September 2023

LCSC Communicator

Regional News, Views, and Information

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative
Together we achieve

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ONE BUILDING ONE BRAND

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The one-building public school along Highway 10 in New York Mills is undeniably the heart of the community. "What's great about our school is that we are in one location," shared New York Mills Public School Superintendent Blaine Novak. "What's challenging is that we are in one location," he said with a smile.

Looking to solve that challenge and others, the New York Mills Public Schools recently completed a strategic plan with the guidance of True North Consulting. The plan identified strategic priorities where the school has opportunities to provide better support to its students, families, and community members. By taking these steps, the school aims to create a nurturing, inclusive, and supportive environment that empowers its students to achieve their full potential.

Source: Blaine Novak, New York Mills Public School Superintendent, MDE – SEL Definition
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC's Communications Generalist



Enrollment is steady in New York Mills, currently near 780 students, and facilities improvements to support the student body were identified as a top priority. New York Mills Public School needs space. The New York Mills Elementary School was built in 1956, and the high school is 30 years old. “How we teach our kids and what they are learning today is so different than when the school was built,” said Novak. “We need more space to accommodate Career and Technical Education (CTE) and programs that support our shrinking workforce.”



INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY HOUSE BUILDING PROJECT

Novak explained that students enrolled in the Industrial Technology program build a house each year that is sold in a closed-bid auction. In addition to the space needed for more extensive construction, they need larger, up-to-date classrooms for the computer numerical control (CNC) routers, as well as additional CTE programming. Special Education services within the district have expanded significantly in recent years, and space needed to provide those services continues to be a priority.
As we continued our discussion about the strategic plan, Novak shared a design of a stunning eagle logo. He expressed his enthusiasm, "We finally have one brand!"

New York Mills EAGLES

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Novak further explained that they had multiple eagle logos on their website, walls, stationery, and sports uniforms for years. However, with their new logo, students and the community can easily recognize and take pride in their school mascot.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) was also identified as a priority area during the strategic planning process. Novak shared that they are identifying an increase in dysregulated behavior in students. This may manifest itself as withdrawal, emotional outbursts, anxiety, or even physical aggression “The social emotional learning of students and their needs are greater than ever,” said Novak.

SEL is broadly understood as a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships, and making responsible decisions that support their success in school and life. SEL develops cognitive and social competencies, such as self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Developing such competencies in students fosters positive social skills, reduces conduct problems, diminishes emotional stress, and improves academic performance.

The New York Mills teachers and administration appreciate the focus on SEL and the help it provides for their students. For example, Judith Brockway, the Principal of New York Mills Elementary, recently created the YET room for students with dysregulated behavior. This room offers a space for students to reflect, calm down, and address more specific social and emotional needs. The YET room is available for those students who may not be at their best yet and can use this room to grow both socially and emotionally. The YET room is not meant for students on Individualized Education Plans, as this measure is an intervention prior to being referred for Special Education. The high school, too, focuses on the SEL standards, providing time for identified students to access additional support both during and after school.

Novak truly understands the significance of fostering strong relationships with both students and staff and its impact on their overall well-being and ability to learn. "When people know me, they know the value I place on relationships," he stated. Regularly, he makes a point of greeting the students as they exit the buses, engaging them in conversation. This is his way of making a connection with students and starting their day off on a positive note. Moreover, it allows him to check in with the bus drivers and address any issues requiring attention.

“The social emotional learning of students and their needs are greater than ever.”
-Blaine Novak

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BLAINE NOVAK
New York Mills
Public School
Superintendent

Going into his 35th year at the New York Mills Public School, Novak is not just dedicated to his staff and students but also to offering support to his colleagues. He prioritizes connecting with other superintendents weekly to check in and build connections. According to Novak, connecting with colleagues and letting them know you're available for them is essential. Mentors have played a significant role in Novak's lifetime career at the New York Mills School District. Novak graduated from U of M Morris in 1989, and after a brief student teaching experience in New Zealand, started teaching in New York Mills as an Elementary Science Specialist.

Soon thereafter, he became the school's Activities and Community Education Director. Novak served as the High School Principal from 2008-2013, followed by the role of superintendent. His brother, Bruce, also a superintendent, motivated him to explore school administration. Jerry Nesland, former New York Mills Superintendent, encouraged him to pursue administration and still provides guidance and support. Even after 25 years, Novak and Nesland maintain their weekly Wednesday morning coffee meeting to check in with each other.

As Superintendent Novak and I concluded our interview, he took me on a tour of the striking hallways of New York Mills Public School. The walls were decorated with student artwork, reflecting the school's warm and inviting culture. The floors were recently polished, creating a sense of excitement about the upcoming return of students. Novak emphasized the importance of building strong relationships with students and their families in a small school environment. He also mentioned that the community is very supportive of the staff and students. Novak ended our interview by sharing, "It's all about relationships, and this school is a great place to be."

Do you want to learn more about New York Mills Public School? Visit their website at www.nymills.k12.mn.us.



FROM THE

Executive Director

"Learning, Leading, and Innovating
to Achieve Vibrant, Inclusive Communities."



Jeremy Kovash
Executive Director

"When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's
lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the
great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still
water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am
free."

-Wendell Berry

I came across this poem recently and it gave me some peace. I know we, adult leaders, often have concerns for our staff and students. We have concern for their futures. I hope that this poem might give you some time for positive reflection in the early days of the 2023-24 year. We are blessed to serve you and lead with you. Let's have a great school year.
Together We Achieve…





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Minnesota Smart Salting Update

IMPORTANT TRAINING INFORMATION FOR MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL IN CHARGE OF SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL.

- MPCA's Smart Salting Tool - The ultimate chloride reduction resource
- New Low Salt No Salt Minnesota Program!
- Smart Salting Certification Training Season is here!
- Smart Salting Certification Refreshers
- Loans for Small Businesses to upgrade equipment for chloride reduction
- Smart Salting for Community Leaders Workshops



Using the Intercultural Development Inventory

AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Author: Jane Eastes, LCSC's Deputy Executive Director
Source: Intercultural Development Inventory - www.idiinventory.com

The world we live in is increasingly interconnected. The ability to navigate and thrive in diverse cultural environments, or multicultural competence, is a skill that we need to both learn and teach. We need to develop competence to communicate and teach effectively as our students come from more diverse experiences, and students will need to learn these skills to effectively communicate and engage in their community and workplace. One powerful tool for assessing and enhancing intercultural competence is the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Schools in our region and across the state have used the IDI as a formative assessment to begin the development of intercultural competence, often starting with leadership teams and smaller groups.

What is the IDI:

The Intercultural Development Inventory, commonly referred to as the IDI, is a widely recognized assessment tool designed to measure an individual's or a group's intercultural competence. It's widely used in schools and Universities, as well as nonprofit, for-profit, and governmental organizations. Developed by Dr. Mitchell R. Hammer, the IDI helps individuals and organizations evaluate their current level of intercultural competence and provides insights on how to progress further.

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How Does the IDI Work?

The IDI is a valid questionnaire-based assessment that measures an individual's intercultural competence on a continuum of six stages:
1. Denial: Individuals in this stage may resist recognizing cultural differences and may perceive their own culture as superior.
2. Polarization: People at this stage tend to view cultural differences as dichotomous, often emphasizing the contrasts between cultures.
3. Minimization: In this stage, individuals recognize cultural differences but may minimize them, seeking commonalities and similarities.
4. Acceptance: People in this stage genuinely appreciate cultural diversity and seek to understand and adapt to different cultural norms.
5. Adaptation: At this stage, individuals can adapt their behavior and communication styles effectively in various cultural contexts.
6. Integration: The highest level of intercultural competence, individuals at this stage effortlessly integrate diverse perspectives and values into their own identity.
The IDI provides a detailed analysis of an individual's intercultural competence profile, highlighting areas for improvement and suggesting strategies for development.

Benefits of the IDI:

1. Self-Awareness: The IDI helps individuals gain a deeper understanding of their own cultural biases and how they impact their interactions with others.
2. Personal Growth: It serves as a roadmap for personal development, guiding individuals toward higher levels of intercultural competence.
3. Enhanced Communication: By pinpointing areas for improvement, the IDI enables individuals to become more effective communicators across cultures.
4. Organizational Development: Many organizations use the IDI to assess and develop the intercultural competence of their teams and employees, fostering a more inclusive and culturally competent workplace.
5. Conflict Resolution: The IDI can be a valuable tool in resolving cultural conflicts and promoting harmony in diverse settings.

Accessing the IDI:

The IDI has to be administered by a Qualified Administrator (QA). Lakes Country Service Cooperative has several QAs on staff who are able to administer the IDI to a group within your organization. To schedule an IDI assessment, or for more information about the process, contact Jane Eastes, jeastes@lcsc.org or Troy Haugen, thaugen@lcsc.org.

In an era marked by cultural diversity in every community, intercultural competence is a critical skill that can lead to personal and professional success. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) offers a structured approach to assess and enhance intercultural competence. By using the insights gained from the IDI, individuals and organizations can bridge cultural gaps, foster inclusivity, and engage effectively in a multicultural world. It's not only a tool; it leads to a pathway to a more connected and culturally aware future.

LCSC Curriculum Leaders Network



Lakes Country Service Cooperative is offering an opportunity to collaborate with other curriculum leaders from the area throughout the upcoming school year. The purpose of the Curriculum Leaders Network is three-fold:

- to discuss current curriculum and resources
- to examine emerging innovations in education
- to develop connections and relationships with leaders around the region as a means of ongoing support throughout the year

The network is open to anyone in the region that has a role in leading curriculum, instruction and assessment in their district. The group plans to meet from 8:30 to 10:30 am at LCSC on October 11, December 13, February 14 and April 10.

There is no cost, but we'd love to know if you are planning to attend.

Please register at https://reg.lcsc.org/#/view-event/295 or contact Jolene King at jking@lcsc.org if you would like to be involved in the network.



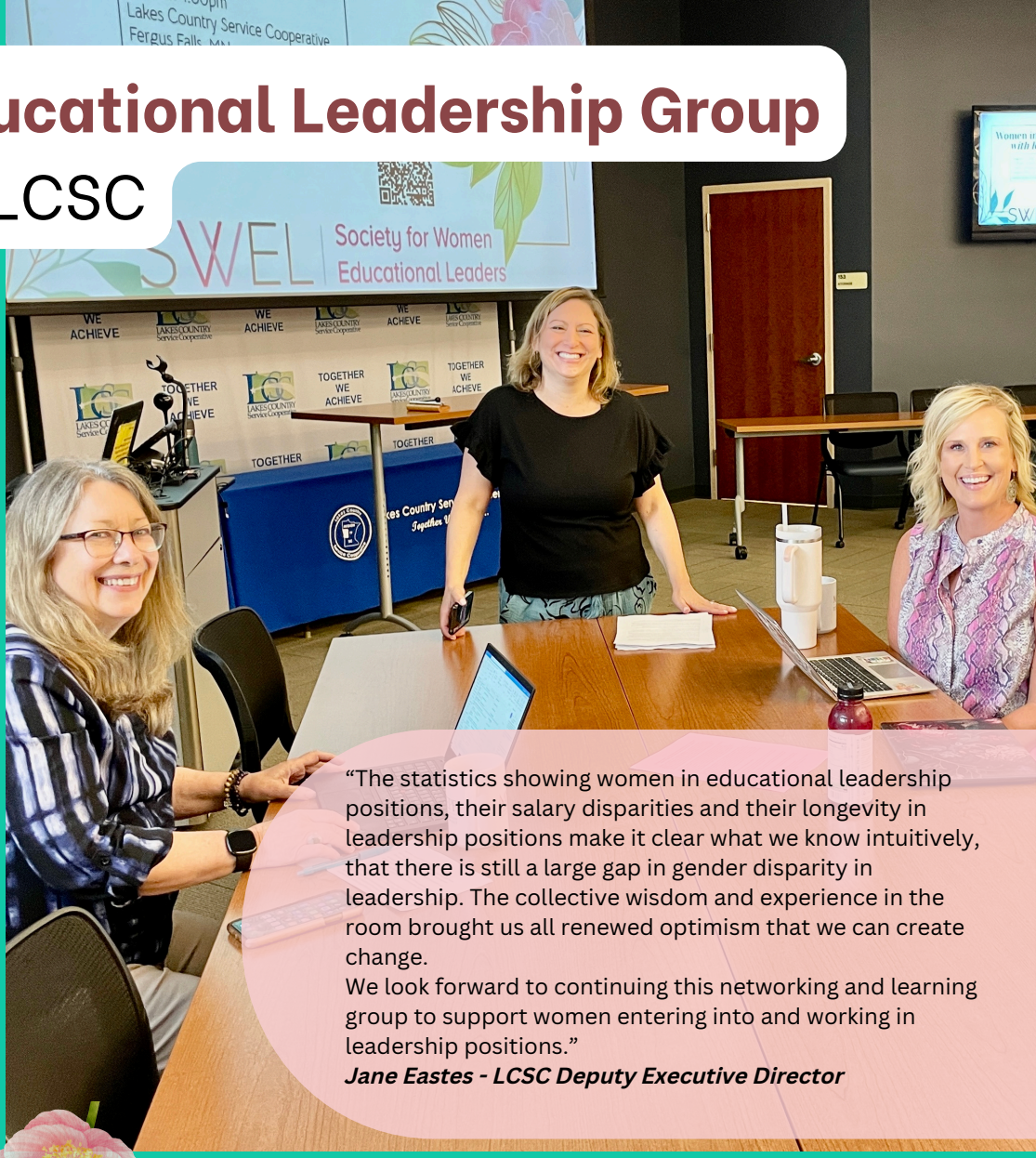
Join us for an in-person Practical Leadership training session, led by professional trainer Lisa Negstad, and you'll learn about various tools to "Build Engaged Teams." This training event is organized by Lakes Country Service Cooperative in partnership with Sourcewell and the Association of Minnesota Counties.

In today's complex and uncertain work environments, high-functioning teams are essential. To achieve effective teamwork and collaboration, it's important to cultivate these skills and give them regular attention. Our workshop focuses on developing shared leadership among team members and provides concrete tools for improving collaboration.

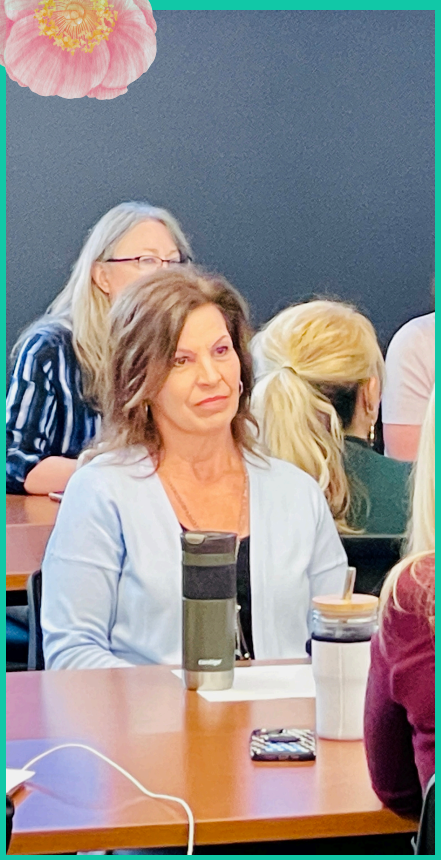
Women in Educational Leadership Group Convenes at LCSC

Lakes Country Service Cooperative kicked off the first in person networking and learning day for women in educational leaderhips on August 11. Over 30 leaders from the region attended. Dr. Marci Levy-Maguire and Dr. Liz Vaught from The Society of Women Educational Leaders (SWEL) facilitated discussions on strategies and tools to support women leaders in education. They also explored data on women in educational leadership and developed individual and network plans for growth and action in the 2023-24 school year.

Are you interested in learning more about Women Educational Leaders? Contact Jane Eastes, LCSC Deputy Executive Director, or Staci Allmaras, Regional Center of Excellence Director, at LCSC 218-739-3273.



"The statistics showing women in educational leadership positions, their salary disparities and their longevity in leadership positions make it clear what we know intuitively, that there is still a large gap in gender disparity in leadership. The collective wisdom and experience in the room brought us all renewed optimism that we can create change.
We look forward to continuing this networking and learning group to support women entering into and working in leadership positions."
Jane Eastes - LCSC Deputy Executive Director









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When it comes to planning, we know it's challenging to look ahead 10, five, or even two years. Our team is passionate about making planning simple and helping people like you plan for the future.

To help with this challenge, ICS has developed a new planning tool called Capital Improvement Planning 360. This comprehensive tool, in close collaboration with our team, helps provide our clients with accurate, comprehensive, and simplified plans for capital improvement and deferred maintenance needs. Our team wants to make planning easy, efficient, and accurate.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT THIS LINK OR REACH OUT TO KAREN KLEIN, COOPERATIVE ACCOUNTS MANAGER, AT KAREN.KLEIN@ICS-BUILDS.COM OR 651-728-1880.



The purpose of the Minnesota Career and Technical Educators Teacher Induction Program (CTE TIP) is to function as a professional learning community for early career teachers in career and technical education and to support their development, efficacy, success, resilience, and retention. This program expands the AFNR TIP program, which has a 98% teacher retention rate. Participation provides access to just-in-time monthly professional development, mentorship, and a cohort of support.

To learn more and to register **CLICK HERE**

MN EPF
MINNESOTA EDUCATION POLICY FELLOWSHIP

SYMPOSIUM ON SYSTEMS CHANGE

Lakes Country Service Cooperative is excited to offer all rural Minnesota Education Policy Fellowship (MN EPF) alumni an opportunity to further the fellowship experience with the first MN EPF Symposium, this year focused on systems change. The expanded fellowship experience includes four, full-day, in-person symposia and two shorter "happy hour" virtual check in sessions. The Symposium on Systems Change is designed around carefully curated texts that will serve as the basis of discussion and further work.



To learn more **CLICK HERE**

>>> NAVAGATING <<<

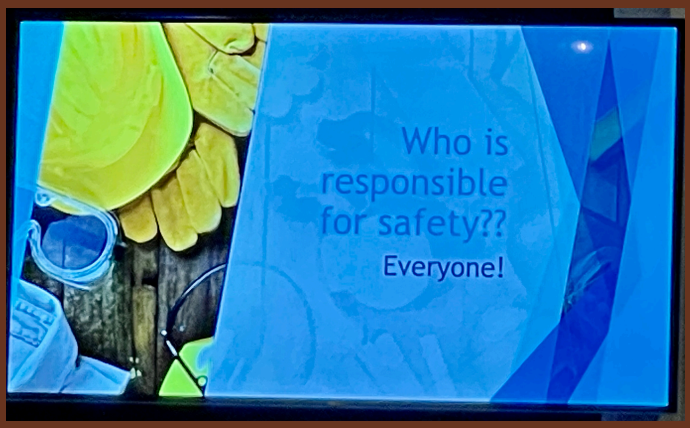
WORKPLACE SAFETY

with LCSC's Health & Safety Team



ALL STAFF TRAINING SESSIONS

Source: Source: Rick Brynildson, LCSC Health & Safety Manager
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC's Communications Generalist



The Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC) Health and Safety team works all year long to help our members build, implement, and maintain strong safety programs in the workplace. Now, with Fall approaching and schools preparing for a new year, the team is under a tight deadline to complete "All Staff" training sessions for schools in our region. "We work with all of the staff in school districts, from custodians and cafeteria staff to teachers, paraprofessionals, and superintendents, to ensure proper training for a healthy and safe environment," said LCSC Health & Safety Manager Rick Brynildson.

Brynildson explained that for all our health and safety members, safety is a mandated compliance requirement. With the support of the LCSC Health & Safety team, our members can foster positive behavioral changes and establish a strong culture of health and safety. Efficiencies for programs in schools often influence decisions, but health and safety programming aids in creating an environment where everyone takes ownership. Data shows that successful implementation of health and safety programs can increase employee efficiency and job satisfaction overall. Plus, National Safety Council studies have shown that conservatively, investing in injury prevention yields a return of between $2 and $6 for every $1 spent.

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Slip, trip, and fall incidents must be taken seriously as they are consistently one of the primary causes of workplace injuries.

According to workplace safety statistics, slip, trip, and fall incidents are consistently one of the leading causes of workplace injuries. These accidents can occur in various settings, including offices, hallways, construction areas, and storage. Factors such as weather conditions, wet or uneven surfaces, cluttered walkways, inappropriate footwear, and inadequate lighting can increase the risk of these incidents. Implementing proper safety measures and practices to prevent slip, trip, and fall accidents will vastly improve the well-being of their employees.

Significant direct and indirect costs can be associated with organizations that neglect to support a robust health and safety program. Organizations could see increased direct expenses related to their Workers' Compensation modification rates and should strive to have a modification rate of 1.0 or lower. Below that rate, they may see discounts from the provider. Above this rate, they may see premium increases and added fees for services put in place by the provider of their Workers' Compensation insurance. Changes in modification rates have a two-year lag time, so employers may not see the impact of not implementing an effective safety plan immediately following an incident. This increases the time and effort to reduce the modification rate and, ultimately, may pay a higher premium. An increase in indirect costs may include finding new employees to fill in for the absent employee, overtime, hiring subs, or long-term substitutes. In addition, administrative costs can increase due to added duties to process the necessary paperwork for claims and track employee absences.

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LCSC Safety Manager, Rick Brynildson leading Safety Training for school custodial and maintenance employees.



School nurses attending American Heart Association Basic Life Support training.



Wayne Stephens, a Health & Safety Facilitator at LCSC, providing Basic Life Support training certified by the American Heart Association.

Brynildson shared that the LCSC Health & Safety program has successfully partnered with schools during demolitions and remodeling projects. "Our team has identified a variety of issues including asbestos, fire, and building code standards, which has aided in members staying on track for completing projects on time," said Brynildson.
At the start of the Minnesota-Covid mandated shutdowns, the Health & Safety team was instrumental in assisting members rollout COVID-19 planning. The team was available to assist members out in the field. Brynildson shared they were able to help members set up COVID-19 plans, contact tracing, and assisted members to meet ever-changing legislative mandates.



LCSC Health & Safety Facilitator, Jeff Preuss leading Health & Safety training for the staff at Hillcrest Lutheran Academy

"I am proud of our team and our ability to responsively navigate issues and be a problem solver for our members. When problem areas are missed, it allows us to walk alongside our members and help them navigate through an issue and help them find a solution," said Brynildson.
If you want to learn more about the Health & Safety program at LCSC, contact Health & Safety Program Manager Rick Brynildson at rbrynildson@lcsc.org.

Welcome!

to the new

Superintendents

in Lakes Country's Region

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative



JUSTIN DAHLHEIMER
Osakis Public School



PAUL CARLSON
Hancock Public School



MEGAN MYERS
Parkers Prairie Public School



BRENDA REED
Browns Valley Public School

Minnesota Rural Educators Association (MREA)

NAMES JENNY MARAS AS THE 2023 NATIONAL RURAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

MREA is thrilled to announce that the National Rural Education Association (NREA) has named Jenny Maras of Morris Area Public Schools as the 2023 National Rural Teacher of the Year.

Maras was named an MREA Educator of Excellence in 2022 and was later recommended by the MREA Board of Directors to be nominated for the National Rural Teacher of the Year honor.

"Jenny Maras embodies the traits of an NREA Rural Teacher of the Year. Her leadership and impact have changed, and continue to impact, the Morris Area School District and its greater community. Jenny is a leader in her district and has been an advocate and voice of Greater Minnesota education," says Bob Indihar, MREA Executive Director.

Maras will be honored and celebrated at NREA's National Forum to Advance Rural Education in Chattanooga, Tennessee as well as MREA's Greater Education Summit in Brainerd, Minnesota, both taking place in November.

Jenny Maras is a Career & Technical Education (CTE) Teacher within the LCSC Perkins Consortium

Source/Author: MREA







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