Southeast Service Cooperative

Connections

April 2024

Area Superintendents Graduate From Program P2

Project MOMENTUM Celebrates P8

Educator Forum Huge Success P14



Inspiring Success

Area Superintendents Graduate from the AASA National Superintendent Certification Program®

MASA Region 1 and AASA partnered to offer a two year statewide cohort opportunity for superintendents to participate in the AASA National Superintendent Certification Program® from October 2022 through March 2024. The program, designed and led by superintendents, assigns participants with a seasoned superintendent as a mentor to provide leadership and guidance throughout the experience. Participants met for two day training sessions over the two year time period covering multiple themes including organizational culture, ethics and professional norms, addressing social, emotional and academic learning, legislative advocacy, and more.

SSC would like to congratulate the following SE MN superintendent program graduates:

Melinda Crowley, LaCrescent-Hokah Public Schools
Jamie Goebel, Lyle Public Schools
Chris Staloch, Blooming Prairie Public Schools



Melinda Crowley



Jamie Goebel



Chris Staloch



Jeff Sampson

We would also like to thank Jeff Sampson, Superintendent of Cannon Falls Public Schools, for serving as a mentor for the program.

Learning Opportunities Through the Reading Center Dyslexia Institute of MN

Orton Gillingham Training

The Reading Center in Rochester is hosting an in person basic Orton Gillingham Training from June 5 –June 28. This graduate level course will meet weekdays at The Reading Center's Rochester building from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, and will include lecture and supervised practicum with a student. Click here to learn more about this opportunity!

Free Online Professional Development for MN Educators

Thanks in part to financial support from the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation, professionals working in MN schools are eligible to access The Reading Center Dyslexia Institute of MN's online courses for free. These courses include Dyslexia 101, Dyslexia in the Classroom, and The Scoop on Suffixes with more to be added soon.

Click here to learn more and register!

Partnership Leadership Training Series with TeamWorks International Inc.

By Kari Kubicek

MASA Region 1 and SSC have partnered to bring TeamWorks International Inc.'s Partnership Leadership Training Series to SE MN MASA members. The leadership series is being offered at a minimal cost to Region 1 MASA members in (6) four-hour sessions throughout the 2024-25 school year, thanks to funding provided by MASA.

Participants will learn the fundamentals of partnership leadership, as developed by Dennis Cheesebrow, and the key elements of Partnership Leadership Frameworks™ tools and processes for use in daily work in a school district. FrameWorks™ are graphical images that help guide and support leadership and organizational development. Developed and delivered exclusively by TeamWorks professionals, these simple, memorable images provide both a process and a frame of reference through which leaders can interpret and manage complex webs of situations, environments, people, and influences.

The Partnership Leadership Training series is scheduled from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM at SSC on the following dates:

Manage When One Must: Time Management
Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Partnership Leadership: Why Partner Leadership?
Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Strategic Planning
Wednesday, November 6, 2024

Manage When One Must: Essential Conversations
Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Manage When One Must: Staff Accountability and KRAs
Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Partnership Leadership Frameworks: Partner When We Should - Wednesday, April 9, 2025

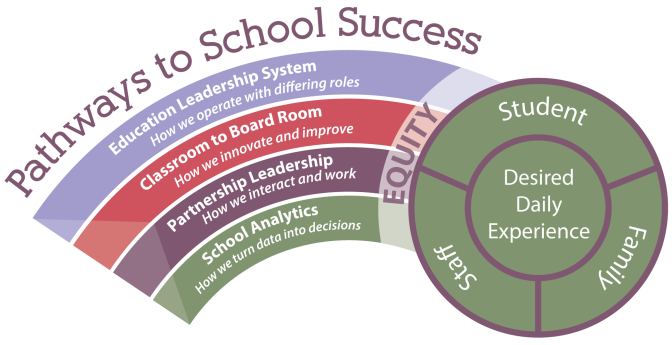
Breakfast, refreshments, and Admin CEUs will be provided.

Registration Rate:
Region 1 MASA Member: $150/person for full series

TEAMWORKS
EDUCATION LEADERSHIP SOLUTIONS

Minnesota Association of School Administrators
Our Common Agenda: Children

For more than 28 years, TeamWorks International, Inc. has been working with organizations to enhance their capacity for strategic, constructive change resulting in realization of vision in practical and measurable ways. TeamWorks' clients come from education, community, religious, business, and government settings but they share a common aspiration; to achieve their goals while remaining healthy, dynamic, and accountable.



Click here to register.

Learn about the series' presenter on the next page.

Leadership continued…

About the Presenter



Dr. Ray Queener, Owner and Principal Consultant at TeamWorks, blends his experience across multiple arenas to assist clients in the areas of partnership skills, strategic growth, personality and motivation awareness, and systemic alignment and accountability. Ray is known for his ease and comfort in working side by side with clients to approach each project with insight and compassion. Both lighthearted and results-oriented, Ray brings energy, focus, and hope to the organizations that he is honored to serve.

Ray has a wealth of experience in education having served in multiple capacities over 30 years. His work in education began as a secondary math teacher in Luck, WI. Having a vision for integrating technology into the classroom, he was able to further that vision as he served as technology coordinator for South St. Paul Schools and later Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan (ISD 196). He transitioned to finance director at ISD 196 and later Stillwater Area Public Schools (SAPS) where he gained valuable experiences learning organizational operations while continuing to serve in public education. Both as an assistant superintendent at SAPS for 10 years and the last 6 years as superintendent for Cambridge-Isanti Schools, he has helped lead successful bond and levy referendums in addition to overseeing district operations.

Ray's work with clients includes: Strategic and tactical planning grounded in organizational vision; VisionCard accountability systems development and implementation to ensure continuous improvement knowledge and capacity development; Executive Coaching; customizing leadership development for clients through the Frameworks® Partnership Series grounded in TeamWorks' proprietary FrameWorks™ and Organizational Development theory; and, Critical Position Benchmarks to assure job—fit in key hires or restructuring.

Service is evident in Ray's support for public education serving as Executive Board Member for Schools for Equity in Education (SEE) for many years. He also served on the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) board and was the Region VI Leadership Team Chair. He was nominated and received several awards from his colleagues including Administrator of Excellence in 2017. Ray's commitment to partnership, and his enthusiasm for supporting others as they learn and develop made him an ideal addition to the TeamWorks team in 2019.

Ray is recognized as a National Certified Superintendent through American Association of School Administrators (AASA) He earned his Doctorate in Educational Policy and Administration and received his Superintendent License from the University of Minnesota. He earned his Master of Arts in Educational Administration from St. Mary's University of Minnesota where he also continues on as adjunct faculty. He has a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Mathematics Education with a minor in Computer Science from the University of Minnesota.

When Ray is not at work, you can catch him outside golfing, fishing, hunting, riding 4-wheelers and cruising in the pontoon.

We invite you to watch this edition of ***SSC Talk***, the video podcast in which we share timely resources with our members. This edition will help you match names to faces, as each of our program managers makes an appearance!

Contact information for program managers and coordinators are in the video description. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions! To access ***SSC Talk***, click the image to the right.



Careers on Fire!
Don't Miss the SE MN Welding Competition

Inspire the Next Generation of Welders



Are you a K-12 educator with students interested in welding, manufacturing, or the trades? Are you an industry partner looking to connect with the future workforce? Look no further than the Southeast Minnesota Welding Competition!

This exciting event, held annually at the Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) Heintz Center, takes place on Tuesday, April 30, and is designed to:

- **Ignite Student Passion**
  Introduce high school students to the rewarding world of welding through a hands-on competition, career fair, and networking sessions.
- **Fuel Career Exploration**
  Students can meet industry representatives, explore career paths, and gain valuable insights into the welding and manufacturing fields.
- **Build Future Leaders**
  Motivate students to excel in their welding and career and technical education (CTE) classes, potentially leading them to compete in future SEMN Welding Competitions.

Bridge the Gap

Foster connections between educators, industry partners, and students, creating a strong pipeline for the next generation of welders.

Success Story

The impact of the SEMN Welding Competition is undeniable. In 2023, four students who attended the event went on to enroll in RCTC's welding PSEO program while still in high school! This is just one example of how the competition is inspiring young minds to pursue exciting careers in welding and manufacturing.

Join the Movement!

While student registration for the 2024 competition is closed, **we are still welcoming non-competing students to attend the career fair and breakout sessions!**

Educators

Encourage your students with a potential interest in welding to register at SEMN Welding Competition Registration.

SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA
WELDING COMPETITION
DURABILITY. STRENGTH. PRECISION.

Industry Partners

We appreciate your support in building the future workforce. Consider sponsoring the 2025 SEMN Welding Competition and connect with the talented students who will be shaping our industry.

Together, let's ignite a passion for welding and empower the next generation of skilled professionals!

A special thank you to our 2024 sponsors!

Deepen Your Impact on CTE: Apply for the MACTA Policy and Leadership Fellowship

By Sarah Ness

Are you a passionate K-12 or post-secondary CTE leader who wants to shape the future of career and technical education?

The Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Administrators (MACTA) is seeking a diverse group of educators for its 2024-2025 CTE Policy & Leadership Fellowship. This year-long program equips you with the knowledge and skills to become a powerful advocate for CTE at the state and federal levels.

What You'll Gain:

- Deeper understanding of state and federal CTE policy: Learn the intricacies of policymaking and how it impacts CTE programs.
- Enhanced leadership skills: Develop your ability to navigate government structures and influence policy decisions.
- Broadened network: Connect with key policymakers, educators, and industry leaders across Minnesota.
- National perspective: Participate in ACTE's National Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C., and gain insights into federal CTE policy.

Who Should Apply:

- Educators with a strong desire to understand and influence CTE policy.
- Commitment to professional development in CTE policy and advocacy.
- Openness to diverse perspectives and a willingness to learn.
- Ability to attend all program sessions, including the National Policy Seminar.
- Passion for mentoring and educating colleagues on CTE policy issues.

Program Highlights:

- Experiential learning: Engage with policymakers, industry leaders, and fellow educators through interactive sessions.
- Focus on equity: Explore how policy decisions impact all learners and ensure equitable access to high-quality CTE programs.
- National Policy Seminar: Gain firsthand experience advocating for CTE on Capitol Hill.

Reduced Fellowship Fee:

Thanks to generous support, the program fee is significantly reduced for the 2024-2025 cohort. Learn more about eligibility and potential funding to cover program costs.

Ready to Make a Difference?

Applications are now open! Click here to apply and become a champion for Minnesota's CTE future.

For questions, contact Troy Haugen at thaugen@lcsc.org.

Future*Forward* Impact Grants Awarded to Support Career-Connected Learning in Southeast Minnesota!

We are thrilled to announce that $300,000 in Future*Forward* Impact Grants have been awarded to communities in Southeast Minnesota! These grants aim to provide robust career and technical education (CTE) experiences designed to empower 5-12 grade students with the skills they need to succeed in their careers and prepare them for college.

A complete list of approved projects will be available May 1 on the SSC website.

Stay tuned for the next grant opportunity!

A second round of funding for $50,000 will be available in the fall for those who were not awarded in the first round. We encourage you to re-apply and use this time to refine your applications!

For more information about the Future*Forward* Impact Grants, please click here.

More Than a Score: Building Lifelong Learners for College, Career, and Life

By Sarah Ness

Members of SSC have spent the past few years piloting a framework to assess student preparedness for college, career, and life success. This initial cohort has yielded valuable insights and best practices.

Now it's time to share the knowledge!

This cohort is inviting K-12 school leaders and educators, regardless of prior involvement, to join our regional network focused on metrics and our approaches to its application.

Over the next year, we'll be hosting a limited series of meetings where you can:

- **Briefly learn about the Redefining Ready framework**
  Gain a deeper understanding and context of this movement that set 12 southeast districts on the path to evaluate the metrics they use to define success for youth life after high school.
- **Hear from the pilot group**
  Discover their experiences, key takeaways, and lessons learned.
- **Explore the future**
  Discuss how we can collaboratively utilize their learning to improve student outcomes across southeast Minnesota.

Are you interested in:

- Moving beyond traditional metrics for student success?
- Building a future-ready learning environment for all students?
- Collaborating with regional colleagues on a shared vision?

If so, we want to hear from you! Register to attend our next upcoming session on June 7, 2024 from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM at Wood Lake Meeting Center. Register here.

Together, let's redefine what it means for our students to be ready!

Five Southeast Minnesota Knowledge Bowl Teams Compete at State

By Katie Hartman

The top forty-eight teams, out of over 1000 across the state, competed at the Minnesota Service Cooperatives' State Knowledge Bowl Meet held at Cragun's Resort near Brainerd on April 11-12, 2024. Students took part in one written round and five oral rounds of close competition.

Teams competing from southeast Minnesota were:

A Division
Houston (8th place), and Kingsland (7th place)

AA Division
Kasson-Mantorville (4th place)

AAA Division
Northfield Gold (3rd place), and Northfield Maroon (9th place)

Please **visit our website** for more information

The State Champions are:

A Division
Minnesota New Country School

AA Division
New Ulm Purple

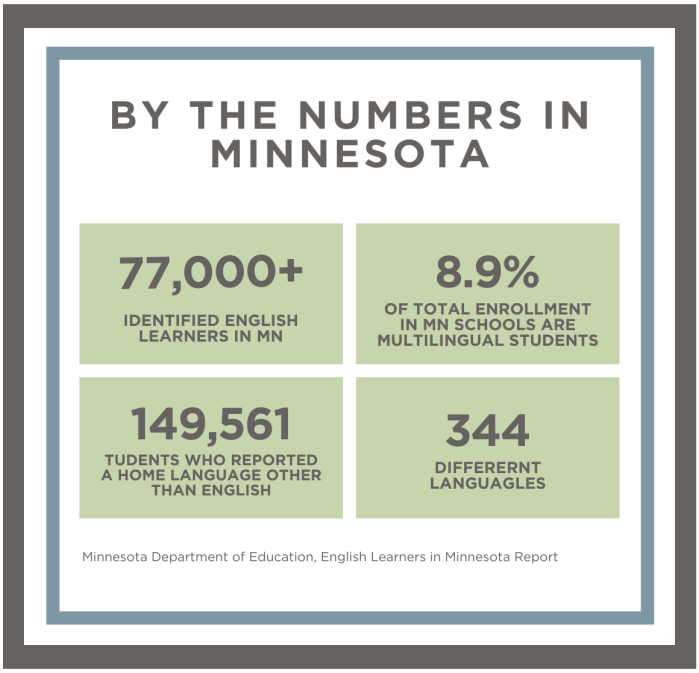
AAA Division
Edina

At the state meet, four-person teams compete against one another in one written and five oral rounds of interdisciplinary questions, for a total of 285 questions. Success at the competition requires the ability to work as a team, as well as knowledge of a variety of areas of study and the ability to recall that information quickly. Knowledge Bowl is sponsored by eleven Service Cooperatives around the state.

Project MOMENTUM Celebrates National Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month

By Claudia Tabini

April is recognized as National Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month—a time to celebrate the rich tapestry of languages spoken around the world and within our own community and highlight the importance of supporting multilingual students in our local schools and communities. In Minnesota, our schools proudly embrace linguistic diversity, with students representing over 300 languages spoken at home. These students and their families bring a wealth of linguistic diversity, enriching our schools, neighborhoods, and communities as linguistic diversity is a strength that enhances cultural exchange, understanding, and cooperation.



Multilingual learners bring many assets to the classroom in the form of lived experiences, information, and ideas they have already learned. Their home and community experiences, and their interests and passions are assets that can be used as focus for content-area instruction for all.

Bilingualism and multilingualism offer a multitude of cognitive, educational, sociocultural, and economic benefits. From cognitive advantages such as enhanced attentional control and mental flexibility, potentially delaying age-related cognitive decline, to educational benefits such as comparable or even higher academic achievement, improved learning outcomes across subjects, increased creativity and higher levels of abstract thought and reasoning, the advantages are vast. Socioculturally, bilingualism and multilingualism foster empathy, cultural understanding, and connections to heritage cultures while promoting global awareness and reducing discrimination. Economically, bilingualism and multilingualism raise occupational status and earning potential.

National Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month is just the beginning. As we recognize the importance of preserving and celebrating heritage languages among bilingual and multilingual learners, let us commit to continued advocacy, dialogue, education, and action to promote linguistic diversity and support the needs of all learners in our communities, not just during April but throughout the year. Together, we can create a more inclusive and equitable educational system for all.

For more information on Project MOMENTUM, click here.

Southeast Minnesota School Crisis Response Team

By Cheryl Wendt



The SE Minnesota School Crisis Response Team is a group of specially trained professionals that are ready to assist districts and schools when they experience an event such as a student or staff death. This team can provide support and assistance to help restore the emotional well-being of the school community. The SE Minnesota School Crisis Response Team (SE MN SCRT) was created using funding made available by MDE through a federal Project AWARE grant, and is coordinated by the Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC).

This SE MN SCRT team's mission is to provide support, guidance and resources to schools during and after a serious loss. The team recognizes that each district has a crisis emergency plan in place. The school crisis response team functions in a different capacity, as they are unattached to the district and do not have strong emotional ties to the students or staff. This allows the team to make decisions more objectively, counsel groups, and support individuals to assist in restoring the emotional well-being of the school community.

There are currently 20 professionals (school social workers, counselors, public health nurses, etc.) who serve on the SCRT. These individuals completed a two-day Managing School Crises: From Theory to Application training this past August. The training, developed through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. (ICISF) is designed to prepare school administrators and all educators for the inevitable crises that occur within schools and/or that effect those in schools.

The SE MN SCRT has responded to six incidents this school year, whether providing resources or deploying team members to the school sites. The team members are able to provide a framework for individuals to begin a healthy grieving process, as well as assist with identifying individuals who may require follow-up services.

If you have questions about the school crisis response team, or are interested in becoming a team member, please contact the team coordinator, Cheryl Wendt.

A Leap Forward in Computer Science Education

By Sarah Ness

We're thrilled to share exciting updates regarding the landscape of computer science education in our state, particularly the recent strides made by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Computer Science Working Group. It's crucial for us to stay informed about these advancements, which directly impact our classrooms and students.

Minnesota's Computer Science Strategic Plan Revealed

After diligent work and collaboration, the Computer Science Working Group has proposed Minnesota's State Strategic Plan for computer science, in compliance with MN Statute 120b.241. This comprehensive plan, available for viewing on MDE's Legislative Report page, outlines ten key recommendations aimed at fostering the long-term growth of computer science education across all public K-12 and charter schools in Minnesota.

Key Highlights from the Plan

Here's a snapshot of some key elements from the strategic plan:

Teacher Qualification and Licensure

The plan emphasizes the creation of multiple pathways for current and aspiring computer science educators to obtain qualifications and licensure, ensuring a diverse pool of skilled instructors.

Equitable Access

With a focus on equitable access, the plan seeks to support the expansion of computer science education opportunities in every public school and charter school in the state within five years.

Grants and Funding

Funding grants will be provided through MDE to support technology infrastructure for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and the implementation of district computer science plans, ensuring that resources are allocated equitably.

K-12 Computer Science Pathway

The plan calls for the development of K-8 computer science standards, followed by their integration into the curriculum, culminating in a required middle school computer science course and high school elective.

Continuous Improvement

To ensure continuous improvement, the plan outlines timelines, data reporting structures, and an evaluation process for the ongoing advancement of computer science education.

Looking Ahead: Implementing the Recommendations

As we move forward, it's essential for educators to familiarize themselves with the recommendations outlined in the strategic plan. Whether it's participating in professional development opportunities, advocating for equitable access within our schools, or integrating computer science concepts into existing curriculum, each of us plays a pivotal role in advancing STEM education in our communities.

Get Involved!

Join the conversation and resource sharing with MDE and our networks through STEM Forward. This will be an emphasis in the 2024-2025 school year. We encourage you to engage with the STEM Forward, leverage available resources for professional development, and collaborate with regional communities of learning to enrich computer science education in our region.

Final Thoughts

In closing, we extend our gratitude to the members of the Computer Science Working Group for their dedication and expertise in shaping this strategic plan. By embracing these recommendations and working collaboratively, we can pave the way for a brighter future for our students and our state.

Join STEM Forward

STEM Forward Represented in State and Federal Legislative Meetings

By Sarah Ness

STEMx On the Hill

This past March, STEM Forward, a member of the MN STEM Ecosystem, alongside SciMathMN and ten other state-level STEM ecosystems, journeyed to Washington D.C. for a momentous event: *STEMx on the Hill*. This national advocacy day brought together educators, training providers, and industry leaders to champion access to quality STEM education for all.

Aligning with National Priorities

The MN STEM Ecosystem strategically used the key themes laid out in the upcoming Federal STEM Plan to facilitate conversations with legislators and their staff. These themes, including education, engagement, environments, research, and workforce development, resonate deeply with the needs of our communities.

We shared best practices and emphasized the importance of extending STEM efforts beyond K-12 to create a seamless pathway into post-secondary education and the workforce. STEM transparency and fostering a STEM mindset across all careers were also central points of discussion.

Championing Innovative Solutions

We shared learnings from the STEMx convening for incentives to encourage states to embrace innovative approaches to STEM education. These approaches include:

- **Industry Recognition of Credentials**
  We believe in empowering industry to play a more significant role in workforce development by recognizing industry certifications alongside traditional education credentials.
- **Transdisciplinary, Convergence Learning**
  Inspired by the White House report "Convergence: The Future of Work in the Age of Learning," STEM Forward shared the importance for a shift toward transdisciplinary learning in K-12 environments. This approach integrates core subjects with applied learning, introducing students to occupational standards and fostering career exploration.
- **Robust Industry-Teacher Collaboration**
  To address teacher shortages and keep pace with industry needs, we shared the need for robust collaborations with industry to support teacher externships in STEM fields. These experiences allow teachers to translate industry standards and competencies into engaging classroom lessons.
- **Streamlined Pathways for Industry Professionals**
  Recognizing the expertise industry professionals bring, we discussed our legislators' views for streamlined pathways for them to enter the classroom. Ideas the STEMx networks learned about could involve federal support programs like housing stipends and increased tax deductions for classroom supplies.
- **Early Career Exploration**
  STEM Forward highlighted the importance of robust career exploration opportunities for middle school students, fostering interest in STEM and CTE fields at a critical juncture.

The Road Ahead

Thanks to your continued efforts on the ground, STEM Forward was able to effectively represent the needs of our state at STEMx on the Hill with the MN STEM Ecosystem and SciMathMN. We are excited to continue working alongside educators, training providers, and industry leaders to make these vital advancements a reality.

Stay tuned for further updates on federal funding streams related to STEM and CTE, and how we can continue to build a powerful, unified voice in our state to champion access for all!

STEM JOY: Cultivating a More Just Future Through STEM Education



By Sarah Ness

This past winter, the Minnesota Science Museum and the Kitty Anderson Youth Science Center (KAYSC) partnered with the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem and STEM Forward to bring you STEM JOY, a groundbreaking training program.

Summary

STEM JOY brought together 27 educators from both formal and informal educational settings. The program aimed to equip them with the tools and knowledge to transform STEM learning into a powerful force for social justice.

Through a series of engaging modules, participants explored themes of identity, privilege, and historical biases within STEM fields.

They then learned how to use this understanding to design curriculum that dismantles oppression and empowers students to build a more just future.

Overview

The training unfolded in three distinct modules:

- **Module 1: Self and Social Justice 101**
  This module kicked things off by encouraging participants to reflect on their own experiences with identity, privilege, and social justice issues. It also explored different types of social justice work and the challenges and strategies associated with them.
- **Module 2: Systems and History: Redefining STEM**
  Moving beyond individual experiences, Module 2 delved into the historical roots of STEM fields. Participants examined the ways in which STEM has been shaped by oppressive systems and how these biases continue to influence the field today.
- **Module 3: STEM Justice in Practice**
  In the final module, participants put theory into action by applying STEM justice principles to curriculum development. They worked together to create tangible lesson plans that integrate social justice themes into their STEM instruction.

Data and Feedback

Feedback from the 27 educators who participated in STEM JOY was overwhelmingly positive. Here are some key takeaways from the post-training survey:

- **Increased Understanding**
  Participants lauded the program for deepening their understanding of the history of racism and oppression within STEM fields.
- **Application Challenges**
  While educators were enthusiastic about integrating STEM justice into their curriculum, many expressed a need for additional support in translating theory into practice.
- **Time Constraints**
  A recurring challenge identified was the difficulty of incorporating new curriculum elements within existing time limitations.
- **Continued Support**
  Educators were eager for ongoing resources and support, highlighting the value of the one-on-one coaching offered by the Minnesota Science Museum and KAYSC.

Next Steps

STEM JOY is just the beginning. The Minnesota Science Museum and KAYSC remain committed to fostering a more just and equitable STEM landscape. Here's how you can get involved:

- **Educators:** If you participated in STEM JOY, take advantage of the free, one-on-one coaching to develop and implement your STEM justice curriculum.
- **STEM Enthusiasts:** Looking for ways to get involved? Reach out to the Minnesota Science Museum or the Kitty Anderson Youth Science Center to learn more about STEM justice initiatives and how you can contribute to building a brighter future.

Together, we can ensure that STEM education empowers the next generation to not only solve problems but also create a more just and equitable world.

STEM Day at the State Capital

By Emily Saed

On March 26, in cooperation with SciMathMN, the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem hosted Minnesota STEM Day at the Capitol. Southeast Service Cooperative's STEM Forward and Future*Forward* were one of over 25 learning partners showcasing hands-on, interactive and student-focused learning innovations from across Minnesota. Together, we told the story of the growing STEM programs, networks and partnerships across Minnesota! Purposeful outcomes included:

- Showcasing STEM efforts in K-12, higher education, and after-school learning;
- Sharing passion and excitement for STEM with Minnesota Legislators;
- Demonstrating the impact that STEM has on student learning and success;
- Networking with other STEM educators, professionals and programs.

If you are interested in showcasing your STEM program, stay tuned for the date of the 2025 STEM Day at the Capitol and don't miss upcoming opportunities this summer including Experience STEAM at the Mall of America and STEM Day at the Minnesota State Fair!



A full list of exhibitors can be found here. **Make sure to check out our STEM Day at the Capitol slide-show here!**

STEM Forward News Bites

Summer STEM Internships Available in May on Future*Forward*™

STEM Forward's employer partners are happy to announce we will be piloting 10-15 paid summer internships and 25 micro internships during the 2024-2025 school year. Beginning May 1, head to www.futureforward.org for more details.

Solar Suitcase Lending Library



STEM Forward will launch the Solar Suitcase Lending Library during the 2024-2025 school year. STEM Forward will receive 20 suitcases that can be checked out in groups of five. More information will be live in August.

Join STEM Forward for 2024-2025

STEM Forward is always accepting new schools, post-secondary training partners, and industry partners to create a future ready STEM-workforce. Whether you're looking for free, world-class professional development, ideas and best practices, partnership opportunities, and/or grant opportunities, complete the partnership agreement and email it to Sarah Ness.

2024 Educator Forum: A Huge Success!

By Sarah Ness

The recent STEM Forward Educator Forum was a resounding triumph, fostering connections, igniting inspiration, and showcasing the power of collaboration across our STEM ecosystem. Here are three key highlights that demonstrate the event's impact:



1. Future Educators Take Flight

For the first time, we welcomed high school students interested in pursuing a career in education. Students like Liam, a senior at Rochester Century High School, gained valuable insights:

- **Networking Opportunities**
  Liam met potential future employers and learned how educators find jobs.
- **Shifting Perspectives**
  He discovered the human side of teaching, seeing educators as passionate collaborators.
- **AI in the Classroom**
  Liam explored the exciting potential and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in lesson plans.

Liam summed it up perfectly: "These events are incredibly important. I wouldn't have been able to meet the people who can help me in my teaching career otherwise."

2. Building Bridges with Post-Secondary Partners

Instructors from our esteemed post-secondary partners actively participated in the forum. This collaboration fostered:

- **Networking and Knowledge Sharing**
  K-12 educators connected with instructors, creating a valuable exchange of ideas and best practices.
- **Alignment and Resources**
  Educators and instructors worked together to better align curriculum and resources for a seamless student transition.
- **Upskilling with AI**
  Instructors, alongside K-12 educators, honed their skills in the ever-evolving field of Artificial Intelligence.

3. World-Class Feedback

We're thrilled to announce that the STEM Forward Educator Forum received a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 86 from attendees – a world-class ranking! This score, achieved for the second event in a row, signifies exceptional attendee satisfaction.

Join Us Next Year!

Inspired by this year's success, we invite you to be part of the journey! Mark your calendars for Wednesday, February 26, 2025, as we convene again at the Wood Lake Meeting Center in Rochester for another extraordinary STEM Forward Educator Forum.

STEM FORWARD

Gearing Up for an Exciting School Year!

Empowering Educators, Building Networks, and Igniting Student Potential

By Sarah Ness

The STEM Forward Executive Committee is thrilled to share plans for the upcoming school year! As we prepare to cultivate a generation of STEM leaders, we're focusing on three key areas for the 2024-2025 school year:

1. Supporting Computer Science Integration in K-12

The state's upcoming emphasis on computer science (CS) integration across K-12 students learning journeys aligns perfectly with our mission. We'll be working alongside local educators to identify gaps and opportunities for successful CS implementation.

2. Expanding Project-Based Learning with New Resources

Get ready to power up classrooms with renewable energy! Thanks to our partnership with We Share Solar, we're launching a Solar Suitcase Lending Library. This pilot program will equip up to 15 educators in our pilot with 20 suitcases containing renewable energy equipment and curriculum. Training kicks off this summer, and applications are still open for a few lucky educators!

We're also continuing our collaboration with The Hormel Institute to expand their K-12 STEM outreach programs. Stay tuned for exciting announcements about lending libraries and field trip opportunities.



STEM Internships and micro-internships are being piloted during the summer and next school year for students to immerse themselves in paid learning opportunities. All internships will be posted on www.futureforward.org's new Job Board. The board is specifically design for high school learning experiences.

3. Fostering Collaboration and Building Bridges

We understand the critical role of strong networks in professional development. Building upon our success with science teachers this year, we'll be focusing on expanding opportunities to network in all subject areas, starting with computer science, to foster collaboration, share resources, and provide targeted professional development.

Building bridges between K-12 and higher education is another key priority. Last year's initiative on integrating AI technology and developing college-ready skills proved highly successful. We'll continue to connect educators at both the K-12 and post-secondary level, promoting collaboration, knowledge sharing, and ultimately, smoother student transitions to post-secondary education.

Join Us!

Whether you're a K-12 or post-secondary educator, STEM industry representative, or a STEM champion, we invite you to join our network! Stay tuned for upcoming events and opportunities to get involved in shaping the future of STEM education.

Congratulations Walking Challenge Winners!



Local Government Steps Winner - Mower County



School District Steps Winner - Wabasha-Kellogg



School District Participation Winner - Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative

Local Government Participation Winner - Mower County Soil and Water Conservation District

Thanks to all of our member groups who participated in this year's challenge!

School District Members: Goodhue – 2nd Place, and **Caledonia** – 3rd Place. The remaining teams, which each received an honorable mention, are listed in the order of their ranking: Mabel-Canton, Lewiston-Altura, Pine Island, Kingsland, Red Wing, Kasson-Mantorville, Rushford-Peterson, Albert Lea, Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative, Triton, Lake City, Dover-Eyota, LeRoy-Ostrander, MN State Academies, Goodhue County Education District, and Southland.

Local Government Members: Austin HRA – 2nd Place, **Workforce Development** – 3rd Place. The honorable mention placements included: Freeborn County, City of Blooming Prairie, City of Byron, City of Dodge Center, City of Albert Lea, and Mower County Soil and Water Conservation District

Southeast Service Cooperative

Nearly 1000 individuals from 29 SSC member organizations enjoyed competing in the 2024 SSC Member vs. Member Walking Challenge this January. If your organization would like to participate in next year's challenge, **contact** Nicole LaChapelle-Strumski. For more information, click here.

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4. Follow the steps to sign up. Enter your name exactly as it appears on your Medica ID card.

Prefer to sign up online?
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CREATIVE MEDIA SOLUTIONS



Southeast Service Cooperative and **South Central Service Cooperative** have partnered to provide our members with communications services through **Creative Media Solutions.**

Offering These Media and Marketing Services and More

- Branding
- Fundraising Campaign Tools
- Graphic Design and Layout
- Photography and Image Correction
- Social Media Audit and Planning
- Videography and Production

CREATIVE MEDIA SOLUTIONS

Contact Katie Hendrickson at SSC for a full list of services and a customized quote.

507-281-6687
khendrickson@ssc.coop

Southeast Service Cooperative
SCSC South Central Service Cooperative

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- Referendum Planning

KEVIN BILLS, AIA
Education Business Unit Leader



SUE PETERSON
Education Strategy Specialist



DAN GOEMANN, RA
Senior Architect



THAD DAHLING
Facility Management + Planning Strategist



Cooperative Purchasing News

Flinn Scientific is now on the CPC Contract!

For more than 45 years, we have been your partner in safe science. At Flinnsci.com, you will find everything you need to inspire and engage your students. From our lab supplies and instruments to our hands-on kits and rich digital content, everything we do is designed to save you time and help you deliver the best possible learning experience to your students, regardless of science discipline and wherever the learning may take place. We look forward to remaining your "go-to" source for all things science and safety for many years to come.

CPC Member Benefits:

- **10% off, and**
- **Free shipping on orders over $100**
- *You must use one of these reference codes: AEPA, CPC, or NDESC to secure contract benefits.*

Flinn is in Express

Log into Express and browse Flinn's extensive selection of products natively in Express or punch out to Flinn's dedicated eProcurement experience. Products include 3D printers, chemicals, lab furniture, lab equipment, safety supplies, and a lot more.

Learn more about CPC's contract with Flinn Scientific→



Electronic Buyback is on contract through Total Technology



Streamline your process by leveraging CPC's Electronic Buyback contract! We conducted the competitive solicitation process on your behalf and awarded a contract to Total Technology.

Total Technology is a known industry leader that conducts a transparent, secure, and environmentally responsible process. They are active in Minnesota and specialize in buying back Chrome, Apple, and Windows devices.

Quote:

You can get a non-binding, pre-inspection estimate on your electronic device buyback providing you with a ballpark estimate of your devices' value.

Free freight:

Packaging and shipping costs are included. This is important because, as you know, freight costs can vary wildly over time. Total Technology always covers 100% of the packing and shipping cost.

Audit:

Total Technology provides:
- Serialized reporting of your device inspection,
- Serialized reporting on the testing of your devices,
- Serialized reporting on the wiping of device data.

Prompt payment:

A vendor's history of consistent payment is important when you are trusting them with items of significant value.

Sustainability:

Total Technology's mission is to extend the lifecycle of technology. After all data has been wiped, your devices will be repurposed, recycled, or otherwise disposed of in a responsible manner.

Learn more about CPC's Contract with Total Technology →

Reach out to CPC! Email us at info@purchasingconnection.org or call us at 888-739-3289.



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Conduct **testing of surfacing materials** to document conditions and prevent injury from a child impacting the surface following ASTM F3313 Standard

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SSC Board Actions and Information

In addition to routine fiscal and business actions, the Board took the following actions in recent meetings. Complete SSC Board of Directors meeting minutes are available on the SSC website at www.ssc.coop.

February

- Approved the SSC 2022-2023 Mid-Year Health Insurance Pool Settlement.
- Approved MN South Project SEMNET.
- Approved CDW Sponsorship of the STEM Educator Forum.
- Approved the SSC Holmes Murphy contract.

March

- Accepted a $500 for sponsorship from SE MN Building and Trades Council for Career Readiness.
- Accepted a $500 sponsorship from Gemini Inc. for Career Readiness.
- Eliminated the position of Mental Health Program Coordinator effective July 1, 2024.
- Approved the annual report and annual plan.

Please **visit our website** for more information.

The information listed here is only a summary. The full text is available for public inspection at SSC's administrative offices.



Brian Grudem

Returning SSC Board Member

Brian has served as the City of Zumbrota's city administrator since July, 2020. He and his wife Judy are the parents of three adult kids, Katie (husband TJ), Tyler, Hailey, and teenager Kevin. In his free time, Brian likes to spend time with his wife traveling or just relaxing. He also enjoys attending sporting events with his boys. Brian is a Vikings season ticket holder and he and his family are huge fans of the Twins, Gophers, Wild, Timberwolves, and any and all Minnesota sports teams.

Welcome back, Brian!

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