May 2022

LCSC Communicator

Regional News, Views, and Information

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative
Together we achieve

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EDUCATION-
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Minnesota Service Cooperative's Senior High State Knowledge Bowl

TOP SIX TEAMS IN CLASS A AND CLASS AA DIVISIONS

CLASS A

1. PARK CHRISTIAN
2. ST. JOHN'S PREP
3. HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC
4. MELROSE
5. MINNESOTA VALLEY LUTHERAN
6. PARKERS PRAIRIE

CLASS AA

1. BUFFALO BLACK
2. OWATONNA
3. CHASKA
4. NORTHFIELD WHITE
5. MINNETONKA
6. BRAINERD BLUE

The Minnesota Service Cooperative's Senior High State Knowledge Bowl competition took place at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd, Minnesota, on April 7 and 8.

Forty-eight Senior High teams from across Minnesota arrived to compete for the title of Knowledge Bowl Champions in the Class A and Class AA divisions. The 2022 Knowledge Bowl participants were excited more than ever to compete in person due to the pandemic preventing the competition in 2020 and a virtual-only participant event in 2021.

continued on next page

Source: Monica Thompson, LCSC Co-Coordinator of Academic Challenges
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communications Generalist



The competition began with a 60-question, 50-minute written test on the first evening and five oral rounds of 45 questions per round starting Friday morning. On Friday, the oral rounds consisted of teams of five buzzing in for the chance to respond to questions that covered a range of topics from politics, mathematics, history, literature, science, pop culture, and more.

The six teams representing Lakes Country Service Cooperative's, Region 4 were Ashby, Battle Lake, DGF, Fergus Falls, Park Christian, and Parkers Prairie. Park Christian placed first, and Parkers Prairie received sixth place in Division A. The Heritage Spirit Award recognizes teams that demonstrate exemplary conduct and team spirit during the competition. This year, the Class A Heritage Award recipient was the Murray County Central team, and the Chanhassen team received the award for Class AA.

Lakes Country Service Cooperative's Academic Challenges Coordinator, Susan Ward, serves as the State Knowledge Bowl Coordinator. Monica Thompson, Co-Coordinator of Academic Challenges, and Jolene King, Education Services Assistant, assist in coordinating the Statewide event.

If you have questions about the Minnesota Service Cooperative's Senior High Knowledge Bowl competition, please contact Susan Ward at 218-737-3273. You can also visit our website at www.lcsc.org for information about this Lakes Country Service Cooperative program. ■

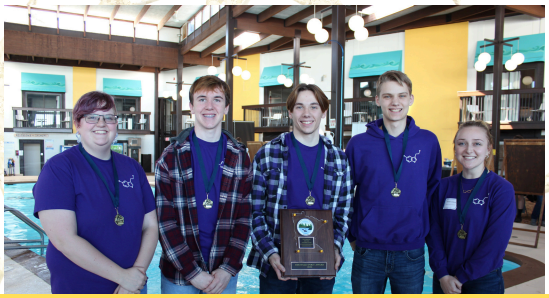


Class A 1st Place: Park Christian

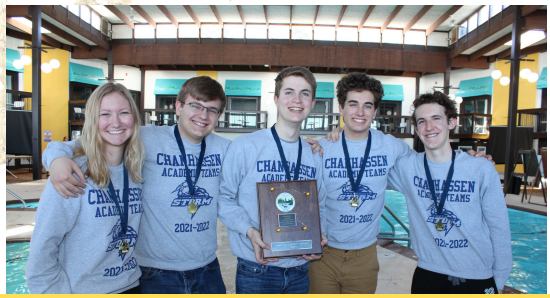


Class AA 1st Place: Buffalo

Heritage Spirit Awards



Class A Recipient: Murray County Central



Class AA Recipient: Chanhassen

"The qualities and conduct becoming to a champion competitor."
Positive attitude toward: all members of the team, other teams, readers/judges/computer operators, team advisors.
Positive attitude in winning/losing; accepting victory or defeat graciously, and overall conduct.



Shaping Perspective

One of my favorite learning activities for high school students when I taught, was to have students read the same article and then discuss their thoughts. If you could find the correct piece, it was amazing how the point of view was shaped by previous thinking, bias, and past experiences. Sometimes, I wish we all (myself included) could remember "perspective" and its influences. Perhaps our communities could have a more positive impact if we remembered that we all have a different perspective.



I finished a really good read entitled "Next Year in Havana" by Chanel Cleeton. One of my mother's last wishes (she passed away in 2019) was to travel with her entire family. We were blessed to take a cruise that included a few days in Havana. Perhaps the romanticism of that trip enhanced my enjoyment of Cleeton's piece of historical fiction. And, of course, my experiences on that trip shaped my perspective. "Next Year in Havana" wonderfully tells the story of the Castro years in Cuba through the lives of a family. The Perez family was torn by Civil War, their own experiences, and eventual immigration to the United States. Cleeton does a wonderful job of tying her novel to characters and letting you see into their perspective. Simply put, each character has a different point of view of Cuban events based on their life situation, status, and point of view.

My hope is that as we work with you, our members, we can remember that perspective shapes our thinking. With that respect, we can make a difference. We can achieve great things for our schools and communities.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of "The Communicator." Have a fantastic summer! ■

Source/Author: Jeremy Kovash, LCSC Executive Director

Work-Based Learning Program



Fergus Falls PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Author: Kathryn Enderson, Work-Based Learning Coordinator - Fergus Falls School District

What if you had the opportunity to try out a career rather than floating from job to job trying to find the right fit? What if you could avoid investing thousands of dollars and years of education on a potential career only to discover that it is not your dream job? This is precisely what students at Fergus Falls High School can do. Whether it is a student going right into the workforce or a student going on to postsecondary education, the work-based learning program is a chance to experience the day-to-day routine of a career to see if it is a good fit for them. Brie is a junior who loves to work with animals. She pursued this work-based learning experience to see what path she wanted to take after high school. Brie is an intern at Companion Animal Hospital. Like most internship students, she attends her internship two periods a day, allowing her to see various things in a veterinary clinic. She has had the opportunity to shadow wellness checks and dental procedures, and surgeries.

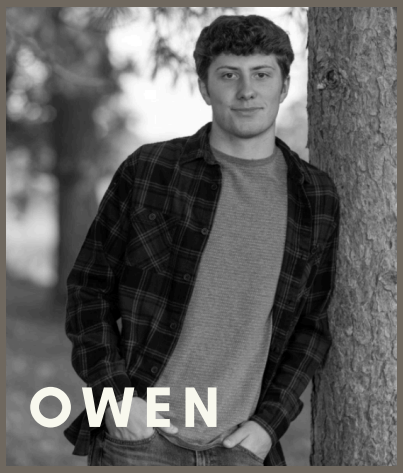
She has also been able to do hands-on activities such as helping set up appointments, getting supplies set out, setting up the exam room, and getting shots appropriately prepared. When asked about her experience, Brie responded, “I’m happy I got the opportunity to intern at Companion Animal Hospital. I am getting to explore career choices and learn to be a better employee.” Getting a head start in her junior year will help her plan out the rest of her educational path, including courses offered at our high school, such as Veterinary Science and Anatomy and Physiology. The program’s purpose is for students to engage in learning both at the school and the worksite.

Brie is still deciding whether she would like to be a veterinary technician or if she wants to pursue the education required to become a veterinarian. This experience allows her to see the tasks required of each and see where her interests and skills lie.

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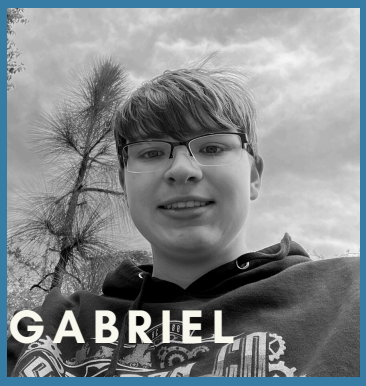
Owen was a “Prairie Kid” in the 4th and 5th grades. For those in the Fergus Falls Public School system, they recognize this as our Prairie Science Class for 4th and 5th-grade students, which meets at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center(PWLC). Perhaps it was here that Owen’s interest in environmental careers began. As a senior, Owen thought that being back at the Prairie Wetland Learning Center would be a chance to learn more about careers in this field and would also be a chance to give back to a program that he loved as a kid. Owen has been an incredible asset to the staff at PWLC, helping with many projects, including prepping the greenhouse for the Prairie Science classes, moving equipment around, washing pots, and watering plants. Owen is willing to help wherever he is needed. One of the most valuable aspects of this internship has been the people that Owen has had contact with.

Teresa Jaskiewicz, the Environmental Education Specialist at the United States Fish and Wildlife Service PWLC, reflected that “the program gave Owen a behind the scenes look at the PWLC, but he is also learning about the many diverse jobs in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.” Owen has had the opportunity to interact with PWLC staff, fellow interns, community volunteers, members of the fire crew, teachers (past and present), and students. These contacts have given him a unique perspective on various environmental careers. Not only does Owen do his internship during the school day, but he is even going out to survey Prairie Chickens at the crack of dawn with the PWLC biologist to develop his leadership skills. Having drive like this, along with the connections that Owen has established, will undoubtedly set him up for success in the future.



"The thing I love most about the program is seeing the mentoring that happens between the adults and students. Now, more than ever, students need caring adults in their lives to guide them in their career journeys. This community has poured into these students in so many ways. It really does take a village."

- Kathryn Enderson, Work-Based Learning Coordinator



Would you like to learn more about facilitating this program at your school? Call Kathryn Enderson, Fergus Falls Public School at 218-998-0944 ext. 9686

Gabriel has had his eye on being an electrician since his sophomore year after his father suggested a career in the trades. This year, as a senior, he has had the opportunity to work on the Fergus Falls Armory project alongside an electrician from Vinco Inc. to see if the career is really what he wants to do. He has had the opportunity to run wire, set up outlet boxes, cut, bend and fasten conduit pipes, and perform many other hands-on tasks. Gabe’s experience has confirmed that this is the path he wants to pursue. He would be interested in an electrical apprenticeship after graduation and pursuing a two-year degree in electrical technology. His dream is to own his own business someday. Gabriel’s experience led him to say, “This internship has been beneficial to me by allowing me to engage in hands-on work. I’ve also learned more about codes and regulations that are a part of this trade.” With the shortage of workers in many trades, work-based learning is a way for employers to attract more of our students to these high-wage-high-demand career fields.

So, whether a student wants to move right into the workforce, attend a technical school, or go on for a bachelor’s or professional degree, work-based learning allows them to see the career first-hand and develop the connections that can help them get established in that career. ■

A Visit to BARNESVILLE'S TROJAN PRESCHOOL



For more information on available openings contact Laura Lempe, Coordinator, at llempe@barnesville.k12.mn.us







On a recent visit to Barnesville's Trojan Preschool, I visited Laura Lempe's and Brianna Chuinard's classrooms. The children were engaged in all areas of learning. The morning included experiences in science and discovery, early language and literacy, pre-math, creative art, dramatic play, and letter and number recognition. The curriculum is based on research that shows young children learn best through hands-on experiences. The lesson plans captured the interest and curiosity of the children. The morning included many opportunities to develop self-regulation skills through the consistent daily routine.

Learning to share, taking turns, working cooperatively, recognizing their emotions- and the feelings of others, and problem-solving all help the children develop social-emotional skills. It was rewarding to see the teachers and the children having fun!

The community of Barnesville is fortunate to have this wonderful experience for their children. Enthusiastic teachers, new classrooms, and new toys and learning materials create a wonderful learning environment.■

Source/Author: Beth Achter, Regional ECFE Coordinator

CENTER FOR POLICY DESIGN





MINNESOTA EDUCATION

POLICY FELLOWSHIP

Minnesota Education Policy Fellows from the past three metro and rural cohorts descended on Washington DC in late March for their Washington, DC policy experience. Twenty-four total fellows had the opportunity to engage with policy entrepreneurs, civil servants, congressional members, and staff during an intense three day experience in the Nation's capital.

Fellows were able to communicate directly with policy influencers like Alex Ricci, former House education committee staffer and current Director of Government Relations at the Education Finance Council, Katherine Neas, the acting Assistant Secretary of Education-Office of Special Education & Rehabilitation, Raven DeRamus-Byers - Program Associate at New America, Andy Rotherham, co-founder of Bellwether Education Partners.

Fellows also had the opportunity to discuss federal policy with Senator Klobuchar's education staff, Max Hurst, and Senator Tina Smith's education staff Brennan Barber.

Senator Smith was also able to take a short break from her full schedule and stop in to meet with the fellows for a short time before a floor vote.

If you would like more information about the Minnesota Education Policy Fellowship, contact Troy Haugen, LCSC Director of Career and College Readiness, at thaugen@lcsc.org or visit our website at lcsc.org. ■

Source/Author: Troy Haugen, LCSC Director of Career and College Readiness

They have almost doubled their graduation rate in doing this, even through the pandemic!

Moorhead

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER



Western Lakes Regional Centers of Excellence would like to give a big “SHOUT-OUT" to Moorhead Alternative Learning Center (MALC) for their school improvement work. Since 2018, the school has built its District and Minnesota Early Indicator & Response System (MEIRS) Leadership Teams, completed a comprehensive needs assessment using data, and built infrastructure to support school improvement in graduation rates.

The MALC MEIRS team meets weekly using student attendance and early indicators to provide interventions for students as proactively and uniquely as possible for each student. Their team addresses student needs and supports at the root of the problem with a collaborative and restorative approach. All staff is involved with input and support, not only by having access to running records that share barriers, strengths, and interventions but also by adding to the student records weekly the day before the MEIRS meeting. Transparency and creating a coalition to support students have been critical to their success.

The monthly meetings of the District Leadership Team have also been vital in the success of the MEIRS team. The feedback loops created by the two teams have been instrumental in supporting the work of the MEIRS team to best help students be successful. The District Leadership Team has identified three priority areas for improvement for the ‘21-’22 school year:

- Ensure a Safe and Supportive School Climate
  - Inclusive Culture
- Improve Standards-Based Educational Systems
  - Guaranteed Viable Curriculum
  - Personalized Learning
- Meaningfully Engage and Communicate with Families, Students, Stakeholders, and Tribal Nations
  - Inclusive Culture

MALC did not stop with MEIRS. MEIRS helped them see what Tier 1 pieces were missing with academics, behaviors, and climate.

So, along with the three focus areas mentioned above, Moorhead Alternative Learning Center was also determined to implement restorative practices, Project-Based Learning, monthly Adult Resilience Sessions and an Advisory Curriculum with Circle practices based on SEL for all students.

MALC is in full implementation with MEIRS, using data from PDSA cycles to evaluate, adjust and improve interventions and systems they use to support students. Their strong awareness of systems and missing pieces has them on full speed ahead in their school improvement process! ■

Western Lakes Regional Centers of Excellence and Lakes Country Service Cooperative are proud to walk beside Moorhead Alternative Learning Center as they utilize implementation science to drive positive change, ultimately supporting all students in their school to become the best version of themselves.

Source/Author: Courtney Henderson, Regional Center of Excellence School Advocate

ENSURE YOUR STAFF DOESN'T MISS OUT ON THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR THEM TO ACT!

New! Limited Waiver Option (LWO) Makes Forgiveness Better

BORROWER ALERT!

- SPEEDS UP FORGIVENESS TIMEFRAME - some borrowers even received *instant* forgiveness in Q4 due to old payments on record!
- LIMITED TIME – Ends in OCT 2022
- DON'T BE IN THE BACK OF THE LINE – Up to 12M borrowers may seek to non-qualifying payments/non-qualifying loans converted
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- HAVE NON-CONFORMING LOANS? Fiducius advisors can help you get these converted

BORROWERS NEED TO TAKE ACTION OR MISS OUT

Assure

Introducing Assure℠, the only solution of its kind, guaranteeing you receive all the additional qualifying payments and loan forgiveness you deserve from the LWO. It's easy, go to your Fiducius portal or Fiducius URL - invest a couple minutes and find out.

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Translation Services now available!

CPC has awarded two new contracts:

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Idea Translations provides translation, interpretation, and content development services to organizations all over the United States and globally. They have an interdisciplinary team with experts in fields such as education, healthcare, eLearning, legal, IT, web and more at discounts up to 20%!

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Visit www.purchasingconnection.org/vendor-list-a-z/ for more information

Cooperative Purchasing is designed to help fulfill purchasing needs while making your buying process more efficient by saving you time and money. All vendor agreements are the result of formal bids or negotiated contracts.

By partnering with reputable vendors and combining the purchasing power of service cooperative members, you receive a wide variety of high-quality products and services with excellent volume discounts.

Perham



Valorant Team Takes First Place!

Lakes Country Service Cooperative's (LCSC) Business Partner, Fenworks esports, held its first area competition at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on April 1-2, 2022.
Over 150 eager North Dakota and Minnesota students arrived to compete in Fenworks' first gaming competition. Area teams practiced and competed for several months to participate in the state championship in one of the following games—Overwatch, Valorant, Chess, APEX Legends, Rocket League, and League of Legends.

In LCSC's service area, LCSC member, Perham-Dent Public Schools, had a remarkable first year and tremendous success, with over 15 students participating in their Jr. Varsity and Varsity teams. The Yellowjackets sent one team to the tournament in Grand Forks and competed in the Valorant competition. The Yellowjackets, team of Levi Baumgart, Aiden Burke, Marcus Cupkie, Jaxon Pickrain, and Jacoby Pokrzwinski took home the first-place trophy in the Valorant competition.

The Yellowjackets teams are voluntarily co-managed by Justin Sonnenberg, Software Development Supervisor for Arvig, and Christi Stoll, General Manager for Empowering Kids. General managers have direct contact with a Fenworks representative for questions or concerns and meet with their teams through the Discord platform allowing for an online private space for communication and team practice. In Perham, in addition to team members practicing from their homes, Empowering Kids provided their state-of-the-art onsite computer lab for students to practice. "We wanted to ensure all kids who wanted to participate had the tools accessible at no cost," said Christi Stoll, Co-General Manager. "In addition to access to the Empowering Kids computer lab, students were also offered participation scholarships through Fenworks, ensuring any child who wanted to participate was not turned away because of inability to pay," added Stoll.

Both General Managers were present at the Alerus Center for the competition. "I was so impressed with how Fenworks was responsive to tech issues the first day of the state tournament," said Sonnenberg. "Our team members knew they would have a good time at the competition, but they had far more fun than they thought they would." A highlight for Sonnenberg with his first esports team was experiencing the leadership ability of Valorant team member Marcus Cupkie. "Marcus provided outstanding leadership to ensure teams were on time for practice sessions and created a solid team environment," said Sonnenberg. When asked about challenges for the team he experienced in his first year of coaching, Sonnenberg stated that coaching could be challenging when you are not meeting face to face. However, they were very fortunate to have strong leaders within the team who encouraged and coached each other.

Fenworks, located in Grand Forks, North Dakota, offers varsity level esports programs to middle and high schools across the Midwest through an esports curriculum, competition, and coaching. Fenworks works to provide an inclusive environment and an avenue for students who may not be participating in traditional after-school sports to get involved in a team sport.

If you have questions or want to see Fenworks esports in your school, you can reach out to Robert Whiting, Fenworks Development Specialist at Robert.whiting@fenworks.com. ■

empowering kids

Source: Justin Sonnenberg & Christi Stoll, Perham Yellowjackets esports Teams Co-General Managers, and Fenworks
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communications Generalist







ORB
A compass of endeavor
REAL ESTATE & PROJECT ADVISORS

ORB IS A BUSINESS PARTNER OF LCSC

ORB Management is a mission-driven owner's representative and commercial real estate firm, serving non-profit clients across the region for 20 years. We equip clients with objective, experience-based information to facilitate smart decisions while navigating the acquisition, development, planning, design, and construction processes for real estate and facility projects.

We bring trusted project leadership from an objective and key coordination role - helping clients achieve their goals by optimizing the physical, functional and financial metrics that affect the outcomes of every project.



ORB is also providing Owner's Representative services on multiple YMCA's, affordable/workforce housing, critical access hospital and health/wellness facilities across the upper Midwest.

Over the past four years alone, ORB has been engaged as the Owner's Representative for Sourcewell, Southwest West Central Services Cooperative, Mid-State Education District, Freshwater Education District, and the Walker-Hackensack-Akeley School District to help plan and develop seven mental health/behavioral disability Learning Centers (totaling more than 200,000 SF) across the region, with two more facilities in the planning stage. These facilities involved collaboration with multiple school districts, municipalities and EDA's, higher education, and the State of Minnesota to provide health and education services for students and adults with moderate to severe behavioral disabilities.

We have a passion for what we do and a desire to work with mission-aligned organizations that serve community needs.

ORB is ready to serve the members of LCSC and have collected feedback from clients to answer the question,

Why ORB Management?

"Mission-alignment"
"We knew that when faced with challenges, our value-alignment would carry the day … we were right."
"I'd trust ORB with my last nickel."
"On a scale of 1 to 10, I'd give ORB an 11 … they could teach project management."
"There were no surprises along the way."
"They brought a high level of comfort and peace of mind."
"ORB saved us from ourselves, and we got way more than expected for our budget."
"Hiring ORB was the single most important project decision we made" ■

Source/Author: Tom Wacholz, President, ORB Management Corporation

EmpowerU



Meet Charlie!

Browns Valley's Therapy Dog

Western Lakes Regional Center of Excellence would like to give a shout-out to Browns Valley Public Schools for their continued school improvement work focusing specifically on social and emotional learning (SEL) for both students and staff. The school has implemented numerous programs to incorporate SEL into classroom instruction. Before this school year, Browns Valley's SEL curriculum consisted of Second Step and MindUP.

The school also uses Fastbridge SAEBRS as a screening assessment to identify students who may be socially, academically, or emotionally at-risk. In the classroom, teachers and staff use the Love and Logic and Responsive Classroom approaches to foster SEL competencies. One new initiative the district chose to pursue is the EmpowerU program for grades K-8.

EmpowerU is a SEL-focused program that helps empower school staff to aid students in both teacher-driven and self-directed lessons on resilience, decision-making, self-esteem, and other components of SEL.

Before the 2021-2022 school year, all staff completed their EmpowerU training so that implementation of the program in the classrooms could be possible this school year.

Staff have also been trained in Zones of Regulation and are implementing elements of that training in their practices in the classroom.

A few months into the school year, the school's new therapy dog, Charlie, was officially certified and is in the school building half-days a few days a week. Students are welcome to see, pet, and spend time with the dog in the Superintendent's office, where Charlie's own canine office is set up.

Each classroom has incorporated a sensory area for students needing to find ways to calm down or release anxiety and stress.

After teacher training in EmpowerU during the 2020-2021 and the Zones of Regulation training and implementation, as well as the student EmpowerU training during this school year, student behavior referral numbers have dropped drastically compared to last year's numbers. Already looking ahead to next year, Browns Valley will be adding HELPme solutions and E-Therapy in the fall.

Another exciting new addition to the Browns Valley School District is a "Zen Den" for staff. Before Christmas break, the administrators surprised the teachers with their new "Zen Den," a place of relaxation during stressful and busy days. The "Zen Den" is outfitted with a massage chair, calming paint colors, a mural, serene music, and a plush rug.

Western Lakes Regional Center of Excellence and Lakes Country Service Cooperative would like to applaud Browns Valley for valuing students' social and emotional health and working to build and educate the whole child. ■

Source/Author: Courtney Henderson, Regional Center of Excellence School Advocate

YOUNG WRITERS

and Other Artists

Conference



MAY 9, 2022

On May 9, 2022, LCSC hosted over 350 students and chaperones for the Young Writers' Conference. LCSC hosts students in grades 3-7 at the M State Campus in Fergus Falls each spring. Students are provided an opportunity to attend workshops presented by Minnesota authors and other local artists.

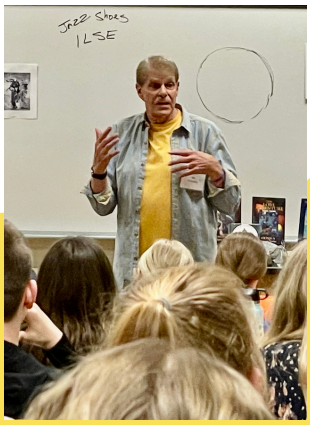




Authors & Artists



Jim Fletcher
Bob Gasch
Debbie Hoven
Laura Rach
Roxane Salonen
Jan Smile
Nick Bretz



What is AESA?

ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AGENCIES

AESA is the Association of Educational Service Agencies and is our national organization that began over 40 years ago. Forty Five States have Educational Service Agencies.

In Minnesota, we were originally called Educational Cooperative Service Units (ECSU's) but are now called Service Cooperatives. Other agencies nationwide are called IEA's (Independent Educational Agencies), BOCE's (Boards of Cooperative Education), REA's (Regional Educational Agencies), Intermediates, etc.

The over 500 Educational Service Agencies nationwide provide a host of programs and services. Fundamentally, they provide professional growth opportunities, shape educational policy, and advocate for strong schools.

LCSC Executive Director, Jeremy Kovash serves on the Executive Council of the AESA. The Council works with AESA staff, including CEO Joan Wade and COO John Bass. The Council provides leadership and direction for the organization and implementation of the strategic plan. They plan an annual conference for the association and other professional development events and services. ■

Want to learn more about AESA? Visit www.aesa.us.



"I am humbled to serve on the Executive Council for AESA."
- Jeremy Kovash,
Lakes Country Service Cooperative
Executive Director

Author: Jeremy Kovash, LCSC Executive Director
Source: AESA www.aesa.us

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