

Cooperative Connection

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Southeast Service Cooperative

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Grow your literacy expertise with SSC's newest learning opportunities

By Lori Mack

Can you believe it is almost time for second semester to begin? 2012 is nearly complete and 2013 is almost here. Shortly after the holiday break I would always return to my classroom feeling refreshed from the holiday and ready to get back to work. Then, it would hit me: Where did the first half of the year go and how could I fit in all the learning that needed to take place for my students before June?

I am hearing from many of SSC's member educators that they are focusing on academic vocabulary



and writing across the content areas as their learning targets for the next two years. What is your district doing to fully implement the 2010 English Language Arts

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Southeast Minnesota represented at national conference

by Amy Grover

The Association of Educational Service Agencies unites organizations similar to the Service Cooperatives from across the country to help regional cooperatives continually improve services to member organizations. At the end of November, several Southeast Service Cooperative Staff, Board, and AAC members attended the 27th Annual AESA Conference. The theme of Inform, Innovate, Implement focused on



issues of importance to the field of education, including

- Board Leadership Strategies in the 21st Century
- Standards
- Cyber Learning / Hybrid Learning
- Shared Services

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Enrollment now open for online courses through SSC's Online Learning Program: SOLO

By Kari Kubicek

Southeast Online Learning Options (SOLO), an approved online learning provider through the Minnesota Department of Education, is now accepting online course enrollments for the upcoming semester.

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 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.

SOLO online course opportunities will be offered to students in grades 9-12 who are currently enrolled in a SOLO member district. Expectations for district enrollment in SOLO programming for student access to courses are as follows:

1. That district staff work directly with SOLO staff and the district retains student funding and student reporting responsibilities.
2. The district will pay a SOLO membership fee and course fees to SOLO.

Online course offerings and online instruction will be provided through Aventa Learning including core subjects, world languages,

electives, honors, and Advanced Placement courses. All SOLO courses will be facilitated by Minnesota licensed instructors in the specific content area. Future offerings will include online courses developed by southeast Minnesota district teachers upon approval by SOLO and MDE.

Visit the SOLO website at www.solo.coop to learn more about how to enroll in an online course as well to view a listing of available courses. Contact Kari Kubicek (kkubicek@ssc.coop) or (507) 281-6668 at SSC with any questions or to learn more about this program.

Online care helps reduce employee health care costs

By Bill Colopoulos



With more and more health benefit programs using high deductibles to reduce premiums, plan participants are being exposed to higher out of pocket costs for routine and minor health care services. Even an outpatient office visit can cost as much as \$150-\$200 – expenses that most employees now have to pay on their way towards satisfying an annual deductible of \$2,000 or more. Even so-called “quick clinics” can cost \$50 - \$75 per visit.

Fortunately, there are cost savings alternatives for less serious, chronic care services that are less expensive than “quick clinics” – and far less than office visits, urgent care or emergency room facilities.

Online or “virtual” health care provides patients with the convenience of online access

to a health care professional that can provide an assessment of their acute health care needs. Virtual care typically provides a range of services similar to “quick clinics” such as Minute Clinic; e.g., prescription services.

Online care is intended to be an effective substitute for more expensive and less convenient alternatives such as emergency room and urgent care facilities. Virtual care can also be a more accessible alternative to worksite clinics provided by employers.

Online care is now available through a variety of Internet providers. Using an Internet link, a patient can, in the convenience of their work place or even their home, set up a video conference with a clinician who can prescribe treatments and issue prescriptions for health care conditions similar to those serviced by quick clinics. The prices for on line services range from \$25 - \$45; depending on the level of clinical care provided. In some cases, online care is provided by an MD; in other instances, by a nurse practitioner.

“Office hours” for online services provided by clinicians

typically run from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday through Friday; with weekend hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Some online health care services provide automated information and nurse lines during the hours when face-to-face on line clinician access is not available.

Online vs. On-Site Clinics

It has become popular for larger employers to build and staff their own on-site “quick care” clinics. These clinics provide services at the worksite that are paid for directly by the employer and provided to the employees in addition to their health benefit plans. The idea is that for every on-site visit, an employee will avoid the use of a traditional office visit, urgent care facility or emergency room admission. The employee may also seek acute care for simple, straightforward conditions without having to leave the workplace; improving productivity and absence management.

However, on-site clinics have their limitations:

1. They are far more expensive to set up and maintain; their per visit cost is usually quite a bit higher than on line care.

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2. Multiple site employers are challenged to choose a site for their on-site clinic – or to provide similar services to all their locations.
3. Only the largest employers are able to justify the clinic being open even five days a week. For most on-site clinic sponsors, two or three days a week are the most they can afford.
4. With on-site clinics, weekends remain a gap; left to traditional service providers.
5. Only the employees have ready access to the on-site clinics; spouses and children are left to traditional service providers.

All of the aforementioned limitations are addressed more efficiently with online care providers. Moreover, online care providers can be used effectively by a group of any size, with any number of locations and by both employees and dependents. Bi-lingual services are also available much easier and more efficiently on line.

Health Plan Integration

Most on-site and online care services are provided outside of the health plan. On-site clinic services are typically provided at no charge to employees.



Online care is either paid 100% by the employee, with pharmacy expenses being eligible under the health plan, or provided to the employee at no charge – IF the service can be integrated with the employees' health plan. In cases where the online care service is integrated with the health plan, the employer may or may not waive some or all of the cost, depending on the type of plan they offer. In the case of an HSA-compatible plan (for example) the online care service charge may be counted towards the employee deductible, in order to maintain HSA compatibility.

Set Up Costs for Online Care

Online care expenses fall into two categories:

- The per visit service charge
- The cost of establishing a worksite location where employees can go during office hours to access on line care (optional)

In the latter case, the expenses incurred are minimal – a computer and ancillary equipment, such as a blood

pressure monitor, disposable thermometers, etc. Compared to on-site clinic set up expenses, online care costs are minimal.

Benefit to Employees and Dependents

Online care provides employees and their dependents easy, fast and affordable access to health care services at a fraction of the cost of more traditional alternatives; a critical cost consideration now that employee deductible and out of pocket liabilities require upfront payment.

Bill Colopoulos is a healthcare economist and consultant serving the Southeast Service Cooperative's health insurance pools. He can be reached at bcolopoulos@ssc.coop or (507) 206-7419.

Area Math and Science Teachers kick off Math Science Teacher Partnership programming

By Kari Kubicek

Science and Math Teachers from various SE MN school districts kicked off the Math Science Teacher Partnership programming year with two workshops in October. The MSTP Program is made possible through an award by the Minnesota Department of Education to assist teachers in improving content knowledge and pedagogical techniques to more effectively implement the Minnesota Mathematics and Science Academic Standards with the goal of improving student learning.

The 2012-13 math cohort is comprised of 25 teachers from the districts of Caledonia, Dover-Eyota, Kasson-Mantorville, Kingsland, Medford, Rochester Catholic, Triton, and Zumbrota. Programming was kicked off with a full day of learning and hands on activities on October 17 at SSC, led by module facilitators Andy Ferstl and Nicole Williams of Winona State University. The goal of the math module is to enhance teachers' understanding of how to initiate inquiry-based mathematics instruction in a classroom that allows all students to learn mathematics and implement STEM pedagogical approaches in their mathematics teaching. In addition to the six programming days scheduled this year,

participating math teachers also have the option of having one or both of the facilitators visit their school and assist them in the implementation of a lesson plan based on what they have learned through the program.

One teacher remarked, "The MSTP math session was awesome. I loved that they showed us the Learning Cycle and then showed what that would look like in the classroom setting. It got me thinking how I can use those same ideas in my own classroom. I also think it guides us as we keep trying to incorporate hands-on learning opportunities for students using simple objects and ideas. I also love the idea that the instructors are willing to come to our districts and help us implement what is being taught at these sessions."

Twenty six science teachers from the districts of Caledonia, Fillmore Central, Kasson-Mantorville, Kingsland, Pine Island, Rochester Catholic, Houston, and Red Wing make up the science cohort for the 2012-13 programming year. This group met for a full day session facilitated by Lee Schmitt of Hamline University including a bus trip to a quarry in Zumbrota on October 23. The primary goal of this year's science module is to enhance teachers' understanding of how to initiate



Math cohort members participate in one of many hands on activities offered at the October 23 MSTP math programming session.

standards-driven, inquiry-based science instruction in a classroom in the areas of Physical, Earth Science and the Nature of Science and Engineering.

Teachers were extremely pleased with their experience and one teacher remarked, "I liked how we became the students again and got a refresher course on rocks and minerals. I also liked going to the quarry and getting to deal with actual rocks."

Programming continues with math and science sessions scheduled for the next few months and a final two day workshop for both cohorts in June 2013.

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and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects?

I have planned class offerings for the new semester to address vocabulary expansion, reading and writing with informational text, and a special 6+1 Traits Writing session specifically for middle school educators. Each session will address the research behind, the standards addressed, and a variety of take-away strategies for you to use immediately with your students. I hope you can join me!

Reading and Writing Informational Text in Grades K-5 January 29, 2013

Who Should Attend: All educators who teach grades K-5 and K-5 administrators.

How much informational text are you using with your students? Research indicates that informational text is scarcely used in primary classrooms.

“Children need the opportunity to engage with their teachers in discussing what readers do to make meaning, and what writers do to convey meaning as a way to take on this kind of strategic thinking” (Brown et al., 1996; Walker, 2005).

This session will deepen your understanding of why the writers of the Common Core State Standards specifically call for a 50/50 balance of fiction and informational writing and



text for our young learners. Participants will examine the research behind early introduction to reading and writing informational text, and Research-based methods you can use with your students will be shared.

Implementing the Reading & Writing Standards in 6-12 Content

February 13, 2013

Who Should Attend: 6-12 Content Area teachers (History, Social Studies, Science, Art, Music, Technology, business, FACS, etc.) and 6-12 administrators.

The 2010 Minnesota Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects call for a shared responsibility in developing 6-12 students' literacy development. Other “Technical Subjects” includes all subject areas that have a technical language. The Minnesota Literacy Standards packs an added twist for content area teachers and the subjects they teach. Not only are content teachers asked to teach their subject area standards, they

are now required to help their students master ten Reading and ten Writing Literacy Standards. Subject area teachers have always included reading and writing as part of their content study, but the new standards are more sophisticated and complex than ever before.

This session is designed to deepen understanding of the reading and writing literacy standards as they relate to 6-12 content areas.

So Many Words; So Little Time - Growing Your Students' Vocabulary

March 5, 2013

Who Should Attend: All educators who teach grades K-12 and K-12 administrators.

Did you miss this workshop the first time it was offered? Many area schools have targeted academic vocabulary expansion as a school-wide goal for their students for the next two years. The sixth shift related to the Minnesota ELA and Content Area Literacy Standards is the focus on increasing our students' academic vocabulary. Brozo & Simpson, 2007, define the expression academic vocabulary as, “...word knowledge that makes it possible for students to engage, produce, and talk about texts that are valued in school.”

This session will help you explore the research and practice

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strategic ways to help your students understand and use academic vocabulary effectively. You will spend the morning looking at the research behind vocabulary expansion and how it affects reading comprehension and overall academic achievement. Attendees will learn to define and identify tier 2 and tier 3 words and later locate tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary words in curriculum materials.

Attendees will then look at Beck & McKeown's and Marzano's approaches to direct vocabulary instruction and then spend the rest of our day learning and participating in a plethora of vocabulary expansion activities that can be used immediately upon returning to the classroom.

Middle School 6+1 Traits Writing across the Content Areas

March 19, 2013

Who Should Attend: All educators who teach grades 5-8 and 5-8 administrators.

"Writing today is not a frill for the few, but the essential skill for the many." (The National Commission on Writing, 2003) Standard number ten of the 2010 Minnesota ELA and Literacy Standards for History/Social, Science, and Technical Subjects addresses range of writing across all content areas.

The Anchor Standard states, "Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and

shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences."

This workshop will introduce you to 6+1 Traits of writing and will help you tailor the Traits to your ELA or Content Area. You will examine student writing samples, practice scoring sample papers with 6+1 Traits rubrics, and learn several activities you can use with your students to engage them in each of the traits. Middle school students are unique and this session is tailored to meet the distinctive learning needs of 11-14 year olds!

The SSC Member rate for all literacy workshops is \$95, Non-SSC Member rate is \$115. Sessions are held from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

About Lori Mack...



Lori Mack serves as SSC's Regional Education and Literacy Specialist and is the author of the popular literacy-focused bi-monthly column for educators, *Speaking of Literacy...™*. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in English Education at the University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse, and earned her Master of Arts degree in Education from St. Mary's University of Minnesota – Minneapolis. Lori returned to St. Mary's University of Minnesota – Winona to earn her K-12 Reading Certification and she teaches part time as an adjunct instructor in the K-12 Reading Certification program at St. Mary's University. Lori was a classroom teacher for 20 years and is passionate about helping kids become competent, efficient, life-long readers.

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

Knowledge Bowl season is underway

The 2012-13 season has begun. 53 teams from 18 districts have been competing at Round Robin competitions at the Southeast Service Cooperative in October, November and December.

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Sub-Regional competitions will take place at RCTC on January 8 and 9, 2013. The top 12 teams from each tier will advance to Regionals on January 22 and 23 at SSC.

Senior High Knowledge Bowl teams begin competitions in December. Participation

continues to grow and we are at a record setting 105 teams from 30 schools!

Round Robin competitions will take place in December, January and February at SSC. On March 19 and 20, 2013, teams will compete in Sub-Regionals at RCTC. The top 12 teams from each tier will advance to Regionals on March 21 and 22 at SSC. The top two tier AA teams and top three tier A teams advance to the state competition on April 11-12 in Brainerd.

Information, scores and schedules can be found at www.ssc.coop. For more information contact: Kirsten Kuehl, kkuehl@ssc.coop or (507)281-6670.



SSC's Second Science & Nature Conference was a hoot!

By Katie Sue Cunningham

SSC's second Science and Nature Conference for grades 2-4 was moved to a larger location to accommodate more students and presenters. This year's event was held on November 2, 2012, at Plainview-Elgin-Millville's Pre K-3 Building and included 246 students from seven school districts. The goal of the conference is to provide the opportunity for students to learn outside the box of the typical school day.

All students took part in a keynote address from the



Students participating in one of the conference's hands-on sessions.

Raptor Center, followed by three breakout sessions.

Session topics included: traveling of seeds, plants, colorful chemistry, bubbles, squishy oceanic creatures, rockets, predators, chemical reactions,

force, static electricity, and raptors.

One teacher mentioned, "It was very neat and had a lot of fun classes. Not one of my students didn't enjoy it."

**Southeast Service
Cooperative**



**Science & Nature
Conference**

SSC hosts successful Young Authors, Young Artists Conference for Middle School students

By Katie Sue Cunningham

Southeast Service Cooperative hosted the second annual Young Authors, Young Artists conference for students in grades seven and eight on November 8, 2012.

The goal of the conference was to expose students to writing and illustrating as an art form, and to provide students an opportunity to express themselves in a positive and creative way. Students participated in four 55-minute sessions. Topics included bookmaking, storytelling and

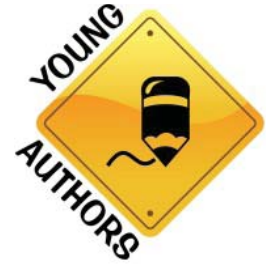


Students participating in one of the conference's sessions.

writing your thoughts, reader's theater, and drawing.

The conference was attended by 86 students from eight school districts. One teacher mentioned "We're at a loss for next year, since my students

will be freshmen in high school. They'll definitely be going through YAYA withdrawal this time next year." The conference will be held again in Fall 2013.



Save The Date: YAYA Grade School Conference

The 26th Annual Young Authors, Young Artists Conference for students in grades 4 - 6, will take place May 21 & 22, 2013 at Rochester Community and Technical College.

School Attendance Day Assignments

Tuesday - May 21, 2013

Byron
Cannon Falls
Fillmore Central
Glenville-Emmons
Grand Meadow
Houston
Kasson-Mantorville
Kenyon-Wanamingo

Tuesday - May 21, 2013 cont'd.

Lyle
Rochester

- Elton Hills
- Franklin
- Friedell
- Jefferson
- John Adams
- Kellogg
- Lincoln Choice
- Longfellow
- Pinewood
- Riverside
- Sunset Terrace
- Washington
- Willow Creek

Rochester Catholic

Wednesday - May 22, 2013

Albert Lea
Austin
Austin Catholic
Goodhue
LeRoy-Ostrander
Mabel-Canton
Northfield
Randolph
Rochester

- Bamber Valley
- Bishop
- Folwell
- Gage
- Gibbs
- Hoover

St. Mary's Owatonna
Stewartville
Triton
Zumbrota-Mazeppa

Randolph students showcase VREP Programming at STEM Summit



By Kari Kubicek

Southeast Service Cooperative staff hosted a Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder (VREP) Program exhibit at the recent STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) Summit hosted by the Rochester Chamber of Commerce at the UCR Regional Sports Center on November 14. Doris Johnson, Technology Instructor at Randolph Public Schools, and four of her students provided the event participants, which included over 2,000 middle and high school students from SE MN school districts, the opportunity to learn about the VREP Program as well as one-on-one coaching in the use of the Blender software. The four students from Randolph included Collin Regenscheid, Alex McKay, Dylan Tonsager, and Ryan Schmicking. These students are members of Johnson's Communication Arts course at Randolph High School, a class designed around the principals of the VREP Program.

VREP is an educational initiative to bring robust new learning opportunities to schools across the country. It offers K-12 students an opportunity to develop and expand their learning across the curriculum by capturing student interest through the use of Virtual Reality 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 their school district and the consortia.

Randolph High School began offering the Communication Arts course last spring based on course curriculum organized by Johnson. Course participants also attended the two day VREP Training Institute hosted by SSC in February 2012 to learn more about the Blender software used with the VR equipment. Since that time, the students have created multiple projects, presented their projects to Randolph school board members, worked with an outside business in creating molecules, created a moon model in Blender for use by the high school's science teacher, and more. Johnson and a few of her students also provided a poster exhibit at the TIES Conference in December.



Randolph student Alex McKay introduces students to Blender, the software used in VREP for 3D creation.

Ryan Schmicking, a student of Johnson's in the course talked about his experience with the VREP program.

"This has been my favorite class in the history of all of my classes," he explained.

Schmicking also indicated that the first few weeks of the course presented a big learning curve for the students, however, the two day VREP training hosted by SSC, which took place following the first few weeks of the course, helped him and his classmates "get over the hump" and allowed for them to move forward in learning Blender and creating their projects.

Although the program is lauded as a student led initiative, Johnson explained that the

Member vs. Member Walking Challenge gains popularity: Begins January 1st!

By Nicole LaChapelle

For the second year, SSC is coordinating a walking challenge amongst its Member organizations. Last year, 12 southeastern Minnesota school districts and four city and county members participated in two separate pedometer-based challenges (Kingsland won the education challenge and Freeborn County won the city/county challenge). At press time, five SSC Member city and county groups and 12 school districts have signed on to compete in the upcoming challenge, which will run January 1 – 31.

Often, the winter months are the hardest time of the year to keep people motivated and excited about exercise. Sometimes a bit of friendly competition can really invigorate not only your wellness program, but also increase morale and teamwork at your organization. This contest is a step-based walking challenge, and requires participants to wear a pedometer and keep track of their steps.

Beginning January 1, participants will start wearing a pedometer and tracking their steps. Step counts are turned in to the person designated to keep track of steps at their organization (most likely the person in charge of the organization's wellness programming). Coordinators then send in the step totals and



SSC Member vs. Member Walking Challenge Coordinators display their organizations' awards for participating in the January, 2012 challenge.

number of people participating that week to Nicole LaChapelle at SSC, who will send out weekly updates on team standings.

A winner in both categories will be announced on February 4. SSC will provide a trophy for the winning school and/or district and the winning city and/or county. They will be presented at the Winter Health Forum (date to be announced soon!). The winning teams will also be featured in the March 2013 *Cooperative Connection* and a press release announcing the winners will be sent to the local media.

If members would like to offer additional incentives for their participants, that is optional. (For example: incentives for the top male/top female, most improved walker, etc.) Groups in SSC's Health Insurance Pools are welcome to use a portion of their health promotion funds from SSC for challenge expenses.

SSC has inexpensive, quality pedometers available for our

members at cost (\$6.50 each). If you would like to place an order, and receive them prior to the January 1st start date, please contact Nicole LaChapelle by Monday, December 17.

Please contact Nicole LaChapelle, nlachapelle@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6674 by Wednesday, December 28 if your group is interested in participating.



Employee Assistance 101

By DJ Enga, Sand Creek Group

All of us experience the stress of life at some point or another. The pressures of performing at work, dealing with family issues, or managing a financial hardship can add up and leave a person feeling very overwhelmed.

According to the American Psychological Association, exposure to stress over extended periods of time has been scientifically linked to high blood pressure, depression, anxiety, loss of sleep, trouble concentrating and other adverse health issues that not only affect the individual and their family, but the employer too. Workplace stress costs U.S. employers an estimated \$200 billion per year in absenteeism, medical insurance and other stress-related expenses. Considering this, stress management may be business's most important challenge of the 21st century!

When 'Life Happens' it can be difficult to know what resources are available that can serve as a means to lead a healthier and more balanced life. For this reason, the Southeast Service Cooperative is proud to partner with the Sand Creek Group, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides confidential counseling services designed to offer employees, and their immediate family members, a

resource to address a variety of issues.

An EAP is a helping resource to identify and resolve personal concerns including:

- Relationship and communication issues
- Separation and divorce concerns
- Substance abuse
- Work pressures
- Stress and coping with change
- Loss and grief
- Parenting, eldercare and childcare
- Financial and legal issues
- Depression, anxiety and other life concerns

The cornerstones of the Sand Creek Group's EAP are based in professional counseling (face-to-face and telephonic) that is free to the employee and always strictly confidential.

The Sand Creek Group has an excellent performance record and is the largest provider of EAP services to public employers in Minnesota, with 500 clinical offices in state and 10,000 providers nationally.

Whether it is in fulfilling an important component of an organization's risk management program or in simply providing the highest level of professional employee counseling services, Sand Creek dedicates itself to taking into account your organizational culture, employee



needs, and service requirements to ensure your EAP is both effective and affordable. Sand Creek Group, Ltd. is an industry leader in providing superior quality and customized employee assistance programs. No wonder Dun and Bradstreet's Open Rating Performance Review has given this EAP its highest rating for performance.

We are happy to offer this program to our partners and would welcome any questions, or possibly set up a time to have a representative from the EAP come and visit your location and answer any questions in person.

For more information, including pricing details, on Sand Creek EAP, contact SSC staff member Nicole LaChapelle at nlachapelle@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6674.

Parents of gifted learners: Learn from the experts at SSC's Gifted and Talented Learners' Parent Network

By Nicole LaChapelle

SSC was pleased to secure some of the region's most well-known experts on gifted learning for its Gifted and Talented Educator Network, which re-convened for the 2012-2013 school year in October. This year, the network was expanded to include evening sessions for parents. Teacher GATE Network speakers tailor their education-focused presentations for an audience of parents. The first parent network session was held on November 29, when Dr. Teresa Boatman presented Social and Emotional Topics for Gifted Learners to about 20 parents of gifted learners. The session also included time for the attendees to network with one another.

GATE Parent Network Member, Bridget Cunningham, shared, "For me the opportunity to connect with other parents who have children facing similar challenges is priceless. As the mother of a first grader starting the GATE journey, hearing from parents who have been where I am is comforting and so valuable."

SSC will offer two additional sessions in 2013:

**The Challenges and Joys of Parenting a Child With Gifts
Thursday, April 4**



Dr. Karen L. Westberg will discuss the issues and joys of raising exceptional children. She will highlight the reasons behind and provide parents with strategies for dealing with peer relationships, advocating for educational services, and dealing with children's intensities.

Parenting Twice Exceptional Students

Thursday, May 2

Dr. Karen Rogers is a Professor of Gifted Studies in the Special Education & Gifted Education Department in the College of Applied Professional Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. She is author of five books, including *Reforming Gifted Education*.

She has expertise in research-based gifted education and has interests in arts education, cognitive processing, parenting, creativity, gifted program development and evaluation, and twice exceptional learners,

for which she currently holds a Javits research grant.

All Parent Network Sessions take place at SSC's Wood Lake Meeting Center (210 Wood Lake Drive SE, Rochester) on Thursdays from 6:30 – 8:00 PM and cost \$10 each. Parents are welcome to arrive at 6:00 PM and use the time to network with other parents of gifted learners. Attendees have expressed interest in expanding the network and work is currently being done to schedule additional sessions.

For more information or to register, please contact SSC staff members Nicole LaChapelle, nlachapelle@ssc.coop or Lori Mack, lmack@ssc.coop, or click [here](#).

Rural community adds a learning lab for success after graduation

By Aubrey Helms, KTTC

It's never too early to start preparing for the future. For most students, graduation is one of the most exciting times in life. But the pressure of finding a job can easily put a damper on things. It's even more difficult if graduates aren't prepared with the skills necessary and that's why a new learning lab is being set up in Adams to make sure special education students are ready for that next step.

It's called a PAES lab - or practical assessment exploration system and will serve students in Grand Meadow, LeRoy Ostrander, and the Southland districts.

Heather Schutte the Work Based Learning Coordinator explains, "What we're trying to do is find out exactly what their interests are and connect it with their abilities so

they can be successful when they get out there."

The lab is just one part of how special education students will have an upper hand when it comes to finding out what they want to after graduation. They're able to explore five career areas: business, computer technology, construction and industrial, process and production and consumer services. It's a safe learning environment to practice before heading out to the real world, but it may be hard to tell the difference. The students are called employees and the teacher the boss. They'll be able to explore about 300 jobs and will be doing a little bit of everything.

Heidi Johnson of Talent Assessment, Inc. says, "Some of the skills they may be learning to measure to the nearest whole in construction but in the consumer service they're using that skill

to measure cloth, it's the same general skill."

It's the first of its kind for rural Minnesota and will serve as a model for the rest of the state. It's making a big difference for the opportunities students can gain locally.

Steve Sallee, Southland/LeRoy Ostrander Superintendent explains, "We had to send those kids to Austin or Rochester for other programs and really we feel like it's better for a smaller district to keep those kids in our own districts." The students are even paid in a token system. The idea is that they'll be able to use the tokens earned to buy things like football game tickets or school spirit wear.

This article was reprinted with permission from KTTC. It was originally posted online at KTTC.com on August 6, 2012.

Deciphering the Benchmarks with StandardsInsightMN™

By Amy Grover

We had a very recent opportunity to showcase our new resource during a poster session at the 2012 TIES Conference. Attendees were able to examine the shifts for teaching and learning to enhance student mastery of English Language Arts, Literacy, and Mathematics standards and had time for hands-on

StandardsInsightMN™

Minnesota

state standards
unpacked

exploration of the online tool available through SSC. If your district would like to learn more, visit www.ssc.coop to check out the StandardsInsightMN™

information, or contact us directly for a demonstration! It's a great way to save time and money while still encouraging high-level PLC dialogue.

Conference continued from page 1

Representing SSC was Suzanne Riley, Dale Walston, Amy Grover, Board Members Carol Cravath, Brian Grudem, Stephen Rosenthal, and Superintendent Steve Sallee. Representatives from other Minnesota Service Cooperatives and the Department of Education also attended. Several sessions were devoted to forging strong partnerships between state and regional education agencies to jointly serve schools and local government.

Keynote Dr. Marcia Tate shared her 20 instructional strategies that engage the brain. During her 30 year career with the DeKalb County (GA) School System, Marcia Tate has been a classroom teacher, reading specialist, language arts coordinator and staff

development director. Currently an educational consultant, she is the author of *Worksheets Don't Grow Dendrites*.

We also learned from Rob Mancabelli, speaker and author in the field of educational technology. In 2011, he co-authored the book *Personal Learning Networks: Using the Power of Connections to Transform Education*, which won the Bronze Medal for Education Book of the Year from ForeWord Reviews. A dynamic and engaging speaker, Rob described in vivid detail how technology is dramatically changing the way teachers and students learn in the 21st Century, and he outlined how and why we need to transform the existing system.

The conference concluded with Manuel Scott, whose personal story was told in the Hollywood movie, *Freedom Writers*. Once dismissed as unreachable and unteachable, at a pivotal moment in his life he took ownership of his learning and his future and returned to school. He now holds degrees from the University of California at Berkley and Trinity International University. Author of the book, *Take Matters Into Your Own Hands: Dream Now*, Manuel's message of hope encourages us to re-commit to transforming our lives, organizations, departments, and classrooms.

A history of AESA is available at http://www.aesa.us/images/AESA-History/AESA_history.pdf.

VREP continued from page 10

teacher's role as a facilitator and mentor to the students is absolutely necessary. In supporting her students' work and success with the VREP Program, Johnson has helped connect different students to assist each other when one of them may need help with a specific skill. Johnson has also provided students opportunities to work with other teachers to build resources for the teachers to use in their course curriculums, and made an outside business connection

that resulted in a project for her students. Johnson has also researched and organized multiple Blender resources and tutorials and created student project evaluation tools, as well as various other resources; which she has posted on her web page and provided to other VREP districts for their use. SSC continues to provide support and training for districts interested in participating in the VREP Program.

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

Recent Board meeting actions and information

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

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

September 2012

Approved the request of Lewiston-Altura Public Schools to participate in the SSC School health Insurance Pool effective September 1, 2012.

Approved the employment of George Sand effective August 24, 2012, as Regional Center of Excellence Charter School Specialist.

Approved the employment effective September 11, 2012, of Ann Clark as Regional Center of Excellence Director.

Approved Board participation in offering the PERA Phased Retirement Option and directed the Executive Director to make recommendations to the Board in offering this option on a case by case basis to eligible employees whose positions and responsibilities can be adjusted to allow a part-time work arrangement without hardship to the organization.

Referred to the ByLaws Committee the question of number of SSC Board positions for consideration and recommendation

Established the 2012 election schedule (for 1/1/2012 Board service) as follows:

a) Nominations to be opened Thursday, September 27 and close Friday, November 2.

b) The ballots will be prepared and sent to local Boards on or about Monday, November 5.

c) Election ballots to be received at the Southeast Service Cooperative by Friday, December 21.

d) Canvassing Committee to meet at 4:30 PM on the day of the regular December Board meeting (currently scheduled for Wednesday, December 26).

e) Elections will be confirmed by the Southeast Service Cooperative Board at its regular December meeting.

Approve the continuation of Peggy Merkel's service on the SSC Board following her retirement from her local school board through the expiration of her term December 31, 2013, pursuant to SSC ByLaws.

October 2012

Accepted a grant contract with the Minnesota Department of Education for \$115,000 to conduct a family engagement development project to be completed June 30, 2013.

Authorized staff to pursue matching fund grants for which SSC would provide funds up to \$5,000 to purchase a trailer in match for sponsorships to cover other costs.

Accepted the 2011-2012 fiscal audit report.

Reviewed and discussed the Board responses and summary of the Board self-assessment and the

Executive Director's performance assessment.

November 2012

There was not a quorum at this meeting, so no official actions were taken. However, the Board received and discussed reports on the following topics:

1. The Joint Health Pools Planning Committee's meeting.
2. Updates on administrative and instructional support services
3. SOLO – Distance learning efforts, status, future direction.
4. Educator Evaluation support.
5. Board elections update.
6. Member Participation and Value Report for 2011-2012 service usage.

Future Board Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, December 19

Wednesday, January 23

Calendar

December

The 2007 MN Math Standards: How to Really Understand Them

December 18
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

SSC Board Meeting

December 19
5:30 - 8:00 PM

AAC Meeting

December 20
12:00 - 3:00 PM

January

AM Espresso at the Wood Lake Meeting Center

January 4
7:30 - 9:00 AM

MSTP Math Cohort Session

January 9
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

MSTP Life Science Cohort Session

January 10
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Coaching for Instructional Growth (Part 1)

January 11
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

English Learners Leaders' (EL) Network

January 11
1:00 - 3:00 PM

Senior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins

January 14, 15 & 16
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

AAC Meeting (Held off-site due to Knowledge Bowl)

January 22
12:00 - 3:00 PM

JR High K Bowl Regionals

January 22 & 23
8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

SSC Board Meeting

January 23
5:30 - 8:00 PM

Reading and Writing Informational Text in Grades K-5

January 29
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

MDE Teacher-Principal Evaluation Forum - Session 2

January 30
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

February

Legislative Breakfast Forum

February 2
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

MDE Teacher-Principal Evaluation Forum - Session 2

February 6
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

MDE Teacher-Principal Evaluation Forum - Session 2

February 7
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

SEMLAC Teacher-to-Teacher Groups

February 11
8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Regional Spelling Bees

February 12
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Implementing The Reading & Writing Standards in the 6-12 Content Areas

February 13
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Senior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins

February 15, 18, 19 & 20
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Final Spelling Bee

February 26
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

SEMLAC Leadership Team Training

February 27
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

English Learners Leaders' (EL) Network

February 27
1:00 - 3:00 PM

March

Coaching for Instructional Growth - Part 2

March 1
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

MSTP Life Science Cohort Session

March 6
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

MSTP Math Cohort Session

March 7
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

English Learners Leaders' (EL) Network

March 13
1:00 - 3:00 PM

AAC Meeting

March 20
12:00 - 3:00 PM

Save Your License Saturday

March 23
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM



SSC is a 2012 Recipient of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility.

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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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	Pat Weir	(507) 281-6677	pat.weir@ieainstitute.com	Regional Manager	

Wood Lake Meeting Center to host Chamber event

On Friday, January 4, SSC will welcome approximately 80-100 Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce Members to the Wood Lake Meeting Center for the Chamber's monthly AM Espresso networking event.

Attendees will enjoy a light breakfast (supplied by Great Harvest Bread Company), tours of the meeting center, SMART

Board demonstrations, and the opportunity to network.

The Chamber's AM Espressos are a perfect opportunity to increase awareness of both SSC and the Wood Lake Meeting Center.

Southeast Service Cooperative Member Districts and Agencies receive a 40% discount on room rental rates.



Wood Lake Meeting Center