

Cooperative Connection

September 2012

Southeast Service Cooperative

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Welcome to the 2012-2013 year, Members, Associates, and SSC Friends!

By Suzanne Riley

July 1 marked the beginning of the new operational year for SSC and for its school members. For our local government members, it marked mid-way through the fiscal year. Summer is both a planning time organizationally and a time when Minnesotans take vacation. I hope you each had an opportunity to take time off for fun and relaxation!

Southeast Service Cooperative was a busy place over the summer. Our award in May, as one of the Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota, was followed in July by being named a recipient of the national Alfred P. Sloan Workplace Flexibility Award for a fourth time. This is important to us, as it signifies our commitment to making SSC a



highly productive organization that places a high value on its employees wellbeing so that they can best serve you.

Strategic planning picked up steam at SSC over the summer. A year-round process, we dedicate more time over the summer months

Member welcome continued on page 4

Needing to unpack the standards, but looking to save hours of time and resources? Explore StandardsInsightMN™!

by Amy Grover

Have you been hearing the buzz in southeast Minnesota districts about StandardsInsightMN™? Twelve of our member districts (Byron, Dover-Eyota, Goodhue County Education District, Hayfield, Kasson-Mantorville, Kingsland, LeRoy-Ostrander, Lewiston-Altura, Southland, Stewartville, Wabasha-Kellogg, and Zumbrota-Mazeppa) were early adopters of this intuitive, web-based resource that



provides professional interpretation of the Minnesota English Language Arts and Mathematics standards. By having the groundwork completed and the framework in place, teachers can get right into discussing the

StandardsInsightMN™ continued on page 19



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Regional Center of Excellence update

Last May in the *Cooperative Connection*, we introduced to you the newly formed Southeast/Metro Center of Excellence, one of three in the state. These Regional Centers of Excellence are designed to provide the statewide system of support for Focus and Priority schools in the seven Twin Cities/Metro area counties and the eleven counties of southeast Minnesota. We serve 32 sites in this region in a collaborative effort of the Southeast Service Cooperative and the Minnesota Department of Education.

Through spring and early summer, the Center team was pulled together, starting with Paul McDowall, who began in April as Director. He and SSC Executive Director Suzanne Riley worked with MDE staffer Anne Lundquist to search for our team of specialists. This team includes the following individuals:

Barbara Marchetti, Special Education Specialist

Kristina Robertson, English Language Development Specialist

George Sand, Charter School Specialist

Andy Schalm, Mathematics Specialist

Kristin Scherman, Reading Specialist

Carol Swanson, Implementation Specialist with Reading expertise

Ann Clark joined the team as our new Director of the Center of Excellence with Paul's departure in mid September to attend to family needs. For more about Ann, turn to page 3.

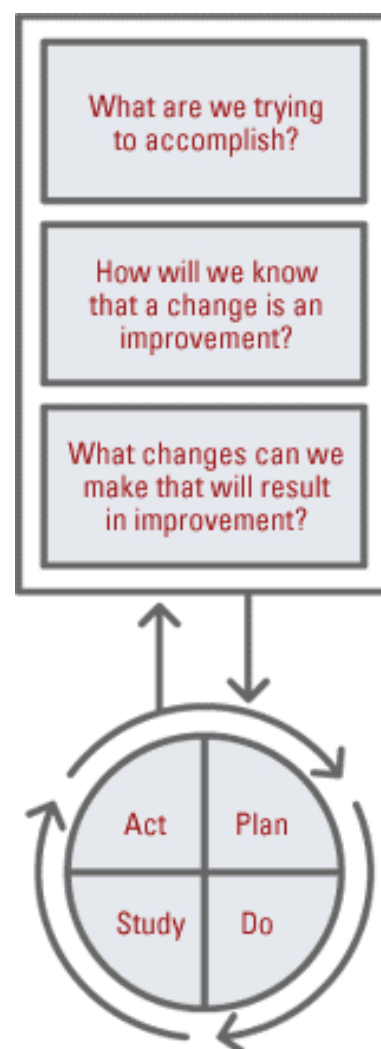
The specialists underwent intensive training over the summer to prepare for their August work with local school leadership teams developing school improvement plans. Now their work has turned to assisting the Focus and Priority schools in our region with plan implementation and employing evidence-based instructional practices.

Through regular, ongoing dialogue and support, these specialists assist principals and teachers in improving academic outcomes for all students by working collaboratively with school staff to:

- Determine the local school's current operational and performance status.
- Assist the school in planning strategic interventions to address identified deficiencies.
- Provide consultation, training and technical assistance to support the school's implementation of its specific planned interventions.

- Monitor the school's progress with implementation and provide support for necessary modifications to the plan.

The statewide system of support (SSOS) supports these efforts by collaborating with staff from across MDE to develop and provide research-based professional development opportunities.



Center of Excellence continued from previous page

The Department specialists, who form the Cross-Agency Implementation Team (CAIT), work together to identify resources, prepare materials, and provide technical assistance guidance that will result in aligned, coordinated support that can be contextualized to meet the needs of school leadership teams, and enables them to improve achievement for all learners. The CAIT and the regional Center of Excellence Team comprise the coordinated efforts to support local leadership teams.

The school improvement process is guided by a simple, continuous improvement cycle, which also serves as the foundation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Our Success:

The overall success of the Regional Centers of Excellence will be measured with a simple program evaluation. Indicators of success will be determined by the Department in collaboration with the Cooperative Directors, and Center Directors. After the appropriate evidence has been determined, the Program Coordinator will design a simple evaluation plan, which will be reviewed and revised at least quarterly.

If you have questions or would like to talk more about the Centers of Excellence, please feel free to contact:

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Meet Center of Excellence Director Ann Clark



I am excited to have the opportunity to work with schools and districts in Southeast Minnesota and the Twin Cities/Metro area. I am fortunate to work with amazing people who are a part of the partnership between the Center of Excellence, SSC, and the Minnesota Department of Education teams as we work to provide support to Focus and Priority Schools.

As I begin my 25th year in education, I find this role in supporting schools in a new way to be very exciting. My experience includes 13 years in administration in the Rochester Public Schools, as the Executive Director of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and as an Elementary Principal; 10 years as a teacher in Rochester and Colorado; and 1 year as a K-12 Education Specialist with ChartHouse, International, home of the Fish Philosophy.

Throughout my experiences, I continue to have a passion for creating schools where a growth mindset exists for all students. This mindset is also the foundation of the adult learning environment in which staff is empowered and capacity is continuously built.

SEMLAC Districts share a day of professional development

By Amy Grover

Over 375 teachers and administrators gathered on Monday, September 24 at Dover-Eyota High School, ready to listen, learn, and talk. Bringing together all licensed staff from the Southeast Minnesota Learner Achievement Collaborative school districts (Dover-Eyota, HVED, Kingsland, Lanesboro, Mabel-Canton, Plainview-Elgin-Millville, and Wabasha-Kellogg), this event offered opportunities for learning and networking. The keynote speaker was Dr. Thomas Many who presented *Inspiring a Lasting Commitment to Learning*. Tom is a nationally known author and speaker who works with teachers, administrators, school boards, parents, and other education stakeholders on organizational leadership, implementation and change, and Professional Learning Communities at Work™ strategies and concepts. Setting the tone for the day, the keynote was followed by breakout sessions led

by 16 amazing presenters. Session topics included Practical PLC Tools, Creating Common Assessments, Technology Tools to Support Collaboration, Literacy Across the Content Areas, and Math Theory Into Practice, as well as options for science, social studies, data, English Language Arts, formative and summative assessment, and building PLCs. The professional development day culminated with Teacher-to-Teacher time, where grade level and content area groups gathered to have facilitated discussions about issues of relevance to their classroom. These groups will gather again on February 11, 2013 for another common work day.

SSC is proud to continue our coordination assistance as this group enters its second year of creating and sustaining PLCs. SEMLAC also offers Leadership Team Training for administrators and teacher leaders. These teams met four times in 2011-2012, and joined one another again on August



SSC's Amy Grover pictured with Dr. Many

2 to learn PLC leadership techniques with trainer Chris Correa, Regional Education Specialist with Metro ECSU. SEMLAC also ensures integration of distance technology to support inter-district collaboration by providing Moodle space and Edmodo groups for sharing resources and continuing professional dialogue. We applaud this unique model of cooperation and collaboration and are excited to have a role in it!

Member welcome continued from page 1

to several levels of planning: organizationally, service areas with team action planning, and individual objectives and performance planning and review. Using a new process this year, the staff met first with facilitation by national organizational design engineer Susan Leddick. The ideas and recommendations we produced were presented for engagement by the SSC Board, Advisory Committee, and staff together. We continue our planning and implementation with a refreshed strategic plan.

Speaking of strategic planning, as your organization prepares to move into planning mode, think about contacting two people at SSC. **Diane Schwinghammer**, dschwinghammer@ssc.coop, possesses vast experience in education administration and school improvement technical assistance, which have led to her development of **"systems planning"** processes that can support your initiative. **Lori Mack**, lmack@ssc.coop, can help you and your staff with literacy planning and development across all grade levels and content areas. Watch for information soon about

services Lori can provide **on-site** at your school district.

At the same time we have been delivering SSC services, we also entered a new partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education to develop and implement the Southeast/Metro Center of Excellence to serve Focus and Priority Schools. You can read more about this on page 2.

Have a great year, everyone!
Suzanne Riley, Executive Director

SSC's Gifted and Talented Network to host region's foremost GATE experts - First session - October 4

In an effort to meet the needs of our membership, Southeast Service Cooperative is pleased to offer a Regional Gifted and Talented Network. To provide support for the high ability students in your school(s), we invite you to join the Network for the 2012-2013 school year. The purpose of this regional network is to offer assistance and support to districts as they continue to develop, modify, and expand programs and activities that benefit high ability learners at all grade levels.

Please consider designating a coordinator from your school. To help assist districts with vertically aligning their program, we encourage elementary, middle, and high school educators to join the network.

The fee for this professional development opportunity can come from your district gifted and talented funds. The group will meet at SSC four times during the school year.

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 participate in networking.

The cost to join the network, and attend all four sessions is \$130/ per year for members or \$150/ per year for non-members. Cohort members are welcome to



bring one or more guests to each session at a cost of \$20 each.

Sessions for Parents of Gifted Children will also be Offered

SSC is pleased to offer three evening sessions geared especially to parents of gifted children during the upcoming school year. The GATE Network's presenters will tailor their presentations and meet with parents on November 29, April 4 and May 2. Sessions will be held from 7:00 - 8:30 PM at a cost of \$10/person, per session or register for all three sessions for \$27/person. All three sessions will be held at Wood Lake Meeting Center in Rochester. Watch for more information to be distributed soon.

For more information on the network, click [here](#) or contact SSC's G/T Network Coordinators:

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

2012/13 Gifted and Talented Network Dates/Topics

Thursday, October 4 - *Best Practices in Identification of Gifted Learners*,
 Wendy Behrens, MDE

Thursday, November 29 – *Social and Emotional Topics for Gifted Learners*,
 Teresa Boatman

Thursday, April 4 - *How to Conduct Effective Evaluations of G/T Services*,
 Dr. Karen Westberg

Thursday, May 2 - *Working with Twice Exceptional Students*, Dr. Karen Rogers

Sessions take place from 12:00 – 3:00 PM

Mental health - A State of Well-Being

by Diane Schwinghammer

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. In this positive sense, mental health is the foundation for individual well-being and the effective functioning of a community.

-World Health Organization

During the summertime a group of individuals gathered to discuss how Southeast Service Cooperative could support educators, school counselors, administrators, nurses and other health professionals working with students experiencing mental health issues, which include anxiety, depression, coping, grieving, and stress, to name a few. It wasn't a long conversation with school personnel for me to realize that any assistance SSC can provide would support adults serving children, K-12. Hence, a vision to promote mental wellness through symposiums, networking, and resources was born.

On November 30, a symposium, *Mental Health – A State of Well Being* will take place at Southeast Service Cooperative. The tentative schedule will include morning presentations on resiliency, depression, anxiety and networking by sharing best

“The essence of our effort to see that every child has a chance must be to assure each an equal opportunity, not to become equal, but to become different - to realize whatever unique potential of body, mind and spirit he or she possesses”

-John Fisher

practices and resources. The afternoon will include a panel speaking about unforeseen tragedies, the aftermath, and hope for the future. The day will close with a powerful presentation *Hope – It Floats All of Us* by Dr. Tim Hatfield.

Districts are encouraged to send a team to support the follow up and create an action plan. Attendees will leave with a “toolbox” of ideas, practical skills, knowledge, and connections with a network of mental health professionals.

This is not designed as a one-time opportunity, but rather will be followed with a second symposium in late February, 2013 and perhaps a third one in April, 2013. We will assess the need for future topics by asking both the November symposium attendees and Southeast Minnesota Counselor Association

members what topics are most pertinent to their work.

Watch for the flyer, which will include all of the details for *Mental Health – a State of Well-Being*, coming to you soon.

Math and Science Teacher Partnership summer programming is a success!

by Kari Kubicek

Thirty-five math and science teachers from 19 Southeast Minnesota school districts participated in the MSTP summer programming this past July. The programming included a five-day Nature of Science and Engineering in Biology workshop for grades 7-12 Life Science teachers and a four-day Visualizing Mathematics workshop for grades 3-8 math teachers with content focusing on: Patterning and Algebra, Statistics, Geometry, and Measurement.

These opportunities were offered by SSC, in partnership with Winona State University and Hamline University, through the Math Science Teacher Partnership grant program. The objective of this grant program, offered through the Minnesota Department of Education, is to assist teachers in improving content and knowledge and pedagogical techniques to more effectively implement the Minnesota Mathematics and Science Academic Standards with the goal of improving student learning.

Lee Schmitt, Professional Development Coordinator and faculty in the Hamline University School of Education, facilitated the science module. Participants were provided an experience to equip them with ideas and skills to implement the Minnesota Science Standards



Science cohort members completing a full, open inquiry using a restored oak-savanna habitat at Quarry Hill Nature Center.

and prepare their students for success in the nature of science and engineering. During the week, participants joined their colleagues at Quarry Hill Nature Center, Cascade Meadow Wetlands and Environmental Science Center, the Mayo Clinic Bio Engineering facility, and the Wood Lake Meeting Center at SSC, to participate in the program activities.

Evaluation comments were extremely positive and participants were very pleased with the experience.

One participant noted, "This was an exciting workshop in that it truly will impact how I start a unit and how I anticipate students developing critical thinking skills."

Nicole Williams, Ph.D., a professor at the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Winona State University, facilitated the four-day math module. The primary objective of the workshop was

to focus on facilitating rich mathematical tasks that promote mathematical thinking in students. A technology component was also included in each day of the workshop.

Evaluation responses indicated a high appreciation for both the content and facilitation of the math workshop.

One participant noted, "I love what Nicole does with these classes! She goes about it with an interesting and very hands-on approach! I love taking the activities back with me. I plan on using new approaches because I understand how!"

SSC is again partnering with Winona State and Hamline in providing MSTP programming for the 2012-13 year. Learn more about this programming by visiting www.ssc.coop.

Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder Program opportunity offered through SSC

By Kari Kubicek

Last February, SSC held its first Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder (VREP) Training Institute in which 10 Southeast Minnesota school districts, including over 50 students and 20 adults, participated.

This training event included student training in the use of Blender software and 3D equipment and adult training in VREP program facilitation. These districts have utilized the months following the training to build their VREP programs in different ways including offering a semester course for students to earn credit, offering VREP as an extra-curricular activity, and even working with an outside business assisting with the building and rendering of 60 carbon based molecule models.

SSC is now offering another training institute to provide your district the opportunity to join in the programming that offers this unique learning method using virtual reality. VREP could serve as your solution for students having trouble succeeding in traditional learning environments. The Virtual Reality Education Pathfinder (VREP) program 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:

- Demonstrate the designer's competency on key national and state learning standards
- Provide avenues for other students to better understand and demonstrate their learning against key standards.

The one day VREP Training Institute has been scheduled for November 29, 2012, from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM, at SSC. This training session is similar to the training event that was held at SSC last February; however, the two-day training has been streamlined into a one-day session. The VREP 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

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 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 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 or (507) 281-6667.

SSC offers SMART Board trainings at your site

SMART Technologies recently unveiled a tremendous update for SMART Notebook software. Version 11 of SMART Notebook will enable teachers to integrate online resources into SMART Notebook files, enhancing instruction and increasing classroom efficiency.

This exciting update brings enhanced learning to your teachers and staff. Katie Sue Cunningham is a Certified SMART Board Trainer for Southeast Minnesota and is available to come to your school,



and update your trained staff on the changes from Notebook 10.8 to Notebook 11. If your staff wasn't trained before this update, that

is fine too. Katie can train your teachers how to effectively use their SMART board.

To find out more regarding SMART Notebook 11, please [click here](#).

Katie Sue Cunningham can be contacted at kcunningham@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6667.

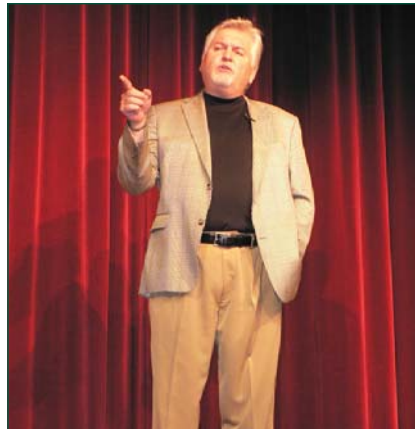
Steve Gilliland entertains and inspires district staff

By Amy Grover

The Southeast Service Cooperative was pleased to welcome Steve Gilliland to our region on August 29, for a "Making a Difference: Purpose, Passion, Pride" presentation.

The bestselling author and dynamic motivational speaker welcomed teachers back to the new school year at Austin High School in the morning, and the Chatfield Center for the Arts in the afternoon.

More than 1,500 teachers from Austin, Chatfield, Dover-Eyota, Fillmore Central, Houston, Kingsland, Lewiston, Minnesota State Academies, Plainview-Elgin-Millville, Rushford-Peterson, St. Charles, Southland, Spring Grove, and Wabasha-Kellogg enjoyed



Steve presenting to the educators.

inspirational anecdotes, laugh-out loud humor and thought-provoking ideas, and were personally and professionally reminded to reach down where the students are, no matter how far down that is, and make a difference. The

rousing standing ovation after the presentation was testament to the fact that his message was well received.

We congratulate Steve for his recent induction into the National Speakers Association (NSA) Speaker Hall of Fame in February. The Hall of Fame Distinction, also called the Council of Peers Award of Excellence, is an honor bestowed on fewer than 200 speakers worldwide since 1977. The lifetime award recognizes speaking excellence and professionalism. Notable speakers such as Ronald Reagan, Zig Ziglar, Norman Vincent Peale and General Colin Powell have also been named to the prestigious NSA Speaker Hall of Fame.

Teacher teams plan for advance placement classes

By Amy Grover

As part of the Southeast Minnesota Advanced Placement (SEMNAP) Project, funded by a \$15,490 grant from the Minnesota Department of Education, SSC hosted College Board's *Pre-AP®: Setting the Cornerstones™ of the AP Vertical Team* training on June 14-15.

Trainer Terri Marlow, a Spanish teacher from Parkersburg, West Virginia, has been conducting this particular training for over five years and was an enthusiastic, well-organized, and knowledgeable presenter. The workshop developed a deeper understanding of AP Vertical Teams and their potential for creating greater student success and greater teacher satisfaction through a more articulated program of study between classes and across grades. The workshop demonstrated the positive impact of Vertical

Teams on equity and on teacher pedagogy and practice. Part of the outcome of the training was a clear understanding of all the elements that contribute to successful Vertical Teams and a suite of ideas to promote, organize and empower the team.

During the training, team members from Lake City Public Schools, Spring Grove Public Schools, Rochester Public Schools, and Rochester Catholic Schools learned about the "Four Cornerstones" ... standards alignment, standards across disciplines, inquiry-based learning, and developing critical thinking skills. Each Cornerstone was explored in-depth with active and interactive sessions that included time for working with the content, discussing workshop strategies that could be applied to the classroom, and reflecting



on the concepts presented and on the ideas that develop from the interaction.

In addition, each Cornerstone was framed by an Essential Question used to provide focus and direction for the work. Team members learned about instructional design, including backward design, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and professional learning communities. Teacher teams left the workshop with an action plan for their AP Vertical Team.

October 24 Health Forum to offer wealth of information and resources for wellness team members

By Nicole LaChapelle

SSC offers three health forums per year as part of its Employee Health Promotion Support Program. The forums offer member wellness coordinators and committee members presentations on a wide variety of wellness topics as well as the opportunity to network with other area wellness coordinators.

The next forum will be held on Wednesday, October 24 from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Presentations will include the following:

Rules of Engagement

Trisha Vennick, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota

Wellness coordinators asked for Trisha to return to a future forum, and we listened!

Her session will explore 'how do I get a broader range of my employees to participate?' She'll discuss how to systematically improve employee engagement by using proven strategies that drive accountability, creating a comprehensive communication strategy, and designing wellness opportunities for every employee, manager, and leader.

Workspace Economics: Impacting Employee Health and the Bottom Line

Wendy McCubbin, Ergotron

Are you looking for innovative ways to invest in your human capital and create a culture of health? Employees forced to sit for long periods are at risk, and so is the organization who employs them. This session will explore how some companies are reducing sedentary

work time and positively impacting employee health and productivity, leading to a healthier organization overall.

There will also be a facilitated group discussion on a variety of wellness topics. New coordinators - this is the time to get lots of your questions answered from your experienced peers!

Click here for more information on the forum.

For information on SSC's Employee Health Promotion Assistance Program, contact Nicole LaChapelle at nlachapelle@ssc.coop (507) 281-6674.

Begin or expand your worksite wellness program with funds from SSC!

If your group is a member of SSC's Health Insurance Pool, you're eligible receive this funding. This program offers prevention-oriented health promotion services that can help you and your employees get fit, stay fit, and manage your health.

What can we use the funds for?

- Hosting a Health Fair
- Costs to start a wellness committee
- Stipends for committee members
- Incentives
- Biometric testing supplies (SSC provides glucose and cholesterol testing supplies at cost)
- Presenters
- Policy, systems and environmental changes at your organization

Contact:

Nicole LaChapelle, (507) 281-6674 or nlachapelle@ssc.coop

Schools - It's time to apply for funding!
(City and County Members have until October 31 to apply)



How much funding are we eligible for?

Depending on your group size, you can receive between \$1250 - \$2750 in funds for your wellness program.

This includes funds for wellness coordination, which are used to either reimburse staff for their time, or for your organization if staff use work time to coordinate activities.

Health care reform update

By Bill Colopoulos



The following article provides up-to-date information about current trends in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). It provides insight into the state of the current health care economy, healthcare reform and popular initiatives that are being used to improve the health and well being of individuals and their families.

General Exchange Rules – Effective 1-1-2014 and Beyond

Now that the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the PPACA, it's time for employers to prepare their health benefits plans to comply with the major rules impact of the law which will begin to take effect on 1-1-2014.

Many of the new rules beginning in 2014 directly affect health plan eligibility, plan design and employer-employee contributions to premium. Small employers will be affected first; large employers later. But all employers will eventually have to adopt policies that will address how the law affects their health benefit program.

Most of the 2014 rules revolve around the new health insurance exchange which will begin operations in Minnesota on

1-1-2014. Exchange rules will ultimately determine how (and if) employers are in compliance with the PPACA.

What is the Exchange? The PPACA provides funds to states to establish a health insurance exchange through which individuals and small employers may purchase health insurance beginning in 2014. States may offer their own exchange or defer control (in whole or in part) to the federal exchange model.

Exchange-related provisions in PPACA impact employers in the following ways:

- Beginning in 2017, states may allow all employers of any size to offer coverage through the exchange
- Prior to 2017, only small employers - employers with 100 employees or less (except in states that limit small employers to employers with 50 or fewer employees prior to 2016) may participate*. In 2016, all states must regard employers with 100 or fewer employees as "small employers". **As of 8/2012, Minnesota is still undecided whether or not the definition of small group will be expanded to 100 employees effective 1-1-2014. As of this date, Wisconsin has not begun development of its own exchange and would be subject (by default) to the federal exchange model.*
- Employers who offer coverage through the exchange may permit employees to pay for such coverage with pre-tax dollars through the employer's cafeteria plan

Employer Shared Responsibility -- (aka "Play or Pay")

Effective January 1, 2014

Employers with 50 or more full-time "applicable" employees are subject to the following penalties related to coverage that they offer or fail to offer to full-time employees:

- Applicable employers who fail to offer full-time employees health coverage must pay a penalty with respect to each full-time employee in any month in which any full-time employee receives a federal subsidy for the exchange.
- The penalty is determined on a monthly basis and is the product of the total number of full-time employees of the employer (over 30) for that month and 1/12 of \$2,000 (up from \$750)
- For example, a business with 51 employees that does not offer coverage is subject to tax equal to 21 (i.e., 51 - 30 = 21) times the applicable payment amount
- Part-time employees are taken into account solely for the purpose of determining if an employer has at least 50 employees.
- The number of full-time employees otherwise determined is increased by dividing the aggregate number of hours of service of employees who are not full-time employees by 120.
- Employers who are "applicable large employers" solely because of seasonal employees who are otherwise full-time employees and that work less than 120 days during the year are NOT

considered “applicable large employers”

The “9.5%” Rule – Employee Income “Safe Harbor”

Even when coverage is provided, employers who offer coverage for any month to a full-time employee who is certified as having enrolled in the exchange **and has received a subsidy** is subject to a penalty equal to the product of the total number of such employees who have received a tax subsidy and 1/12 of \$3,000 (capped at 1/12 of \$2,000 times the total number of full-time employees during such month)

Note: Employees offered employer coverage are not eligible for a subsidy unless their required premium for single coverage exceeds 9.5% of their household income* **or** if the plan’s share of allowed costs is less than 60%.

* *Employers may use employee-only wages in Box 1, W-2 as a “safe harbor”. (see IRS Technical Release 2012-01).*

This is the general interpretation of the proposal inquiry solicited by the IRS in Notice 2011-73. Tracking household income was considered too difficult in too many instances; thus, the “safe harbor” accommodation was provided.

For example, there could be potential conflicts between coverage and costs regarding dependents – some of whom may be covered by, but not part of, an employee’s “household” income (e.g., a 25-year old child not living at home and who is no longer a tax dependent but who is nevertheless covered under their parent’s health plan as allowed

by the PPACA. This is one example of the difficulties with dependent coverage interpretations that led the IRS to develop the “safe harbor” resolution outlined above.

Employer “Play or Pay” Mandate Summary – Q&A

Employers must provide minimum health care coverage, or pay penalties, starting in 2014.

Does this apply to small employers?

The health care reform law provides for an exemption for employers that employ fewer than 50 full-time equivalent employees.

How does the provision define a full-time employee?

A “full-time employee” is an employee who is employed on average at least 30 hours per week.

IRS Notice 2011-36 requested comments on an approach that would use a “look-back measurement period,” of possibly as much as three months, that employers might use in determining whether current employees are full-time for purposes of this mandate. Many details remain to be addressed in subsequent regulations.

Can penalties ever apply to part-time or temporary employees?

Based on the preliminary regulatory guidance HHS has issued, it appears unlikely employers will face penalties for not offering coverage, or for offering insufficient coverage, to part-time or temporary employees.

Does this apply to dependent coverage?

The dependent coverage issue is one of the most important in the employer “play or pay” mandate and regulatory guidance on the statutory provision is forthcoming. In essence, according to the statutory language, the employer must offer “Minimum Essential Coverage” to employees and their dependents, but it appears that only employees must be offered minimum essential coverage that is both “affordable” and of “minimum value.”

As the PPACA is currently written, it is possible to interpret its language as not requiring employers to offer affordable and minimum value coverage to dependents; only employees. The enforcement of dependent rules would be complex and has many practical challenges. This is why the current rules have yet to address them; modifications to law in regards to dependents may be coming in the future. But for right now, the only guidance is directed at single coverage and employees only.

What is the frequency of penalties?

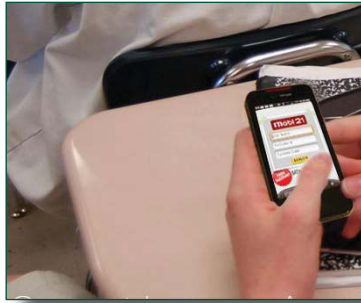
State health insurance exchanges would impose penalties on employers not in compliance with this mandate on an annual basis. What is not clear is what happens if an employee is receiving federal subsidies to buy exchange-based coverage and after, say, three months gets another job with qualifying employer coverage and leaves the exchange. Are the penalties imposed on the previous employer refunded? This issue has

Mobl21: Mobile learning content solutions

by Katie Schmitt

Through partnerships with the Minnesota Service Cooperatives and the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA), Southeast Service Cooperative has a new contract with Mobl21 for mobile learning content. As a mobile learning application, Mobl21 allows educators to develop and distribute learning content to students via mobile devices. Students can access Mobl21 learning content anytime, anywhere.

Mobl21 offers content creation solutions to save you time. In collaboration with top U.S. educational publishers, Mobl21 provides pre-packaged learning



content through its web-based, Mobl21 Store. Educators can search, preview and download lessons to share with students. Mobl21's professional service team can also develop and customize learning material to meet your instructional goals.

Try Mobl21: [Register to request a Free Trial](#). Once your account is approved, you can log on to mobl21.com to start creating content.

Thinking about taking the plunge into mobile learning? Read these articles on the basics of mobile learning and implementation.

[Mobile Learning Basics](#)
[Mobile Learning Implementation Steps](#)

For more information on Mobl21, please contact Supra Manohar at supra@mobl21.com or (510) 861-0511. Members receive a minimum 2% discount off services and subscription rates.

Improving student achievement with Archipelago Learning

By Katie Schmitt

Archipelago Learning offers three products to SSC members as part of their cooperative purchasing contract: Reading Eggs, Education City and Study Island. Each of these user-friendly products is designed to improve student achievement while providing interactive and engaging online learning activities. Each program reinforces and enriches lessons, extending learning beyond the classroom with 24/7 anytime access. As students access the programs at home, parents are more involved and empowered to help with learning.

[Reading Eggs](#) is a web-based, supplemental early reading program designed for PreK-2nd grades featuring interactive animations, activities, games, songs and rewards. The program integrates five essential reading components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers are able to place students in appropriate reading level, monitor progress, differentiate instruction, access real time reporting and add the program into lesson plans.

[Free 4 week trial for Parents and Teachers](#)

[Education City](#) is an online learning program for PreK-6th grades that is mapped to state and common core standards. Students are engaged in interactive reading, math, science and ELL content presented with bright colors, music and fun characters. Teachers can introduce new concepts through whole class, interactive whiteboard lessons, track student progress and identify learning gaps through reporting tools.

[Free trial for Educators and Administrators](#)

[Study Island](#) is a web-based, state specific assessment preparation program. It is organized into topics covering all of the Minnesota Academic Standards according to the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments administered in elementary school, middle school and high school. Students participate in interactive lessons and activities either at their own pace or under the guidance of a teacher. The program features automatic remediation,

real time reporting and formative assessment. Teachers like how the program assists with data-driven instruction, response-to-intervention and differentiated learning.

[Review the research that demonstrates how Study Island increases student achievement](#)
SSC members receive the following discounts on all Archipelago Learning products, including Reading Eggs, Education City, and Study Island: 15% discount of first purchase and 10% off subsequent purchases, including renewals and add-ons. For more information, contact: Andrew Zierman (800) 419-3191 x7671 or andrew.zierman@archlearning.com.

Join us for An Introduction to Archipelago Learning Products at Southeast Service Cooperative on September 28, 12:15 - 1:45 PM. This free lunch and learn session will cover updates to Study Island and provide an overview of Reading Eggs and Education City. Pre-registration is required.

SSC: The Next Generation

By Amy Grover

On June 18-19, the SSC staff was excited to be joined by Dr. Susan Leddick to help us boost our planning process to the next level. Susan is a national consultant in strategic planning, continuous improvement, and organizational design, ... which we have labeled "breakthrough planning."

A former teacher, community college administrator, director of training for a state government project and director of quality and training for a manufacturing firm, Susan is active in the application of quality theory, practices, and tools. She is one of a handful of consultants in the United States who pioneered the translation of quality management methods from business to education. Dr. Leddick brings multiple perspectives on the many difficult issues organizations face as the world around them changes, and has an unique understanding of educational service agencies and their specific role in the education system. She has helped several groups of leaders to effect entire



Dr. Susan Leddick

organization redesign. With her facilitation skills and expertise, the staff looked at the future that we, as a team, envision for SSC, our critical outcomes as an agency, how to most effectively plan together, and how to examine the effect of changing times on our ongoing planning process. By looking at the environmental context factors that impact us, we were able to craft a motivating identity statement, identify four big questions facing us, develop a shared vision for our future, and develop five bold steps to take in the coming months and years.

After our intensive two-day retreat with Susan, our teams met to refine our program and service action plans. Then, Susan returned on July 30 to facilitate a "2012-2013 and beyond" planning session with the staff, Board of Directors, and Administrator Advisory Committee members. During this time, we developed a shared understanding of critical planning issues, expanded the implications of our work in June, and identified specific ways for the Board and AAC to support SSC's strategic work. Within the structure of her facilitation, we were able to have very informative dialogue, gain important feedback from those advisors that represent our membership, and set short-term and long-term goals for SSC. Our 2013-2014 Annual Plan will be available soon, and we will highlight some of the exciting work that we accomplished and ways that we will continue to improve existing services and expand to meet new needs in a high-quality manner. We look forward to keeping you posted as our work continues!

SSC wins Sloan Award fourth year in a row!

SSC has been honored with the 2012 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Excellence in Workplace Effectiveness and Flexibility for its use of flexibility as an effective workplace strategy to increase business and employee success.

"We are thrilled to receive this recognition for our workplace practices," said Suzanne Riley, Executive Director of SSC. "We're receiving this award again because each SSC employee helps to cultivate our flexible environment by supporting each other in so many ways – with work assistance, moral



support, encouragement when we have challenges, and praise when we do something especially well. It takes board and CEO placing a high value on employee wellbeing to institute flexibility policies

and practices, but what makes workplace flexibility sustainable is the employees' commitment to the organization and their co-workers." Members of SSC's Board and staff are pictured here.

Dale Walston awarded MSC's Outstanding Service Award

Dale Walston was recently awarded the Minnesota Service Cooperative's Outstanding Service Award. We congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition.

Dale has been employed at SSC for over 10 years and currently serves as SSC's Director of Operations. He is continually making improvements in operations and administrative

services. He demonstrates leadership and support of his colleagues at SSC, in the community, and among the Minnesota Service Cooperatives. Dale shared, "I want to thank the SSC Board of Directors, staff and Advisory Committee for the honor of this award. I know that personal accomplishments do not happen without the daily efforts of the great team I work alongside."



Dale pictured with members of SSC's Board and staff

Austin High School teacher Lisa Sanders wins WEM award

Austin teacher Lisa Sanders was recently named as a regional honoree in the WEM Foundation's 2012 Outstanding Educator Awards program.

Lisa shared, "I am honored to be the 2012 WEM Regional honoree for teacher achievement. As a teacher I am always looking for ways to improve my students' learning and to assist them in becoming learners for life. I am always seeking opportunities to learn more about the subjects I teach and how to

teach these concepts and ideas to my students, so they can be successful both in my classroom and in life.

I am modeling for my students what it means to be a learner for life. I use a variety of activities in my classroom to engage and empower my students in their learning and provide my students with opportunities to grow in their learning that will continue throughout their lives."



Lisa is pictured with Austin High School principal Brad Bergstrom

800 students fill conference to capacity!

By Kirsten Kuehl

The Young Authors, Young Artists Conference was held on May 17 and 18, 2012. Over 800 students, accompanied by adult chaperones, experienced an exciting day of learning.

Students in grades 4-6 from public, private and home schools across southeast Minnesota gathered at the Heinz Center at the RCTC 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 an out-of-classroom experience that students remember for an entire lifetime. The conference has been held for over 20 years.

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

Students submitted stories, poems and illustrations that can be found on our website (www.ssc.coop).

Mark your calendars for the 2013 conference on May 21 and May 22! More information and brochures will be available early in 2013.

Registration opens soon for fall student conferences

Science and Nature Conference - November 2

Southeast Service Cooperative



Science & Nature Conference

Students in grades 2-4 will convene at the Plainview-Elgin-Millville PreK-3 building in Plainview for the second annual Science & Nature Conference. The conference begins with check-in at 8:30 AM and concludes at 1:30 PM. Students will take part in three engaging sessions, and one keynote from knowledgeable presenters from Minnesota.

Early Bird Registration
(October 1 - October 15)
\$45 per student

Standard Registration
(October 15 - October 31)
\$50 per student

A highlight of the conference will be the keynote and presentations

from the Twin Cities-based Raptor Center. They will bring four of their feathered friends: an eagle, falcon, hawk and owl.

Students will select three sessions from a selection of 11 different science and nature-focused sessions.

It is recommended to have 1 chaperone per 10 students. Chaperones are welcome to attend the sessions if there is remaining space, once all students have taken their seat.

Interested in registering for this conference? Please [click here](#).

Young Authors, Young Artists Middle School Conference - November 8

SSC is hosting a Young Authors Young Artists Conference for 7th and 8th graders on November 8. This conference, held at SSC, is being offered to expose students to writing and illustrating as an art form and to provide the students an opportunity to express themselves in a positive and creative way.

The second 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.

Early Bird Registration
(October 1 - October 15)
\$45 per student

Standard Registration
(October 15 - November 5)
\$50 per student

Unlike our other conferences, chaperones will not be required (but welcome) for this conference. SSC will provide staff to supervise each session.

Conference Sessions

- Bookmaking: The Beginning Together
- Fishin' for a Lede
- Rumpelstiltskin, Private Eye
- Drawing on Design

Interested in learning more about or registering for this session? Please [click here](#).



Rochester student excels at National Spelling Bee

Friedell Middle School eighth-grader, Roshini Asirvatham, exited the 85th Scripps National Spelling Bee during the semifinal round on Thursday morning.

She tripped up on “sciophyte,” a plant that thrives at low light intensity, during the Thursday morning semifinals, which were nationally televised. It was Roshini’s second appearance at the national bee.

A 14-year-old from San Diego, Snigdha Nandipati, won the event Thursday night, getting the win by spelling “guetapens,” a French-derived word that means ambush, snare or trap. She beat out eight other finalists.

A semifinalist last year, Nandipati became the fifth consecutive Indian-American



Roshini poses with her SE Minnesota Spelling Bee Grand Champion trophy.

winner and 10th in the last 14 years, a run that began in 1999 when Nupur Lala won and was later featured in the documentary “Spellbound.”

Rochester’s Roshini Asirvatham was one of the last two Minnesota students to be ousted from the National Spelling Bee. The other was seventh-grader Antony Joseph of Fairmont Junior High.

On Wednesday, three Minnesotans fell short of the semifinal round: seventh-graders Emma Greenlee of Mesabi East High School in Aurora; and Elise Stahl, a home-schooled student from Greenfield; and eighth-grader Matthew Majerle of Forestview Middle School in Baxter.

This article was re-printed from the May 31, 2012 issue of the Rochester Post Bulletin.

Knowledge Bowl Season Begins

A meeting for Knowledge Bowl advisors was held on September 18 at the Southeast Service Cooperative.

The 2012-13 season was discussed, including updates to the Knowledge Bowl program, dates for the junior and senior seasons, Question Reviews and Invitationals.

Teams registered for Round Robin dates. Competitions for

junior high begin in October and for senior high in December. In 2011-12, over 50 teams from 18 schools competed in Junior High Knowledge Bowl and 99 teams from 29 schools competed in Senior High Knowledge Bowl.

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



StandardsInsightMN™ continued from page 1

questions that are specific to their classroom, their building, and their district such as:

- What does this mean for our professional development plan?
- What can we learn from looking at the K-12 progression that will help us in grade-level work?
- What are some important vocabulary and ideas that need a shared interpretation?
- What professional development is necessary to make necessary changes in practice?
- Do we have the materials and resources we need to meet these new learning targets?

This resource provides valuable insight that allows users to examine the standards in a variety of ways and dialogue with colleagues to develop common expectations and articulate consistent instruction within and across grade levels and content areas. It assists in the complicated work of aligning curriculum directly to the benchmarks and ensuring that students have developed the knowledge, skills, and conceptual understandings expected within each standard, and are able to demonstrate their attainment and understanding. And, it serves as a powerful tool for Professional Learning Community work. Furthermore, StandardsInsightMN™ helps identify key vocabulary for both the teacher and the student to

highlight technical terminology and domain-specific vocabulary that are essential for learning.

This in-depth investigation of the standards is all packaged in a very affordable, easy-to-use, online tool that is searchable and can be filtered by grade level, strand, or standard. Furthermore, editable space is provided within the resource that allows each district to customize use of StandardsInsightMN™ to align with other areas of focus in your classrooms, such as assessments, interventions/ extensions, resource materials, lesson alignment, teaching ideas, research, action steps, etc. As a whole, this affordable, yet powerful collaboration tool encourages a culture of improvement, builds internal capacity, supports systemic change, and leads to efficient group work.

If you would like to learn more about how StandardsInsightMN™ could help your district, please contact Amy Grover at (507) 281-6693 or at agrover@ssc.coop. We would be happy to demonstrate the tool via a webinar, come to your site to discuss the potential with your leadership team, or join one of your PLC group meetings to show how StandardsInsightMN™ can be used to guide thinking about instruction and student learning.

Why unpack the standards?

“It provides clarity as to what students must know and be able to do. When teachers take the time to analyze each standard and identify its essential concepts and skills, the result is more effective instructional planning, assessment, and student learning.” - Larry Ainsworth (2003)

VREP program continued from page 8

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 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 Kari Kubicek 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 to learn more about this program. You may also contact Kari Kubicek via email at kkubicek@ssc.coop or phone at 507.281.6668 with any questions.

Health Care Reform Update continued from page 13

Does Minnesota intend to implement its own exchange on 1-1-2014? Will federal or state laws apply to it? How about Wisconsin?

Minnesota is aggressively pursuing the development of its own exchange; following PPACA guidelines for a state-based and operated exchange program. However, federal tax law and PPACA requirements will apply to the Minnesota exchange – in addition to, and in conjunction with remaining applicable state insurance laws that are not pre-empted by the PPACA.

To date, Wisconsin has not begun development of, nor has it declared its intention to, pursue its own state-based exchange. This implies that a federal exchange model will operate in Wisconsin effective 1-1-2014.

For the maximum health plan cost of 9.5% of an employee's income:

a. Does it include just the employee's wages or their household income?

The employee's Box 1, W-2 wages only.

b. How are hourly employees, tips, etc. calculated?

The relevant figure is what is reported on the W-2, in Box 1.

c. Does this apply to family/dependent coverage?

The employer calculates the employee premium share for self-only coverage as a percent of the employee's Box 1, W-2 wages.

What about pretax deductions that lower income, like 401(k) contributions?

Only amounts reported in Box 1 should be used in determining whether an employee's premium share exceeds 9.5% of wages.

Will employers offering HSAs with high-deductible health plans generally meet the minimum coverage requirements?

The question of HSAs and high-deductible coverage falls under the future regulatory guidance heading. Nevertheless, it's safe to assume that high-deductible health plans with HSAs will qualify as minimum essential coverage that meets the "minimum value" test. In the Small Business Health Options "SHOP" exchanges, employers must offer, as a minimum value option plan, the second lowest cost "Silver" qualified health plan (QHP) offered through the exchange. This presumes a minimum actuarial value (AV) of 70%; with the remaining 30% liability assumed by the employees. However, plans with an "AV" as low as 60% (aka "Bronze" plans) may be offered as lower cost alternatives to other plans offered by the participating SHOP employer.

Are special employer and employee types such as unions, non-profits, government employers and commonly-owned companies treated differently for any health care reform requirements?

Yes, the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act contains some exceptions and special consideration for collectively bargained plans, union health plans, multi-employer plans and affiliated employers. Refer to PPACA and its regulatory

guidance for more information on those specific situations.

Do any health care reform regulations apply to dental and vision plans?

Yes, for example, the cost of dental and vision plans that are integrated with health insurance plans, i.e., not stand-alone, must be included in W-2 reporting of health costs. Also, pediatric dental and vision care is included in the definition of essential health benefits.

Do provider access requirements define Qualified Health Plans (QHPs) benefit value?

Yes. The final SHOP rules issued 3-12-2012 specified that provider access standards will be defined by the PPACA that govern whether or not all plans offered through an exchange are QHPs based on the plans providing an adequate access of providers within the territory of the exchange program.

References:

IRC Section 4980H

IRS Technical Release 2012-01

IRS Notice 2011-36

IRS Notice 2011-73

PPACA, SHOP Exchange Rules 3-12-2012 (45 CFR Parts 155, 156, and 157)

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.

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 meetings:

June 2012 Meeting

Accepted bids from vendors for parking lot development and construction, with stipulations as follows:

- Rochester Sand and Gravel, asphalt paving
- Heartland Excavating, sitework
- Legends Concrete, concrete
- Herold Flags, Flags/flag poles
- Chosen Valley Electric, electrical
- Accept lawn irrigation bid of the lowest of Stadsvold Lawn & Landscape Management and a forthcoming bid from Zoller Brothers Irrigation.
- Bids will be re-opened for landscaping.

Accepted the 2011 CCOGA Health Pool settlement report and credited calculated excess claims funds to the following groups: City of Byron, City of Mantorville, City of Spring Grove.

1. Revised the Personnel Benefit Plan for 2012-2013 as follows: Change the dental and vision contribution benefits to stipulate that an employee may elect to waive SSC group

health plan coverage and receive a contribution to the VEBA equivalent to the single dental and vision contributions multiplied by the employee's FTE, if the employee provides proof of coverage as a dependent under a spousal/family provided group health plan or the employee provides proof of Medicare coverage. This option will be available only to employees with active VEBA accounts.

2. FSA Amount: Effective 9/1/2012, the maximum employee contribution for medical flexible spending accounts is \$2,500.

Approved the employment effective July 1, 2012 of Andrew Schalm (Mathematics Specialist), Kristin Scherman (Reading Specialist), Carol Swanson (Implementation Specialist), and Kristina Robertson (English Language Development Specialist). Authorized the opening of a position of Charter School Specialist.

Increased the annual stipend of the SSC Board Chair from \$500 to \$650 effective July 1, 2012.

Adopted the 2012-2013 budget.

July 2012 Regular Meeting and Strategic Planning Session

Accepted a grant contract with the Minnesota Department of Education for \$134,528.00 to provide math and science content and instructional strategies training for teachers in partnership school districts during the 2012-2013 year.

Conducted a joint strategic planning session of the Board of Directors, the Administrative Advisory Committee, and Staff. The session was facilitated by Susan Leddick, who also facilitated

the staff's June planning session in preparation for this session.

August 2012 Regular Meeting

Accepted the recommendation of the CCOGA Pool Formula Committee and adopted the 2013 Plan Year City/County Health Pool renewal formula and the resulting rate adjustments. Maintained the stop loss insurance level for the City/County Pool at \$125,000. Authorized staff to establish special conditions and adjustments for groups as warranted by unique group circumstances.

Approved the employment effective August 1, 2012 of Barb Marchetti as Regional Center of Excellence Special Education Specialist.

Accepted the resignation of Paul McDowall as Center of Excellence Director effective September 30 and thanked him for his contributions in the development and implementation of the SSC Center. Authorized the Executive Director to initiate a search for a successor and hire as soon as possible.

Future Board Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, October 24

Monday, November 26

Wednesday, December 26

Calendar

September

An Introduction to Archipelago Learning Products
September 28
12:15 - 1:45 PM

October

Gifted and Talented Network
October 4
12:00 - 3:00 PM

SMART Board Beginner with updated Notebook 11 Software (For PC Users)
October 4
3:30 - 6:30 PM

SSC's New Parking Lot Celebration
October 8
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins
October 9 & 10, 16
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Coaching and Feedback Skills for Supervisors and Managers
October 11
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

English Learners Leaders' (EL) Network
October 11
1:00 - 3:00 PM

MSTP Math Cohort Session
October 17
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

AAC Meeting
October 18
12:00 - 3:00 PM

SMART Board Intermediate with updated Notebook 11 Software (For PC Users)
October 18
3:30 - 6:30 PM

MDE Teacher-Principal Evaluation Forum
October 22
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

MDE Teacher-Principal Evaluation Forum
October 23
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

MSTP Life Science Cohort Session
October 23
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

SSC's Fall Health Forum
October 24
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting
October 24
5:30 - 8:00 PM

Save Your License Saturday
October 27
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

So Many Words; So Little Time: Growing a Student's Academic Vocabulary
October 30
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

MDE Teacher-Principal Evaluation Forum
October 31
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

November

Science & Nature Conference
November 2
8:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Round Robins
November 5 - 7
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

SEMLAC Leadership Team Training (Day 2)
November 7
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

English Learners Leaders' (EL) Network
November 7
1:00 - 3:00 PM

YAYA Middle School Conference
November 8
8:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Principal – School Leadership Evaluation Seminar
November 13
4:00 - 8:00 PM

It's a Balancing Act: 50/50 balance between fiction and informational text in grades K through 5
November 14
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

AAC Meeting
November 15
12:00 - 3:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting
November 26
5:30 - 8:00 PM

MSTP Math Cohort Session
November 28
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Evaluating Text Complexity
November 28
12:30 - 3:00 PM

Gifted and Talented Network
November 29
12:00 - 3:00 PM

Mental Health - A State of Well-Being
November 30
Time TBA



SSC is a 2012 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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 - 2..... Dental Reimbursement
 - 3..... Staff Development
 - 4..... EHSM
 - 5..... Student Academics & Conferences

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| | name | phone | email | service area |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
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| | Katie Sue Cunningham | (507) 281-6667 |kcunningham@ssc.coop..... | Training and Program Technician |
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| | Kirsten Kuehl | (507) 281-6670 |kkuehl@ssc.coop..... | Instructional Services Coordinator |
| | Nicole LaChapelle | (507) 281-6674 |nlachapelle@ssc.coop..... | Communications and Program Technician |
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| | Diane Schwinghammer | (507) 281-6683 |dschwinghammer@ssc.coop..... | Director of Instructional Services |
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| Bill Colopoulos | | (507) 281-6690 |bcolopoulos@ssc.coop..... | Health and Benefits Consultant |
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| Thad Dahling | | (507) 281-6680 |thad.dahling@ieainstitute.com..... | Project Manager |
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| Angie Radel | | (507) 281-6682 |angie.radel@ieainstitute.com..... | Senior Project Manager |
| Pat Weir | | (507) 281-6677 |pat.weir@ieainstitute.com..... | Regional Manager |

You're invited to a celebration!

Members -

SSC's staff and Board are excited to offer our Members and Wood Lake Meeting Center clients the convenience of our new parking lot! Come help us celebrate its completion.



Monday, October 8 at SSC

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM, Free

Enjoy a lunch of pulled-pork sandwiches and all the fixings, cake, music, prize drawings (2 \$50 gift certificates to Creative Cuisine Company, a free night stay at Country Inn and Suites, Whistle Binkies certificates), door prizes, and the chance to catch-up with SSC staff and fellow Members.

No registration is needed for the celebration, simply stop in anytime between 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM. In the event of inclement weather, we'll move the party into the Wood Lake Meeting Center.