

# Cooperative Connection

September 2013

Southeast Service Cooperative

Vol XXIV, No. 3

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## Clarity - Measure the true impact of technology on your district's student achievement

By Kari Kubicek

SSC is very excited to offer our districts the opportunity to purchase Clarity from BrightBytes. This is a needs assessment survey tool that collects data from administrators, teachers, and students in four areas (classroom, access, skills and environment). These four areas represent the analyses necessary to successfully assess technology integration and its impact on student learning.



The framework examines the measurement of student and teacher **access** to technology at school and at home, teacher and student **skills**, and factors in the school **environment**, such as relevant policies and

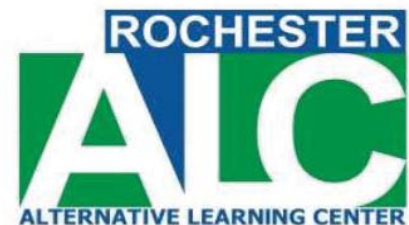
*Clarity continued on page 17*

## SSC to host ice cream social for Rochester ALC students and staff

By Nicole LaChapelle

To welcome the students and staff of the Rochester Alternative Learning Center to their new home on Wood Lake Drive, SSC, along with a group of its Wood Lake Park neighbors, will host an ice cream social on Friday, September 27, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM.

SSC Executive Director Suzanne Riley shared, "We are excited that our eclectic neighborhood will be graced with an extraordinary learning institution. The Rochester ALC staff are committed professionals, the building is well suited for meeting alternative learning needs, and the students are committed learners who meet life's challenges constructively and head on. We hope to make Wood Lake Park a great new home for them."



SSC expects around 170 ALC students and 30 staff members to attend.

The following Wood Lake Park businesses and organizations have assisted SSC with resources for the social: Bimbo Bakeries USA, Child Care Resource and Referral, Country Inn & Suites By Carlson, Rochester South, Culligan of Rochester, Culver's South, Extended Stay America, Rochester, South, IEA, Inc., and Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center.

## SSC recognized for exemplary workplace practices

SSC has been honored with the 2013 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Excellence in Workplace Effectiveness and Flexibility for its use of flexibility and other aspects of workplace effectiveness as a workplace strategy to increase business and employee success. This is the fifth time SSC has received this honor, but the first time in the At-Large Category.

This prestigious award, part of the national When Work Works project administered by Families and Work Institute (FWI) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), recognizes employers of all sizes and types in the region and across the country.

"We're thrilled to receive this recognition for our workplace practices," said Suzanne Riley, Executive Director of Southeast Service Cooperative. "Thanks to a collaborative spirit between the Board of Directors and all co-workers, we are able to support each other in our work so that we can be flexible with many aspects of our jobs and our employment. Our top priority is cultivating a relationship culture that manifests in each employee's interactions, results in high performance, assists in managing diverse needs, and sustains a flexible work environment. Our staff and board highly value the designation as a flexible workplace."

Workplace flexibility — such as flextime, part-time work and compressed workweeks — has been demonstrated to help



businesses remain competitive while also benefiting employees. Flexibility in combination with other aspects of an effective workplace—such as learning opportunities and supervisor support for job success—can have a powerful impact on employee engagement and motivation.

"Our research consistently finds that employees in effective and flexible workplaces have greater engagement on the job and greater desire to stay with their organization. In addition, they report lower stress levels and better overall health," said Ellen Galinsky, FWI president.

The Sloan Awards are unique for their rigorous, two-step selection process, which involves an evaluation of employers' flexibility programs and practices, and a confidential employee survey on the key ingredients of an effective and flexible workplace. All applicants are measured against national norms from the *National Study of Employers*.

"As a recipient of the 2013 Sloan Award, SSC ranks among the top 20% of employers nationally in

terms of its programs, policies and culture for creating an effective and flexible workplace," Galinsky said. "In addition, what makes this honor so special is that their employees have corroborated this, affirming that it is indeed an effective and flexible workplace."

When Work Works is a national project to educate the business community on the value of workplace flexibility by sharing research and promising practices, and conducting the annual Sloan Awards. It is an ongoing initiative of FWI and SHRM.

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For more information about the When Work Works initiative and the Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Excellence in Workplace Effectiveness and Flexibility, visit [www.whenworkworks.org](http://www.whenworkworks.org)

# Over 800 students attend conference!

*By Katie Sue Cunningham*

The Young Authors, Young Artists Conference was held on May 21 and 22, 2013. Over 800 students and 158 adults experienced a day of learning.

Students in grades 4-6 from public, private and home schools across southeast Minnesota gathered at the Heinz Center at 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 annual 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 conference has been held for over 26 years.

Session topics range from character development to book arts to watercolor artwork to storytelling. Presenters were a mix of individuals who have presented at the conference in the past and several individuals who were brand new to the conference.

Students submitted stories, poems and illustrations that can be found on our website (<http://www.ssc.coop/Page/122>).

Mark your calendars for the 2014 conference on May 20-21, 2014! More information and brochures will be available early in 2014.





# Pooling, fully insured, self-insurance and the Affordable Care Act

By Bill Colopolous

While the Affordable Care Act will expand employer coverage to include new employees who work 30 or more hours per week, it will also raise the question of which funding method an employer should use for their health benefits program. In this article, we will explore three common methods of funding: pooling, fully insured and self-insurance. We will also explore strategic considerations for dealing with the additional plan liabilities created by the ACA.

## Pooling

The term “pooling” takes on new meaning under the ACA, since all insurance carriers will be offering what will essentially be pooled coverage to insured groups. The advent of community rating, elimination of pre-existing conditions limitations and health questionnaires means that all members purchasing an insurer’s health insurance policies will be joining their community rating pool. As is the case with all pools, your own claims data will determine whether you are providing or receiving a subsidy to or from the pool.

Other pooling methods exist outside of the carrier world. Unions, trade groups, public sector employers have all formed a variety of pools. How pools rate member groups vary by pooling method. Some pools require participation in a narrower choice of plans and issue common rates to all participating groups. Other pools allow groups greater flexibility in terms of rating based on their own



claims experience and choice of benefit plans.

## Fully Insured

In general, being insured in the new ACA environment means that your group’s claims experience will be less of a factor in your rating. This will smooth the highs and lows of your future rate increases or decreases, but your rates will likely be higher (at least at first) due to the assimilation of increased risk factors that are affecting the carrier pools as a result of the ACA’s benefit mandates, community rating and elimination of pre-existing conditions limitations.

## Employer Health Plan Impact of the ACA

If your group is a higher risk group, the new ACA rating methods may result in lower premiums than would have been charged under the previous method, which generally held groups more accountable for their own claims. On the other hand, if your group is a lower risk group, being fully insured under the ACA will likely result in higher premium charges to your organization and your employees.

## Self-Insurance

Assuming responsibility for paying your own claims, establishing and holding your own reserves and paying for your program administration in a self-insured plan will give you some autonomy in choosing what benefits you offer and what they cost. Basically, your costs will reflect your own level of risk. The on-going challenge is determining whether or not this will be an advantage for your organization now and in the future. This decision must be made carefully; it is a matter of risk tolerance, and should not be based on what advantages may have been realized by self-insurance in the past. It’s relatively easy to see (in retrospect) what advantages self-insuring may have provided during periods of lower claim activity or for a group that has demonstrated lower risks over a period of time. Predicting future costs – especially in the new ACA environment – is far more problematic.

There are pluses and minuses regarding future PPACA plan liabilities that can impact a self-insured decision. We begin with the preservation of the “traditional” advantages of self-insuring: avoiding state premium taxes, the group holds its own reserves and takes advantage of that and other cash flow advantages. Plus, if predicted claims do not materialize, the savings accrue immediately and directly to the group.

On the other hand, the PPACA also represents some additional

# Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder Program Opportunity offered through SSC

By Kari Kubicek

SSC is currently recruiting districts to join the Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder (VREP) program for the 2013-14 school year. VREP captures student interest with the opportunity to develop and expand their learning across the curriculum using Virtual Reality (VR) and 3D. Students become self-motivated learners and mentors for their peers, choosing to create VR projects related to their own interests and for educational use within the VREP consortia. Student projects serve to 1) demonstrate the designer's competency on key national and state learning standards and 2) provide avenues for other students to better understand and demonstrate their learning against key standards. VREP could serve as your solution for students having trouble succeeding in traditional learning environments.

A one day VREP Training Institute has been scheduled for November 20, 2013, from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM, at SSC. This training session will include a session for your students and one or two adults. The student training is designed to educate them in the use of the VR system and the Blender open source software. The separate session for teachers will provide them with some information

for facilitating their students in the successful use of VREP as a learning resource as well as time to network with other VREP teacher facilitators. Teachers will also be provided time to observe their students work during the training.

The **Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder (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. Students within the program are offered high school and/or college credit for their work and 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 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.

Students in VREP are charged with creating virtual reality and 3D models, simulations and projects which serve several purposes around accelerating student learning.

**Projects demonstrate their understanding of key, high-level national and state educational standards and expectations. Projects are connected to curriculum areas and grade level expectations, providing the opportunity for other students to understand key concepts and ideas through the use of VR and 3D. VREP projects are connected to national and state standards and available via a secure on-line library to**

*VREP continued from page 5*

all VREP schools and students, thus rapidly expanding the availability of high-quality VR and 3D applications for schools and children.

**The program is demanding, and students are expected to provide presentations and clearly articulate what they have learned on short notice.** Students must show a willingness and desire to be independent learners and be willing to work in an environment where self-discipline and maturity are expected.

#### **VREP Outcomes:**

- Provide students with self-directed, interest-driven, project-based, rigorous learning in independent and collaborative environments in which they can learn and demonstrate technical skills, content expertise, teamwork, discipline, and 21st century communication and employability skills.
- Create a consortium of student-designers who develop and share virtual reality learning environments that assist others in their learning of critical standards and competencies.
- Impact the role and perception of the teacher as “director of learning” to the role of the teacher as “facilitator of learning” through a very different approach to learning

environments and approaches.

**Impressive results** are emanating from the initial set of pilot schools – formerly disengaged or minimally engaged students re-engage and improve their GPA, take increasingly difficult courses, and begin to see themselves as learners and capable students. At-risk, special education, high and low achieving students have all benefited from participation in VREP.

**VREP is more about transforming learning and teaching than it is about technology.** VR and 3D are simply vehicles for changing the traditional teacher-student relationships. VREP has no defined curriculum and requires no “lesson plans” from a teacher.

Rather than trying to anticipate what students might need and building a structured plan for getting from A to B, VREP puts the learner out front. The idea is simple: Build a VR application that is educationally relevant and that demonstrates your learning. It is the teacher’s job to coach, support, facilitate, question, and challenge VREP students.

Teachers spend their time applying their content expertise, asking probing questions, and working side-by-side with

students as they work through problems and questions that have real meaning to them.

**In short, VREP teachers and schools create the conditions for students to engage and be successful and then make sure that the traditional system with all its constraints stays out of the student’s way!**

#### **How to sign up for the program:**

Districts interested in participating in the program should review and sign the VREP District Commitment Form and VREP Member Agreement Form and submit them to Katie Sue Cunningham at SSC. These documents outline expectations for districts wishing to participate in the program including the participation and financial commitments.

Please visit [www.vrep.org](http://www.vrep.org) to learn more about this program. You may also contact Katie Sue Cunningham via email at [kcunningham@ssc.coop](mailto:kcunningham@ssc.coop) or phone at (507) 281-6667 with any questions.

## SSC's Gifted and Talented Educator and Parent Networks to host region's foremost GATE experts

SSC will again offer a Regional Gifted and Talented Network and we are thrilled to have secured leading experts in the field of Gifted Education to work with our network educators! To provide support for the high ability students in your school(s), we invite you to join the Network for the 2013-2014 school year.

This network offers assistance and support to districts and GATE educators as they continue to develop, modify and expand programs and activities that benefit high ability learners at all grade levels. Its goal is to promote effective, thoughtful, and differentiated learning options for gifted children.

To help assist districts with vertically aligning their program, we encourage elementary, middle and high school educators to join the network.

Each network meeting will feature a presenter who specializes in Gifted and Talented Education. Time will be set aside at the start of each session to allow attendees to eat lunch and network and the session will end with round table discussions.

The SSC District Member Annual Fee is \$225, which includes attendance in all 4 sessions. Individual sessions are \$65 each.



In conjunction with our GATE Teacher Network, SSC is also offering a network for **parents** of gifted children. These evening sessions, which are held from 5:30 - 7:00 PM, feature the same GATE experts that present at the teacher network. Sessions focus on the challenges and joys of raising a gifted child. GATE Parent Network sessions cost \$12 each.

The network's goal is to promote effective, thoughtful, and differentiated learning options and parenting tips for caregivers of gifted children.

For more information, click [here](#) or contact SSC's GATE Network Coordinators:

Lori Mack  
lmack@ssc.coop  
(507) 281-6691  
or  
Nicole LaChapelle  
nlachapelle@ssc.coop  
(507) 281-6674

### 2013/14 Gifted and Talented Educator Network Dates/Topics

October 24

#### ***Motivating Your Gifted but Reluctant Learner***

Dr. Diane Heacox

January 16

#### ***Enhancing Professional Development Using Case Studies: Underrepresented Populations***

Wendy Behrens - MDE

March 20

#### ***Teaching to All Types of Brains***

Dr. Jane Kise

May 1

#### ***Perfectionism***

Dr. Thomas S. Greenspon

*Sessions take place from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at SSC.*

### 2013/14 Gifted and Talented Parent Network Dates/Topics

October 24

#### ***Supporting School Success***

Dr. Diane Heacox

January 16

#### ***Bringing Out the Best***

Wendy Behrens - MDE

March 20

#### ***Parenting to All Types of Brains***

Dr. Jane Kise

May 1

#### ***Perfectionism***

Dr. Thomas S. Greenspon

*Sessions take place from 5:30 – 7:00 PM at SSC.*



## SSC partners with SafeSchools to offer safety and compliance training and more to all of our members

*By Kari Kubicek*

SSC has partnered with SafeSchools to provide member districts the opportunity to ensure a safe environment for their students and staff with the following products:

- SafeSchools Training offers an online staff training and compliance management system and includes a library of 100% school-focused courses matched with a state of the art compliance management system,
- SafeSchools MSDS offers an online MSDS (material safety data sheet) management system that allows users to organize, update, and store chemical inventory lists and MSDS's into virtual binders, accessible from any computer with an Internet connection,
- SafeSchools Alert is an online incident reporting and tracking system that allows students, staff, and parents to confidentially report safety concerns to your administration 24/7/365; and,
- SafeSchools Accident is an online accident tracking and first report of injury system that lets you record, investigate, and manage accidents and injuries anywhere on your campus, through any web-enabled device.

SSC has negotiated the discounted pricing outlined below for each of the above components for our member districts:

| Product              | Price          | Minimum purchase |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| SafeSchools Training | \$5/FTE        | \$400 minimum    |
| SafeSchools MSDS     | \$100/building | \$300 minimum    |
| SafeSchools Alert    | \$.50/student  | \$400 minimum    |
| SafeSchools Accident | \$195/building | \$400 minimum    |

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Kari Kubicek at [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop). We also encourage you to explore the SafeSchools website at [www.safeschools.com](http://www.safeschools.com).

### SafePersonnel – Safety and Compliance training for non-academic organizations

We are very excited to announce that SafeSchools has recently developed a product specifically for non-academic organizations to assist our city, county, and non-profit members in streamlining their staff training and policy administration. SafePersonnel is a suite of safety and compliance programs including online staff training, safety incident reporting and tracking, MSDS management, and accident tracking. These customized programs can be used by municipalities, hospitals, businesses, and other non-education related organizations to increase safety and compliance. We encourage you to visit [www.safepersonnel.com](http://www.safepersonnel.com) to learn more about this product.

Questions? Contact Kari Kubicek at [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop).



# Cooperative Purchasing Contracts: The top 5 and the next 3



By Katie Schmitt  
Cooperative Purchasing Technician

Members who use the Top 5 contracts are making the most of the Cooperative Purchasing Program!

The Top 5 contracts are designed for members to save money by offering great discounts and providing easy, convenient ordering. The Top 5 represents the contracts with the largest aggregate spend among SSC members. These contracts are the result of formal bids and requests for proposals, meeting Minnesota bid requirements and saving members the time and money on soliciting bids and proposals.

1



## Tierney Brothers

Contract Category: Technology and Audio/Visual  
Why members like Tierney Brothers:

- Minnesota Company
- Discounts between 5-39% off list
- Quality products and installation
- Selection and inventory warehouse

2



## School Specialty

Contract Category: School Supplies  
Why members choose School Specialty:

- Discounts on wide selection of catalogs
- Great customer service with John Burman, regional sales representative
- Free shipping on orders over \$49.00
- Integrates with finance software
- Easy returns and exchanges

3



## CDW-G

Contract Category: Technology Equipment and Supplies  
Why members prefer CDW-G:

- Great selection and quality
- Nationally-bid discounts
- Easy ordering, tracking, and on-time delivery
- Product maintenance and installation
- Project planning assistance
- Hassle-free returns, warranties

4



## Nelson Auto Center

Contract Category: Vehicles  
What makes Nelson Auto a great choice?

- Discounts up to \$8,700 below dealer invoice
- Purchase the brand and model of vehicle you want

The top 5 and the next 3 continued from page 7

- Receive discounted pricing anytime throughout the year
- There are no buying windows
- Vehicles can be shipped to our local dealership for dealer preparation and pick-up
- Fleet expertise on your side from custom accessories to specialized vehicles



#### OfficeMax

Contract Category: Office Supplies, Technology and Furniture

Why members like OfficeMax:

- Competitive pricing and selection
- Free, next day delivery
- Planning assistance for technology and furniture/office design
- Discounts online and in-store (Need a [Retail Connect Card?](#))
- Easy returns and exchanges

#### The Next 3

The Next 3 contracts are the next tier of savings after the Top 5. If you aren't using these contracts yet, now is a good time to take a look at them.

- [Tremco](#) (roofing)
- [Konica Minolta](#) (copiers, printers and print management)
- [Paper](#) (annual copy paper sale)

Would you like to know how much you are utilizing the Top 5 or the Next 3? Contact at [kschmitt@ssc.coop](mailto:kschmitt@ssc.coop) for a Cooperative Purchasing spend report for your organization costs.

## 2013-14 Knowledge Bowl season begins



The 2013-14 Knowledge Bowl season is starting soon.

The annual Advisors' Meeting was held at the Southeast Service Cooperative on Tuesday,

September 17. Current and new advisors learned details and dates about the upcoming season. More information may be found on SSC's website.

Participation continues to grow each year. In 2012-13, 53 junior high and 106 senior high Knowledge Bowl teams competed.

The junior high season begins in October and culminates with Sub-Regionals and Regionals in January. Senior high Knowledge Bowl teams begin competitions in December with Sub-Regionals and Regionals in March. Five

teams from southeast Minnesota advance to the state competition on April 10-11, 2014, in Brainerd.

Information can be found at [www.ssc.coop](http://www.ssc.coop). For more information contact: Kirsten Kuehl, [kkuehl@ssc.coop](mailto:kkuehl@ssc.coop) or (507) 281-6670.

# Southeast Minnesota speller goes to National!

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. — Eleven-year-old Christine Farnberg had no trouble spelling a pair of words that would have befuddled dictionary namesake Noah Webster at the 86th Scripps National Spelling Bee on Wednesday, but a written test earlier in the day means the sixth-grade student at Holy Spirit Catholic School in Rochester will sit out today's semifinal round.

Farnberg took the stage to spell the words *raconteur* — a person who is skilled in relating stories — and *odiferous* — odorous or fragrant — during the public portion of the tournament but came up a few points short of the total needed to advance.

Only 42 of this year's 281 participants made it to the semifinal round.

"I was proud of how poised I was and how comfortable I was," she said. "You could always do better, I guess, but I think I did a pretty good job."

The Holy Spirit Elementary student said she wasn't thrown off by any of the questions.

"I knew all the words," she said. "I was pretty prepared."

Her father, Eric, characterized her performance as "wonderful."

"I couldn't be more proud of her," he said. "Her goal was to make it to the semifinals. She didn't make it but she finished tied for 42nd overall and I think that's just great."



*Christine Farnberg at the 86th Scripps National Spelling Bee.*

This year marked Christine's first appearance in the national competition but perhaps not her last. She is eligible for a return trip in 2014. And, while nervous, she walked straight to the microphone at center stage and spelled her words without hesitation.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee took on new meaning — or rather, lots of meanings — with organizers having decreed that the precocious youngsters need to prove they know more than just how to spell. The 281 competitors took a 45-minute computer test that probed their knowledge of both spelling and vocabulary, with the results to be combined with Wednesday's on stage round to determine who advances to the semifinals Thursday. Organizers announced the addition of vocabulary seven weeks ago, saying it reinforces the Bee's mission to encourage students to broaden their knowledge of the English language. They waited until all

of the qualifying Bees had been completed so that the spellers would be on equal footing in their preparation.

There will be another vocabulary test for those who make it to the semifinals, but tonight's finals will look the same as always — with spellers taking turns tackling incredibly difficult words under the bright lights of prime-time television until only a champion remains. The winner takes home more than \$30,000 in cash and prizes.

The environment Tuesday morning was more low-key. Still, the tension and pressure were evident. The test took place inside a large hotel ballroom, where about 50 spellers at a time sat at a long, rectangular table staring at computer screens.

The scoring system has the complexity usually associated with something like Olympic gymnastics: 24 words to spell and 24 words to define, although only 12 of each count toward the total score. There was also a pair of extra vocabulary words worth three points each. The spellers were asked to choose among four possible definitions for each vocabulary word.

Organizers might tinker with the format in future years, but there's little doubt that the vocabulary test is here to stay.

*This article was re-printed from the May 30, 2013 issue of the Rochester Post Bulletin.*



# Wabasha-Kellogg Public Schools establish lactation room

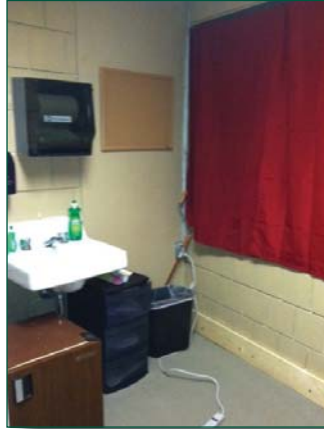
By Tara Nelson

Wabasha-Kellogg School District announces the establishment of a lactation room for employees, who choose to continue breastfeeding their new babies. The lactation room was a joint effort among school administrators, WK Wellness Committee, custodial staff and the Goodhue, Wabasha, and Pierce County Breast feeding Coalition. Wabasha-Kellogg School District employs 95 teachers and staff and has a K-12 student enrollment of 579.

According to the Olmsted Area Breast Feeding Coalition, the benefits of families who breast feed their infants extend from individuals to the workplace and to the community. Employers who support breast feeding reap the benefits of: 1) higher job productivity and employee satisfaction, 2) added recruitment incentive for women, 3) an enhanced reputation as a business concerned for the welfare of its employees and their families, and 4) lower health care costs associated with healthier, breast fed infants and their mothers. This also leads to a healthier workforce in the future.

The lactation room is centrally located within the K-12 school building, so any mother can easily access this room.

Jim Freihammer, Superintendent of Schools, stated, "I want Wabasha-Kellogg School District to be a place where employees can thrive in a



*Images of W-K's new lactation room.*

healthy working environment. With that in mind, our Wellness Committee believes that providing a lactation room helps the mother return to work earlier and with less stress knowing they have a private place to comfortably express nutritious milk for later feedings for their baby."

"As a new mom, I was grateful that my employer has a facility for me to use as it is one less thing in a busy day that I have to worry about. It is nice that we have a place that

we can relax and take care of what we need to without posting signs outside our rooms," said Amanda Christiansen, new mom.

Another new mom, Sheri El-Nashaar said, "I am thankful for the mother's room at W-K, as it enables me to provide the best possible nutrition for my daughter in a clean and calm atmosphere. It is comforting to know that our building and faculty have taken visible steps to support this crucial time of development and transition for both mother and child."

*Tara Nelson is a Health and Physical Education Teacher at Wabasha-Kellogg Schools.*

# Positively PBIS

By Katie Schmitt

Are you positively interacting with students every day? Is your school a safe, welcoming place for all students? Do students know what behavior is expected of them in classroom and non-classroom environments? How can you make these things happen in your school?

School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) provides a dynamic framework to create a positive school culture in which students are taught behavior expectations and rewarded for meeting or exceeding those expectations. PBIS empowers staff to pre-correct and prevent unwanted behaviors. PBIS is structured to meet each school's specific needs because it is designed by school staff.

What can you expect from PBIS?

- Improved classroom and school climate
- Decreased reactive management
- Maximized academic achievement
- Improved support for students with EBD
- Integrated academic and behavior initiatives
- Increased data-driven decision making

PBIS training is provided for school teams by the Minnesota Department of Education through the Southern Regional Implementation Project (S-RIP). The next training cycle begins in August 2014. To help you explore this opportunity and learn more about PBIS, I will present informational webinars on December 4 and December



18. Cohort 10 applications will be available in December and due in January.

If you would like more information on becoming a PBIS school, contact me at [kschmitt@ssc.coop](mailto:kschmitt@ssc.coop).

## Confused by the state standards?

StandardsInsightMN™ is a web-based application that “unpacks” the Minnesota English Language Arts, Literacy Across the Content Areas, and Mathematics standards, allowing districts to quickly and easily align curricula with them. The web-based system provides a robust database, explaining evidence of student attainment, key vocabulary for teachers, knowledge expected within the standard, skills embedded within the standard, and conceptual understandings within the standard. Want to learn more about how your neighboring districts are using StandardsInsightMN™? Contact Amy Grover at 507-281-6693 or [agrover@ssc.coop](mailto:agrover@ssc.coop) for an information session with your leadership team and/or a demonstration via webinar.

# StandardsInsightMN™

# SSC offers Moodle hosting services and Moodle training for member districts

*By Kari Kubicek*

SSC is offering Moodle hosting services to member districts interested in facilitating Moodle course content. A Moodle site requires a dedicated server and staff to administer and support users on the Moodle site. SSC's Moodle hosting service can provide districts a site to build and facilitate online course content without the worry of maintaining and supporting a Moodle server.

SSC offers two different hosting options for interested districts. Districts may choose to sign up for the Regional SSC Moodle site option or the Virtual Moodle server option. The Regional SSC Moodle site option provides hosting of an unlimited number of district-sponsored blended student courses and staff professional development courses on SSC's Moodle server. Regional decisions support the administration of the site including version upgrades and site settings.



SSC administrative support includes course adds, student enrollments, password resets, and basic Moodle use assistance. Dependent on the overall Regional Moodle Site usage, active user numbers may be limited.

The Virtual Moodle server option is available to districts interested in administering their own Moodle site with a separate domain name. District staff administering the site will be responsible for adding courses, student enrollments, password resets, and staff technical support. SSC will provide server

space and hardware and software technical support during business hours. The district will be responsible for management of the site including site administrative rights, site setting control, branding capabilities, and will be allowed unlimited space and users.

If your district is interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Kari Kubicek at [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop) or (507) 281-6668.

## **Moodle Training**

SSC also offers Moodle training opportunities to member districts. If interested in an SSC staff member traveling to your district to facilitate training for your staff, please contact Katie Sue Cunningham at [kcunningham@ssc.coop](mailto:kcunningham@ssc.coop) or (507) 281-6667.

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## First time iPad user?

Did you just get handed an iPad for your classroom? Have you had an iPad for a while, but still don't know how to use it? If so, this workshop is for you. In this workshop, participants will learn how to work with the iPad settings and adjust them to their preferences, experiment with native apps, and visit the iTunes store.

**Who should attend:** Individuals with limited or no experience working with an iPad

**What to bring:** Participants will need to come to class with a fully-charged iPad, knowledge of Apple ID along with your password. Contact Katie Sue Cunningham if you are unaware of how to obtain an Apple ID.

**When:** Tuesday, October 8 from 8:30 AM-2:00 PM

**Fee:** \$120 for Members of SSC or \$140 for Non-Members of SSC

**About the Presenter:** Katie Sue Cunningham is SSC's Certified SMART Board trainer. She also presents technology sessions on a variety of programs and devices including the Microsoft Office Suite



Southeast Service  
Cooperative



Science & Nature  
Conference

## Science & Nature Conference

**November 1, 2013**

For SSC Member Districts

Students in grades 2-4 will convene at the Wood Lake Meeting Center in Rochester, for the third annual Science & Nature Conference. The conference begins with check-in at 8:30 am and concludes at 1:55 pm. Students will take part in four engaging sessions from knowledgeable presenters from Minnesota.

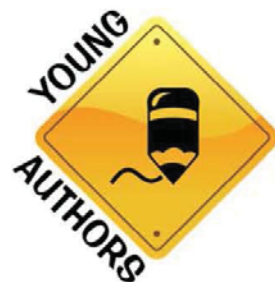
Check our website for more information  
([www.ssc.coop/Page/146](http://www.ssc.coop/Page/146))  
Or feel free to contact  
Katie Sue Cunningham at  
[kcunningham@ssc.coop](mailto:kcunningham@ssc.coop), 507.281.6667

*One chaperone said "I just want to thank you so much for offering a science & nature conference for younger students. Often, they are only offered for older students, but I think it's really important to expose the younger students to a variety of sciences as well."*

## Young Authors, Young Artists Middle School Conference November 7, 2013

For SSC Member Districts

- Who:** Students in grades 7-8  
**What:** Students will participate in four captivating sessions with knowledgeable presenters  
**When:** November 7, 2012- 8:30 am - 1:55 pm  
**Where:** Wood Lake Meeting Center in Rochester



The third annual conference will host four presenters who have made doing what they love into a career. These four sessions will be engaging and include hands-on activities.

Check our website for more information ([www.ssc.coop/Page/147](http://www.ssc.coop/Page/147))  
Or feel free to contact Katie Sue Cunningham at  
[kcunningham@ssc.coop](mailto:kcunningham@ssc.coop), 507.281.6667

# Owatonna school social worker named Minnesota's best

By Derek Sullivan

OWATONNA — Sue Schroeder received an unexpected birthday gift this summer.

The Wilson Elementary School social worker was named Minnesota School Social Worker of the Year by the Minnesota School Social Workers Association (MSSWA). Schroeder found out about the honor on July 2, which also happens to be her birthday. Last year's winner Dan Porter, who works for the White Bear Lake school district, made the call.

She will receive her award at the MSSWA Fall Conference, which takes place from Nov. 1-2 in St. Cloud.

Schroeder, who has worked in the Owatonna school district since 1990, was nominated by Wilson principal Julie Sullivan.

"Sue's role at Wilson Elementary School goes beyond what many social workers do at their schools," Sullivan said. "She's a valued resource for our students, staff and families. Working with elementary students is without a doubt a strength of Sue's. She knows just how to approach the needs of our students and support them, no matter what the situation is."

Schroeder began her social work career in 1983. For the first eight years, she worked with three Minnesota counties, providing child protection assessment, ongoing

case management, adoption and civil commitment screenings.

With the Owatonna school district, she has worked with students in preschool, elementary school and high school students, including the Alternative Learning Center. Since 1990, she has remained in the Owatonna school district because of the "positive, accepting approach the staff takes toward kids."

"Every day when I come to work, it's a very positive experience," Schroeder said. "Teachers look for the good. They promote whatever assets they see in kids. Generally, it's really an upbeat, collegial place to be. It makes it really easy to come to work every day." Schroeder currently works at Wilson, where two-thirds of its population qualify for the free and reduced lunch.

"If you think about that, seven out of 10 of our kids come from families who are struggling economically," Schroeder said. "That has a pervasive impact on them in a lot of ways. Parents want the best for their kids, but sometimes being able to afford what kids need is difficult for parents, so it just gives my role a greater, deeper breadth because there are a lot of kids that do very well. They just need to access some of the resources we have in the community."

Whether she is working with 8-year-olds or teenagers, Schroeder



*Wilson's Sue Schroeder was named 2013 School Social Worker of the Year by the Minnesota School Social Workers Association. (Derek Sullivan/People's Press)*

said she goes into a situation with the same goal.

"We have to build a trusting relationship with kids and their families. We have to see what's positively happening for them and build on that," she said.

"Regardless of their age, as social workers, we are looking to assist kids in working through any barriers that are preventing them from learning."

Schroeder said CulturFest, which annually takes place in late September at Wilson, is a great passion of hers. The community, multi-cultural festival traditionally brings together more than 2,500 people each year. For the past 14 years, Schroeder has chaired and written grants for the event.

*This article was re-printed with permission from the Owatonna People's Press.*

Clarity continued from page 1

administrative support. All three areas converge to produce the results in the **classroom**, which closely examines both teacher and student use of specific technologies for various types of learning.

The results obtained through the survey will help districts measure and drive technology decisions and investments, position students for success with technology in the 21st Century, measure the impact of technology spending on student learning, and save money on technology projects and professional development. At its core, the Clarity platform captures the link between school technology use and student achievement. It provides a quick, efficient way to measure the degree of instructional technology integration in the classroom, resulting in a detailed report that shows technology strengths in the district, provides a plan for meeting standards, identifies professional development needs, and allows districts to track progress over time. Furthermore, the aggregate regional data will help SSC identify common needs and target regional professional development opportunities.

SSC has contracted with brightBytes to offer the Clarity tool at the discounted annual fee of \$0.70/student, which allows you to offer unlimited surveys throughout the year. To sign up for this opportunity, click here to access the Clarity order form.

The service year will run August 15, 2013, through August 14, 2014. Statewide survey launch dates for multiple districts will be set for October 1 (deadline for districts to sign up September 13), November 1 (deadline for districts to sign up October 18), and December 2 (deadline for districts to sign up November 15). Please note that if a district wishes to upgrade to Clarity Pro, which includes parent surveys, they would have to pay an additional per student fee, which is based on their student enrollment.

First year cost includes support provided by brightBytes in the collection of data through the districts' distribution and collection of surveys completed by administrators, teachers, and students an unlimited number of times during the year, compilation and aggregation of collected data to provide insight into technology use within your district, and

identification of technology projects and professional development best suited to meet your district's needs.

For those of you who would like to learn more about Clarity before signing up, you can explore the Clarity for Schools website. A recorded webinar is also available for viewing upon request. Please contact Kari Kubicek at [kkubicek@ssc.coop](mailto:kkubicek@ssc.coop) with any questions.

## CLARITY FOR SCHOOLS MEASURES THE TRUE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

INVALUABLE AND  
INSIGHTFUL DATA



Understand how your teachers and students are using technology for learning

MEASURABLE  
PROGRESS



Measure how much your programs and professional development are impacting student learning

SIMPLE STEP-  
BY-STEP PLANS



Implement plans developed by experts and successfully implemented at schools

CUSTOMIZED  
ROADMAPS



Manage projects and professional development across multiple schools



*Pooling continued from page 4*

liabilities; even to self-insured groups. The ACA requires that self-insured plans provide “minimum essential coverage” which means that benefits offered must have an unlimited lifetime maximum, include certain covered expenses, including wellness and prevention benefits. The self-insured plan sponsor may also not impose pre-existing conditions limitations, which will likely affect the future cost of stop loss premiums that most self-insured plans have and upon which their risk tolerance depends. And of course, the self-insured plan sponsor’s aggregate claims liabilities remain higher than a traditionally insured plan – or even a pooled plan – may charge.

#### **Pool Rules vs. Self-Insurance**

Belonging to a pool means agreeing to play by a certain set of rules that are designed to protect the groups from each other. Under the ACA that boils down to ensuring all groups are following the same policy regarding participation; i.e., making sure that within each group, enough eligible members are participating that they collectively represent an even spread of risk. If one group were to discourage participation by charging higher employee premium contributions, resulting in only higher risk employees participating, that would create adverse risk that the other pool members would share. For a self-insured group, such adverse risk would be theirs and theirs alone. In a pool, their adverse risk would impact all participating members’ costs. Thus, from a risk election perspective, deciding to be a pool member is different than being self-insured.

#### **Managing aggregate costs under the ACA**

How will employers manage their increase in aggregate cost exposure generated by the ACA? This question is a key one for groups to consider as part of their decision of what funding method works best for them.

For most employers, aggregate cost exposure under the ACA is determined by three questions:

1. When we must redefine health plan eligibility down to 30 hours, how many more employees who are not eligible for health benefits now, will become eligible?
2. How many of the newly eligible employees will enroll in our health benefits program?
3. What changes will we have to make to our health plan benefits to become compliant with the ACA – and what will these changes cost?

The answer to the first question does not define additional plan liabilities for the employer, but only their exposure to potential additional liability. The additional liability itself is determined by the answers to the second and third questions.

Once the answers to (2) and (3) are known, the employer is faced with an array of possible solutions aimed at reducing their aggregate cost exposure:

- Offering a minimum value plan or some other higher deductible plan
- Develop a contribution strategy aimed at directing some employees to the

public Exchanges and paying the penalties instead of current premiums

- Redesigning their plan as a defined contribution program that will allow offering 105 healthcare programs such as HRAs and/or participating in a private exchange plan

Naturally, pool participation rules will require that groups stick more closely to “status quo” solutions such as the example illustrated by the first bullet. However, while many creative solutions exist for reducing aggregate cost increases projected by the ACA’s new plan eligibility rules, a group’s first step should be determining just what additional liabilities may exist and to quantify them. Those measurements must be made before effective solutions may be prescribed.

#### **Summary**

Appetite for risk, uncertainty regarding additional ACA cost liabilities, which solutions are palatable to whatever funding program is currently being used and, finally, which funding vehicle is the best choice are all strategic concerns for employer groups in the new ACA environment. Sound strategic decision processes must be used to assess and evaluate these important considerations.

For more information, please contact:

Bill Colopoulos, (507) 281-6690,  
bcolopoulos@ssc.coop

*Bill is Southeast Service Cooperative’s health benefits consultant.*

## Recent Board meeting actions and information

**Note: Complete SSC Board of Directors meeting minutes are available on the SSC website at [www.ssc.coop](http://www.ssc.coop).**

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

### June 2013 Meeting

Accepted the 2012 CCOGA Health Pool settlement report and credited calculated excess claims funds to the Cities of Harmony and Spring Grove

Accepted the recommendation for the 2014 CCOGA Health Insurance Pool Bid; awarded the group health plan administration contract to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota; awarded SelectAccount the contract for HSA, FSA, HRA and cafeteria plan administration; and recommended to the MSC VEBA Committee the acceptance of SelectAccount's bid for VEBA Administration.

Approved the School Health Pool 2013-2014 Wellness Incentive Program as proposed.

Approved contracts with the following consultants for the 2013-2014 year: Lobbyist contracts with Capitol Hill Associates, Lindquist & Vennum, National Strategies, Inc. and David A. Bieging Law Office PLLC for a

total combined amount of \$31,609; The Kinney Firm for \$24,037, and Creative Benefit Consultants for \$62,478; total contracts \$118,124.

Dick Riley attended the meeting, and the Board thanked him upon his retirement for his 20 years of service to SSC.

Accepted the grant contract with the Minnesota Department of Education for year 2013-2014 of the Southeast/Metro Center of Excellence, including MDE approved employee compensation for Center Staff and all other expenses of the program, in the amount of \$940,914.

Authorized staff to move forward with the expansion of the Wood Lake Meeting Center, including staff planning of final design, extending the contract with Armon Architecture for assistance in securing bids for construction contracts and project management, and scheduling and implementation of the expansion.

Appointed the following administrators to new terms on the SSC Administrative Advisory Committee for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015:

- Area 1: Ron Wilke, LaCrescent (continuing in a new term)

- Area 3: Gary Kuphal, Plainview-Elgin-Millville (continuing in a new term)
- Area 2: Mark Matuska, Kasson-Mantorville
- Area 4: Beth Giese, Cannon Falls
- At Large: Rachel Udstuen, Spring Grove (continuing in a new term)
- At Large: Ed Harris, Chatfield

Adopted the 2013-2014 budget as proposed.

### July 2013 Meeting

Awarded a regional contract for the purchase of bread to Bimbo Bakeries.

Accepted the recommendation of the CCOGA Pool Formula Committee and adopt the 2014 Plan Year City/County Health Pool renewal formula and the resulting rate adjustments, maintained the current stop loss insurance level for the City/County Pool; directed and authorized staff to establish special conditions and adjustments for groups as warranted by unique group circumstances.

Accepted the Rochester Area Foundation grant in the amount of \$1,500 for a Gifted and Talented Parent Network in 2013-2014.

## Recent Board meeting actions and information continued...

Accepted the MDE grant contract in the amount of \$118,630 for MSTP programming in 2013-2014..

Accepted the resignation of Kristina Robertson effective August 7 and thanked her for her service during the first full year of the Center of Excellence; directed staff to immediately conduct a search and fill the position of Center of Excellence ELD Specialist.

### August 2013 Strategic Planning Meeting

The Board of Directors, Administrative Advisory Committee, and SSC Staff conducted a strategic planning

session to review vision, values, contextual map of influencing factors, and chart of “big questions and bold steps” to provide guidance for the staff in updating goals, strategies, and action plans. The SSC 2013-2014 Annual Plan will be based on the direction established at this session.

### August 2013 Regular Meeting

Approved a memorandum of understanding allowing Rochester Public Schools, Rochester Alternative Learning Center to use the vacant lot owned by SSC in Wood Lake Park for the school’s garden program.

Approved the employment of Kelly Frankenfield effective August 21, 2013 as Regional Center of Excellence Advocate/ELD Specialist.

Accepted the request of Rushford-Peterson Public Schools for the group of eligible employees to participate in the SSC School Health Insurance Pool effective September 1, 2013.

Authorized staff to arrange for a flexible, as needed hourly, long-term, temporary position to provide accounting support through the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

## Looking for a data management system as you gear up for educator evaluations?

As you know, the Southeast Service Cooperative, in partnership with the other Minnesota Service Cooperatives, has vetted many of the tools available. Knowing that each district has different needs and that no one solution would be a match for all, we did not select just one product. Instead, we are recommending any of the following high-quality products, and have negotiated reduced rates on behalf of all Minnesota schools. To learn more, please contact Amy Grover at 507-281-6693 or [agrover@ssc.coop](mailto:agrover@ssc.coop), or visit our website for contact information for the representative from each partner company.





## Calendar

**October***October 1***Academic Vocabulary Strategies  
Grades 6-12**

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

*October 7***Transforming Your Schools**

10:00 AM - 3:30 PM

**Edmentum Lunch and Learn**

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

*October 8***Introduction to iPad**

8:30 AM - 2:00 PM

**Nonfiction Reading Power**

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

*October 9 - 11***Junior High Knowledge Bowl  
Round Robins***October 14***AAC Meeting**

12:00 - 3:00 PM

*October 15***Flipped Learning Classroom**

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

*October 16***eProcurement 101**

11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

*October 22***MSBA/EdMN Teacher Evaluation  
Team Training**

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

*October 23***Tierney Classroom Tech Tour**

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

**SSC Board Meeting**

5:00 - 8:00 PM

*October 24***MSTP Elementary Science**

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

**iPads for Education**

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

**GATE Network (Teachers)**

1:00 - 4:00 PM

**GATE Network (Parents)**

5:30 - 7:00 PM

*October 25***Playgrounds and Roller Coasters:****Bullying, Brain Research and Resiliency**

8:30 - 11:00 AM

**iPads for Education**

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

**School Climate/Bullying Prevention:****Breathing, Naming and Feeling Your Way  
to a Healthy Classroom**

1:00 - 3:30 PM

*October 26***Save Your License Saturday**

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

*October 28***Setting Goals and Making Plans for  
School Success**

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

*October 28 - 30***Junior High Knowledge Bowl  
Round Robins***October 31***MASA Fall Meeting**

9:00 AM - 1:30 PM

**November***November 1***Science & Nature Conference for****Grades 2-4**

8:30 AM - 1:55 PM

*November 5***Writing Power**

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

*November 7***Young Authors Young Artists Conference  
for Middle Grades**

8:30 AM - 1:55 PM

*November 11***SMART Board Intermediate**

8:30 - 11:30 AM

*November 12***SMART Board Beginner**

8:30 - 11:30 AM

*November 14***MSTP Math Session**

8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

*November 15***Junior High Knowledge Bowl  
Round Robins***November 18-19***Junior High Knowledge Bowl  
Round Robins***November 19***Suicide Signs and Prevention**

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

*November 20***VREP Training**

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

*November 21***eProcurement 101**

11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

**AAC Meeting**

12:00 - 3:00 PM

*November 25***SSC Board Meeting**

5:00 - 8:00 PM

**December***December 2-5***Senior High Knowledge Bowl  
Round Robins***December 3***Academic Vocabulary Strategies  
Grades K-5**

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

*December 5***MSTP Science Session**

8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

**PBIS Coaches Training**

9:30 AM - 2:00 PM

*December 19***Administrators Advisory Committee**

12:00 - 3:00 PM

*December 23***SSC Board Meeting**

5:00 - 8:00 PM



SSC is a 2013 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 #

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 or 1-800-657-6996 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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## "I Have A Dream" youth video competition

As part of Human Rights Week, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) is sponsoring a video contest to hear from youth across the state about their take on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Dream" and what its ideals mean to them in their lives today. Finalists will be honored the first week of December during Human Rights Week in Minnesota and their videos will be showcased by MDHR on YouTube. Commissioner Lindsey will recognize the finalists at their school and discuss diversity and Dr. King's Dream with the student's class.

Videos should creatively show how participants view race, diversity and the ideals of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream today in their life, their school and their community.

Youth in grades 4 - 12 and adults ages 18 - 25 are eligible to submit videos, which may be 30 seconds to 2 minutes in length. The submission deadline is November 16, 2013. Click here to learn more.

