpose of offering schools the StandardsInsight web-based tool for investigation and building understanding of the State adopted standards and negotiate a marketing partnership with Metro ECSU.

Terminated a contract with Arnolds for custodial supplies effective December 31, 2011.

Authorized staff to contract with AB Systems to provide professional technical assistance with the design and building of the SSC east parking lot.

January 2012 Regular Meeting

Election of Officers for the Year 2012:

- Chairperson Carol Cravath
- Clerk Don Andring
- Vice-Chairperson Peggy Merkel
- Treasurer Susan Phillips

Official Publication: Designated the Southeast Service Cooperative newsletter and the SSC website as the official newspaper posting for Southeast Service Cooperative members; designated the Rochester Post Bulletin to publish legal notices; and encourage members to publish Southeast Service Cooperative Board actions as a part of their individual Board minutes.

Rescheduled the Annual meeting to the date of the February regular Board meeting.

Approved initiation of use of Commerce Bank for accounts payable automation program.

Set the 2012 Board meeting schedule as follows:

Wednesday, February 29

Wednesday, March 28

Wednesday, April 18

Wednesday, May 23

Wednesday, June 27

Monday, July 30

Wednesday, August 15

Wednesday, September 26

Wednesday, October 24

Monday, November 26

Wednesday, December 26

Wednesday, January 23, 2013:
Regular/Annual Meeting

Suzanne Riley presented a declaration of appreciation to Dale Walston from the Board and staff on his ten-year anniversary at SSC and his accomplishments over these years.

Accepted a grant contract with the Minnesota Department of Education for \$500,000 for the period ending June 30, 2012, to develop and implement school improvement services under guidance of the MDE, contingent on reaching mutually agreed upon terms.

Awarded a contract for environmental health and safety management technical assistance to Institute for Environmental Assessment for the three-year period July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015.

Accepted the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, including hiring Lori Mack as Regional Education Specialist, moving Diane Schwinghammer into the position of Director of Instructional Services, and promoting Amy Grover effective February 1, 2012, and terminating the employment of Heidi Knepper effective January 20, 2012.

Amended the Personnel Benefit Plan to preface the outline of benefits with the following statement: "Employees who are funded by another entity for which SSC is providing fiscal hosting may not be eligible for all benefits and may be eligible for other

benefits designated by the contracting organization."

Casted SSC's three ballots for the nominated candidates on the MREA Executive Board ballot.

Chairperson Cravath appointed the 2011 Committee members:

- Finance Committee: Treasurer Sue Phillips, Chair Carol Cravath, Vice-Chair Peggy Merkel, Stephen Rosenthal, Tess Kruger
- Personnel Committee: Chair Carol Cravath, Sue Phillips, Don Andring, Tess Kruger, AAC Representative Superintendent Gary Kuphal
- Policies Committee: Marcia Ward, Brian Grudem, Mike Christensen, Don Andring, Al Nelson
- ByLaws Committee: Marcia Ward, Brian Grudem, Mike Christensen, Al Nelson

February 2012 Annual and Regular Meeting

Chairperson Cravath called to order the joint Annual Meeting and Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors. Suzanne introduced Lori Mack, Regional Education Specialist, who started work on February 1. Lori provided some of her background.

Accepted the settlement report for the 2010-2011 School Health Insurance Pool.

Approved the proposed new three-year contract with Bill Colopoulos effective July 1, 2012.

Authorize the Executive Director to open the position of MDE Regional Center of Excellence Director and conduct the search and hiring process pursuant to instructions from the Minnesota Department of Education.

Accepted a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education to conduct a two-day training session for advanced placement educators in the amount of \$15,450.

Accepted the application of Olmsted County to become a member of Southeast Service Cooperative effective January 27, 2012.

Approved a three-year lease through Kinetic Leasing for Konica-Minolta copier equipment at an annual projected cost of \$11,500.

Calendar

March**AAC Meeting**

March 23
12:00 - 3:00 PM

MSTP Math Cohort Session

March 27
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

SMART Board Beginner

March 27
8:30 - 11:30 AM

An Introduction to Archipelago Learning Products

March 28
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

**Gifted and Talented Network Session
(At Cascade Meadow)**

March 28
12:00 - 3:00 PM

SMART Board Advanced

March 28
1:30 - 4:30 PM

SSC Board Meeting

March 28
5:30 - 8:00 PM

MSTP Life Science Cohort

March 29
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

**Playground Safety:
Children depend on it**

March 29
10:30 AM - 1:30 PM

April**SMART Board Beginner**

April 17
1:30 - 4:30 PM

SSC Board Meeting

April 18
5:30 - 8:00 PM

SMART Board Intermediate

April 24
3:30 - 6:30 PM

SMART Board Advanced

April 26
8:30 - 11:30 AM

Introduction to the Revised Social Studies Standards

April 26
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

May**Introduction to the Revised Social Studies Standards**

May 1
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

**Local Literacy Plan
Development Day**

May 8
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Introduction to the Revised Social Studies Standards

May 8
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

**Gifted and Talented
Network Session**

May 9
12:00 - 3:00 PM

**Local Literacy Plan
Follow-Up Day**

May 14
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**MASA Region 1 Administrators
Spring Session**

May 15
11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

AAC Meeting

May 17
12:00 - 3:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting

May 23
5:30 - 8:00 PM



- Save the Date -

Minnesota Native American Voices

Symposium Dates - *July 24 & 25 or August 14 & 15*

Audience: Principals and K - 12 Teachers

Keynote speakers: John Bobolink, Norm Benson and more

Symposium will focus on:

Minnesota Native American Culture

Minnesota Standards related to Minnesota American Indians

Resources will include:

Native American resources for purchase from Birchbark Books

Art and Artifact collections from Plains Art Museum, Fargo



-more information available soon-

Sponsored by and held at Southeast Service Cooperative

210 Wood Lake Drive SE - Rochester, Minnesota

- www.ssc.coop -



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For up-to-date news, visit
www.ssc.coop

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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
- 2..... Dental Reimbursement
- 3..... Staff Development
- 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.

	name	phone	email	service area
SSC Staff	Suzanne Riley	(507) 281-6673	.....sriley@ssc.coop.....	Executive Director
	Katie Sue Cunningham	(507) 281-6667	.....kcunningham@ssc.coop.....	Training and Program Technician
	Amy Grover	(507) 281-6693	.....agrover@ssc.coop.....	Program and Planning Manager
	Chris Hancock.....	(507) 281-6671	.....chancock@ssc.coop.....	Accounting Technician
	Kari Kubicek.....	(507) 281-6668	.....kkubicek@ssc.coop	Program Coordinator
	Kirsten Kuehl	(507) 281-6670	.....kkuehl@ssc.coop.....	Instructional Services Coordinator
	Nicole LaChapelle	(507) 281-6674	.....nlachapelle@ssc.coop.....	Communications and Program Technician
	Lori Mack	(507) 281-6691	.....lmack@ssc.coop.....	Regional Education Specialist
	Dick Riley	(507) 281-6666	.....driley@ssc.coop	Program Assistant
	Katie Schmitt	(507) 281-6676	.....kschmitt@ssc.coop	Cooperative Purchasing Program Assistant
	Diane Schwinghammer	(507) 281-6683	.....dschwinghammer@ssc.coop	Director of Instructional Services
	Bob Tweten.....	(507) 281-6663	.....btweten@ssc.coop	Health and Safety Manager
	Dale Walston	(507) 281-6675	.....dwalston@ssc.coop	Director of Operations
	SSC Consultants			
Consultants	Bill Colopoulos	(507) 281-6690	.....bcolopoulos@ssc.coop.....	Health and Benefits Consultant
	Mary Haney	(507) 281-6686	.....mhaney@ssc.coop	School Improvement Consultant
	Kathy Hartman.....	(507) 281-6685	.....khartman@ssc.coop	School Improvement Consultant
	Roger Jones.....	(507) 951-6749rjoneshr@yahoo.com	Human Resource Mgmt Consultant
	IEA (Institute for Environmental Assessment)			
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	Angie Radel	(507) 281-6682angie.radel@ieainstitute.com	Senior Project Manager
	Pat Weir	(507) 281-6677	.....pat.weir@ieainstitute.com.....	Regional Manager