LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative
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LCSC Communicator

January 2025

Regional News, Views, and Information

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EDUCATION

Electronic Edition

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CGB Public School's Path

to a One-Campus Solution

The Clinton Elementary School, established in the 1940s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), has served the community well over the years.

In the fall of 2023, the Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley (CGB) Public School District successfully passed a twenty-five million dollar referendum, which will enable the district to transition to a unified one-campus model at the current Graceville facility. Starting in the fall of 2026, CGB will operate as a single PreK-12 campus.

Continued on next page

Source: Brad Kelvington, Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley Public School Superintendent;
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communications Generalist

This twenty-five million dollar initiative aims to enhance the educational experience by updating the Industrial Tech and Family and Consumer Science areas, creating a new preschool facility, renovating the elementary school, upgrading the high school, and introducing a new fitness center, multipurpose room, gymnasium, and commons area. Groundbreaking for this exciting project is scheduled for the spring of 2025.

Superintendent Brad Kelvington, who is in his third year at CGB, brings a wealth of experience from his previous roles as superintendent at Rocori and Aitkin Public Schools. Raised in Olivia, Minnesota, he has a deep appreciation for the small-town atmosphere and the work-life balance it provides. After engaging with the CGB school board, he felt a strong connection to this community as a fitting place for his career. Having started as a teacher, Kelvington spent a decade in South Dakota before returning to Minnesota to continue his educational journey. With 34 years in education and a family background in teaching, he is dedicated to fostering a positive learning environment.

Currently, while there are no specific plans for the future of Clinton Elementary School, there is a hope that the facility can be utilized for community programs and events. The shift to a single campus is partly motivated by the need for financial sustainability. Maintaining two separate buildings with the current enrollment levels presents challenges, and the decision to focus on a unified campus is seen as a necessary step for long-term viability. Although the Clinton Elementary School has made significant contributions to its students, addressing its critical infrastructure needs has become increasingly important.

Looking ahead, projections suggest that CGB will welcome 334 students from PreK to 12 for the 2026-2027 school year, with an anticipated slight increase in enrollment. The local census indicates there are over 20 children aged birth to three in the district, highlighting the potential for enrollment growth.





CGB currently has a full teaching staff. To support their staffing requirements, they have welcomed three Cultural Exchange Educators from the Philippines. These dedicated educators arrived in the United States this past summer, successfully navigating the immigration process, and are enthusiastic about contributing to the district's educational mission.

To be part of this program, schools must complete an application and sign an agreement that outlines several important requirements. These requirements include offering a salary and benefits equivalent to those of full-time teachers for the visiting educator positions, providing mentorship and additional support to facilitate their success, and assisting with housing, transportation, and other essential needs. The educators, with backgrounds in science and elementary education, include one individual assigned to support the Bigstone and Lismore Hutterite Colonies. Under this partnership, the colonies provide the facilities, while CGB provides the educators. Together, they work collaboratively to deliver the highest quality education to students, who typically range in number from 20 to 30.

"We are genuinely proud of the strong partnership we have cultivated with the elders in both colonies. Our collaboration aims to ensure that each student receives a quality education and graduates with a CGB diploma," remarked Kelvington.

At present, CGB is actively gathering feedback to explore the possibility of transitioning to a four-day school week, a model adopted by many other schools in Minnesota. To that end, a survey has been distributed to community residents, students in grades 6-11, school staff, and parents. "If you reside in the CGB District or the surrounding area, you have likely had the opportunity to share your perspectives on this potential change," said Kelvington. This initiative could enhance CGB's financial efficiency while also providing families with a chance to achieve a better work-life balance. "It may also serve to attract and retain quality school staff," Kelvington added.

Continued on next page



GYMNASIUM ENTRANCE



PRE-K ENTRANCE





To enhance opportunities for student activities, the school boards of Herman-Norcross, Wheaton, and CGB have come together under the initiative known as "Border West." "This collaboration will enable our students to engage in a diverse array of activities," stated Kelvington. Notably, a new fishing team has been launched, and the Border West Football team made it to the State Quarter Finals this past fall, which is a remarkable accomplishment.

Kelvington was also delighted to highlight the meaningful partnership between CBG students and the local Frandsen Bank. Seniors who aspire to attend trade school are eligible for tuition coverage along with a $1,000 stipend. Last year, six dedicated students participated in this generous opportunity. To qualify, students must maintain passing grades and successfully complete their programs. The Frandsen family's dedication to supporting students interested in pursuing a career in the trades is immensely appreciated.

"What I am most proud of is that our students fully embrace the opportunities available to them—be it through community initiatives or teacher support. Their accomplishments are a testament to their hard work and gratitude, truly embodying the spirit of our small, agricultural community," shared Kelvington.

Do you want to learn more about the progress of the one-campus solution or other initiatives at CGB? Visit their website at www.graceville.k12.mn.us.

FROM THE

Executive Director

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



Jeremy Kovash
Executive Director

Happy New Year!

As we jump into the second quarter of the 21st century, we look forward with optimism. What can we, as your service agency, do to ensure that students in Wheaton get the same opportunities as students in Westonka? What can we, as your service agency, do to ensure that our school leaders have the same growth opportunities in Rothsay as they do in Robbinsdale?

I believe there are several key pieces:

- Ensure access using technology and globalism.
- Expand our CTE footprint for today's learners and tomorrow's workforce.
- Continue to grow our academic challenges program to meet the needs of students today.
- Research and discuss the complexities of students growing up with technology at their fingertips.
- Examine new and improved methods of teaching, instruction and school efficiencies.
- Continue to partner with other organizations to create effective services and programs.

We are excited for 2025 and beyond.

Thank you for being a valued member and partner of Lakes Country Service Cooperative. We wish you a blessed 2025 and hoping you enjoy this issue of The Communicator!



Classroom TO COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

JANE EASTES
Deputy Executive Director

Rural Sociologist, Ben Winchester has a positive and optimistic message for rural Minnesota. In what he names as the rural "brain gain," Ben summarizes his research in several key points.

- The population of residents ages 30 - 49 years old has increased in rural Minnesota counties.
- These newcomers have significant education, skills, connections, spending power and children.
- People migrate to rural communities for **1)** a simpler life, **2)** safety and security, **3)** affordable housing, **4)** outdoor recreation and **5)** quality schools.

Communities can work together to attract newcomers and create a quality of life that all residents enjoy.

Notice that Ben's research does not name jobs as the primary reason people migrate to rural communities. Although undoubtedly important, people have more options available. No longer do you have to be as close to your workplace as you used to be. At LCSC we have employees living and working from all over our nine counties and beyond.

The focus of rural development has shifted toward creating community culture and amenities that are attractive for healthy living and raising a family.

With smaller populations, it is the people who choose to live in rural communities that will create and maintain the healthy, vibrant and resilient rural communities that will thrive in the future.

That is why growing a civic minded and skilled next generation is vitally important to our future in rural Minnesota.

We at Lakes Country embrace the vital work of bringing together our education and local government members that support the belonging and growth of our youth in all of our communities. Starting with our partnerships with nonprofits dedicated to youth and community building, including West Central Initiative, World Savvy, Move for America, and Mentorship Minnesota (and more) our goal is to create more support for all of our members who are engaged in the work of growing a healthy and engaged next generation.

2025-26 School Lunch & Breakfast Program



Author: Jane Eastes, LCSC Deputy Executive Director

LCSC's purchasing cooperative, the Cooperative Purchasing Connection (CPC), is in the midst of preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of over one hundred schools in Minnesota and North Dakota, calling for advantageous pricing and service for school food under the USDA School Lunch and Breakfast program.

There is still time to participate in the cooperative RFP, if you have not signed up already. The RFP will be published **February 3, 2025.** Participation agreements are due **January 29, 2025** and can be found **here.**

Participating in the cooperative RFP means your school does not have to prepare and conduct your own RFP, and is assured of compliance with USDA rules for competitive solicitation for school food. The combined volume of purchases also attracts better pricing from manufacturers and brokers, and delivery fees from distributors.

New this year, CPC has partnered for assistance in the bid process with the Equalis Group. Equalis staff have years of experience in the K-12 and higher school food purchasing industry. In addition, Equalis has connected CPC with a cooperative group of schools in Colorado. By combining the two cooperative's volume we expect to attract deeper discounts directly from manufacturers and brokers.

We invite you to learn more about participating in the CPC multi-state RFP for school food by watching our recorded webinars here, or by contacting Melissa Mattson and the CPC team at info@purchasingconnection.org, or 1-888-739-3289.



September 2024, Teacher Induction Program (**TIP**) Seminar

Author: Lavyne Rada, LCSC Associate Director of Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Building a Skilled Workforce

Through Innovative Career and Technical Education in Minnesota

At Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC) and Minnesota Career and Technical Education (CTE), our mission is to strengthen Minnesota's workforce by equipping students with the skills needed for tomorrow's careers and by providing educational leaders with the resources to meet today's challenges. Our team supports teachers with teacher licensure, professional development, mentoring, and retention programs so teachers can prepare students for highly sought-after professions. We have created an annual report to give an overview of Minnesota's career and technical education landscape as well as to highlight the work being done across the state.

This year's report emphasizes our efforts to assist teachers via grant-funded alternative licensure programs, the CTE Teacher Induction Program, and various mentoring resources. Each program aims to reduce obstacles to entry for teaching professionals and ensure they have continuous support needed to succeed in the classroom. As we move forward in our mission to promote innovation and excellence in career and technical education programs throughout Minnesota, this report provides an in-depth analysis of our past successes and future prospects.

Continued on next page

Career and technical education is growing and programs are expanding across Minnesota. During the 2023-2024 school year, 369 Minnesota public school districts and charters offered at least one CTE program. In the Lakes Country Service Cooperative, 151 CTE teachers are in the 34 school districts which have CTE programs offering robust courses spanning fields from agriculture and health services to business and trade.

Alternative Licensure for CTE Teachers

Access to qualified CTE teachers is a critical component to students accessing CTE programs. Teachers with industry expertise provide hands-on, industry-relevant experiences to students for high-demand careers; however, teacher licensure systems limit access for industry experts to obtain a permanent license. One in three CTE teachers had a license at risk in 2023-24 (i.e., 725, 31%; up from one in five in 2019) and were teaching without a permanent license (i.e., Tier 1, Tier 2, or an Out-of-Field Permission). LCSC offers a competency-based licensure program that is a clear pathway to obtain a license, yet nimble enough to provide individualized programs of study based on the identified needs of each licensure candidate.



> "I feel like this is the magic piece that has been missing from my career for a long time. I just did not understand what I needed, and I would not have had the bandwidth to go back to school while I was raising a family and working full time."
>
> **-licensure candidate**

Retention and Mentoring

The CTE Teacher Induction Program (TIP) staff and mentors support early-career teachers by giving them the tools to be successful, using research-based induction and mentoring methods. The TIP promotes that professional relationships are key to teacher development and retention. Through monthly professional development, early-career teachers receive just-in-time training and coaching. Since 2022, 161 unduplicated early-career teachers and 41 mentors have participated. Of those, 84% entered the CTE teaching profession through an alternative pathway. At a rate about 16% higher than the average of all Minnesota teachers, nearly 86% of participants returned to teach the year following TIP participation. An early-career participant shared, "Being able to talk and connect with other teachers in my licensure field was so useful. I do not have anyone else in my building at school to talk through and share ideas with." Furthermore, CTE TIP mentors also benefit from participation: "As a mentor, CTE TIP rejuvenated me. I feel like I have something to give. I can support and help others more than I realized. I finally feel relevant. Not just some 30 years of experience teacher nearing retirement." TIP is continuing to develop a culture of lifelong learning and collaboration.

By expanding programs and supporting teachers, we are working to ensure that students are well-equipped to enter high-demand industries, thereby contributing to a robust and resilient economy.

COOPERATIVE Purchasing CONNECTION

REFERENDUM PLANNING, EFFICIENCIES FOR YOUR PURCHASING PROCESS, HELPING YOU SAVE MONEY ON MAINTAINING FACILITIES



From left: CPC Program Representatives, Julia Dangerfield & Jerome Evans

CPC attends over 20 conferences, trade shows, and association meetings every year. We always enjoy great conversations with our members!

Here are **five** great questions that led to really productive conversations between CPC members and the CPC Team:

How can CPC vendors help with Referendum planning?
CPC vendors will work with your architects and project planners to provide design services and contractually negotiated costs for your upcoming projects.

How does CPC help bring efficiencies into the purchasing process?
Every organization has a unique procurement process. We can help you spot areas where cooperative purchasing can help your organization save time and money. Two common areas of efficiency are: using our contracts instead of going out to bid and using Express to centralize your eProcurement.

How can CPC help us save money on maintaining facilities?
CPC's portfolio of facilities and maintenance contracts is both deep and wide. Some CPC vendors will develop maintenance plans for free and others can help you reduce costs by organizing your operations. Let us walk you through our vendors' offerings and point out opportunities to save!

How does CPC help us to get money back on electronics?
That's right! CPC awarded a contract to a tech buyback vendor that works with you to assess your electronics and pays you! This one is always a popular topic.

How exactly does using CPC support your local service cooperative?
CPC is a multi-state joint powers program of Service Cooperatives and we're always happy to talk about how the partnership between members, vendors, and the CPC program supports services back to you!

Find us at PurchasingConnection.org

You can drop us a line at info@purchasingconnection.org

CHANGEMAKER HUB

Sparks Student-Driven Innovation in West Central Minnesota

Source/Author: Staci Allmaras, LCSC Director of School and Youth Engagement



A Day of Design, Dialogue, and Discovery

On November 13, 2024, the Fergus Falls community became a hub of student-driven innovation, as 59 high school students and 36 educators, school leaders, and community advocates gathered for a World Savvy Changemaker Hub. Hosted in partnership with Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC), the event drew participants from Alexandria Public Schools, Battle Lake Public Schools, Fergus Falls Public Schools, Kalon Prep Academy, and Minnewaska Area Schools.

The Changemaker Hub was designed as an immersive, day-long experience where youth and adults worked together to reimagine K-12 education. Guided by the question, "How can we transform education to ensure that all young people have a safe and inclusive school where they develop the essential skills they need to thrive in a complex and interconnected world?", participants engaged in inquiry, reflection, and action-planning activities.

Voices of Change: What Students Had to Say

Student perspectives took center stage at the Changemaker Hub. The day's discussions revealed that while many students have positive school experiences, others feel unseen as individuals. Students called for schools to emphasize relational connections with adults and to create learning experiences that are relevant, engaging, and reflective of real-world challenges.

Themes that emerged from student feedback included the desire for:

- **Autonomy, choice, and flexibility in learning**
- **Passionate and compassionate educators**
- **Curriculum that extends beyond academics to include life, leadership, and social skills**
- **Inclusive practices that honor diverse learning styles and address discrimination**
- **Student-Led Experiments: Turning Ideas Into Action**



> This is a very beneficial way to get your ideas out and gain the knowledge of others that could be similar to your own."
>
> - student participant

The afternoon session was all about action. Students designed creative "experiments" to bring back to their schools. These projects aim to address some of the key challenges they identified. Examples included:

- **Fostering a Culture of Growth:** Implementing actions such as conversations, presentations, and interventions for students scoring below 65% on assignments, making failure a productive learning opportunity.
- **Student-Led Teaching:** Encouraging students to teach their teachers something new every other week, fostering stronger connections and mutual learning.
- **Reimagining Assessments:** Shifting from tests and quizzes to project-based learning and presentations to reduce student stress and increase subject engagement.
- **Strengthening Teacher-Student Connections:** Hosting teacher workshops on building student connections and allowing students to shape classroom culture.
- **Amplifying Student Voice:** Establishing a student-led advocacy committee to ensure that student perspectives are represented in school decision-making.

WHAT'S NEXT?

These experiments underscore the belief that young people, when given the opportunity, can lead meaningful change in their schools and communities.

Taking It Beyond the Hub

LCSC encourages schools and districts to build on the momentum of the Changemaker Hub by taking intentional next steps. Recommendations for advancing student-centered change include:

Reconnect with Participants: Gather students who attended the Hub to discuss the next steps for their experiments. Consider inviting them to present their ideas at a faculty or principal's meeting.

Use Youth Participation Models: Explore Roger Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation to deepen youth engagement in school decisions.

Create a Futures Advisory Council: Launch a council that brings together students, educators, and community members to imagine and test what's possible for the future of education.

Utilize the Futures Cone: Engage students, educators, and community members in scenario planning using the Futures Cone model to spark further innovative experiments.

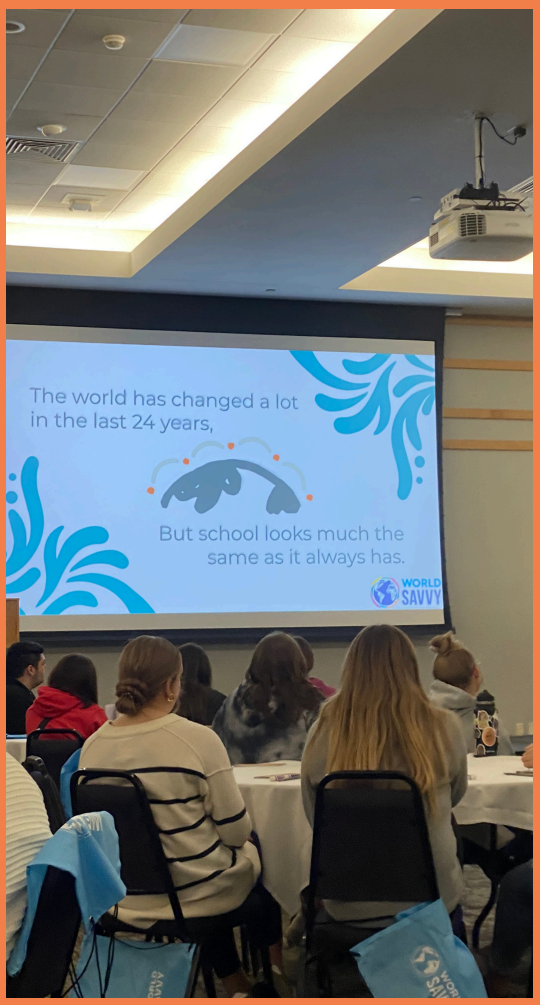
A Call to Action

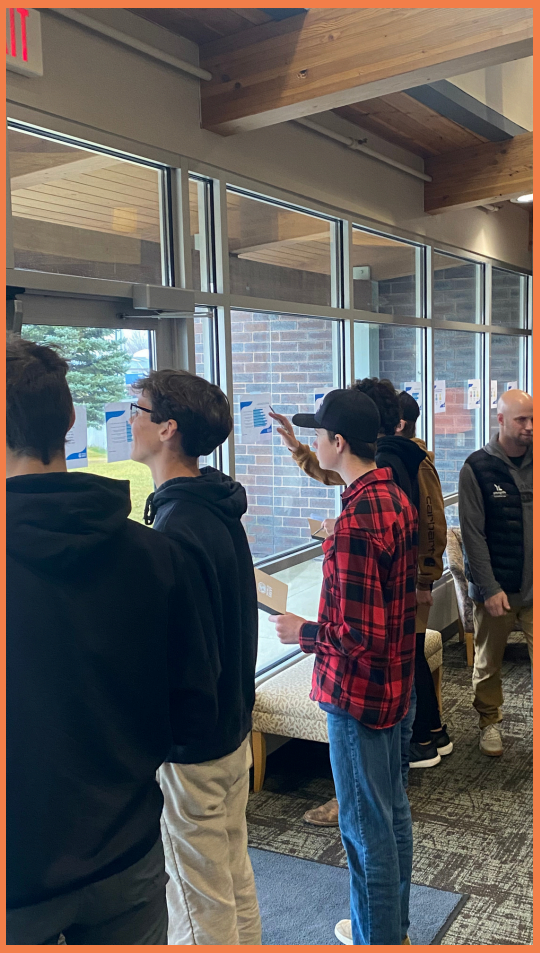
The Changemaker Hub highlighted the power of youth-driven change. It also challenged educators and leaders to listen, learn, and co-create with students. As one student stated, "Invest NOW because we are the future." By embracing the ideas and energy of students, LCSC and its partner schools can lead the charge toward a more inclusive, relevant, and student-centered education system.

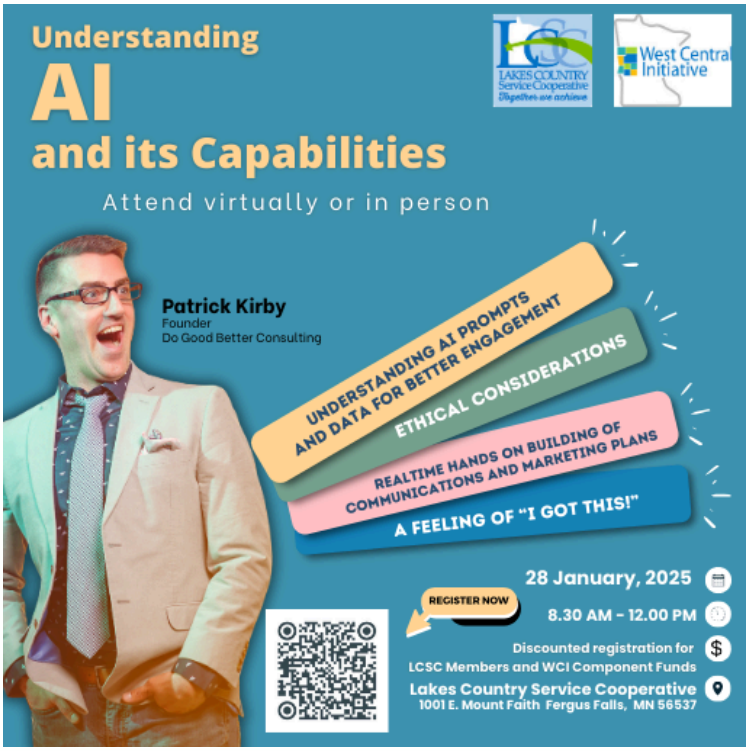
Join the Movement

LCSC invites all educators and community partners to join future Changemaker Hub events and support youth-led change initiatives. For more information or to learn how you can get involved, contact Staci Allmaras, Director of School and Youth Engagement, sallmaras@lcsc.org or Jonathan Filzen, Director of K12 Outreach & Engagement, Midwest, at jonathan.filzen@worldsavvy.org.

Together, we can reimagine education—by youth, for youth.







USING AI CAN BE DOWNRIGHT SCARY, OVERWHELMING, AND COMPLICATED!

But what if there was a simple way to learn and know enough to feel confident in leveraging this incredible technology to help you brainstorm ideas, lessen your workload, and allow you to spend more time building and maintaining workflow?

Well, you're in luck – because Patrick Kirby, Founder of Do Good Better Consulting is going to walk you through some of the best ways to use AI to free up your calendar, speed up some of your processes at your organization, and make you feel comfortable (dare we say, even confident!?) about using this rapidly changing and increasingly important technology to benefit your mission and work.

And sure, all this AI talk sounds great. But how on earth do you actually do it!?

This half-day training will walk you through some of the more accessible programs, develop (in real time!) plans, and answer questions without you having to dedicate your precious time to navigating this potentially complicated new way of communicating, creating, and interacting.



We'll walk together through done-with-you communications, fundraising, and marketing plans to use AI in a way that doesn't overwhelm but ensures that you know enough to be dangerous while maintaining and doubling down on your soft skills that will be even more important in the future.

Registration is available to attend in person and stream via Zoom for individuals who want to participate virtually.

This will be a hands-on workshop, so we encourage you to bring a laptop.



Follow-up Webinar to ask Patrick anything in March 2025

Oh? Is that not enough!? Do you have follow-up questions on how things go as you begin to execute this plan we have created? Do you have a problem or issue that is blocking your organization from moving forward quickly? You are in luck. Patrick will be scheduling a webinar to answer all your questions in March 2025. All included in your registration.





YOUNG WRITERS' AND OTHER ARTISTS' CONFERENCE

May 13, 2025
Students in Grades 3-7
MState in Fergus Falls



LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative
Together we achieve

Source/Author: Monica Thompson, LCSC Coordinator of Technology Integration and Academic Challenges

The 2025 Young Writers' and Artists' Conference is set to take place on May 13, 2025, at Minnesota State Community & Technical College in Fergus Falls.

This annual spring event offers students in grades 3-7 a valuable opportunity to participate in engaging classes led by Minnesota authors, storytellers, illustrators, and other talented artists.

Last year, approximately 255 students took part in this event. Everyone enjoyed a performance by Nick Bretz, a magician with a 4th-degree black belt in Taekwondo. Participants also attended sessions with a storyteller, a writer, and an artist, where they explored the art of storytelling, practiced their writing skills, and created their own artwork.

Online registration for the 2025 Young Writers' and Artists' Conference will be available soon at www.lcsc.org.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to reach out to:

Monica Thompson, Academic Challenges Coordinator: mthompson@lcsc.org or
Jolene King, Program Assistant: jking@lcsc.org

We look forward to another year filled with creativity and inspiration!

CALLING ALL TEACHERS!

Author: Jane Eastes, LCSC
Deputy Executive Director



elevate teaching

Elevate Teaching, a Minnesota Nonprofit dedicated to uplifting the role of teaching in our society and motivating more people to become teachers, is looking for Minnesota teachers to record a personal inspiring message about what you love about teaching.

It's easy and fun to record. Start with this page, **https://www.elevateteaching.us/calforteacherstories**, for instructions on what and how to record and where to upload your video.

We'd love to have videos from teachers in west central Minnesota!

Help inspire new teachers with your story. What motivates you to teach? What keeps you in the classroom or school day after day? What would you say to the next generation of teachers to inspire them to join the profession?

LCSC is proud to join Elevate Teaching's mission to uplift and grow the incredibly foundational (and, yes, challenging) role of teaching in our communities. And more importantly, thanks to all of you for being a "future maker."



BUILDING STRONG MATH CLASSROOMS

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative — Together we achieve

Northwest Service Cooperative NWSC Established 1971

COMPASS
Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The 8 Effective Teaching Practices & Regional Math Connections

Description: This overview session, designed for teachers and district leaders, introduces the 8 Effective Teaching Practices as a foundation for shifting the perception of math in our schools.

3 Session Options

- Feb. 27th (Virtual) 3:30-4:45pm
- March 4th (At LCSC) 10:30am-12:00pm
- March 5th (Virtual) 9:00-10:15am

REGISTER HERE OR SCAN ME

Facilitators



Craig Bahr
Regional Compass Math Lead
Lakes Country Service Cooperative



Marcella Melby
Regional Compass Math Lead
Northwest Service Cooperative



Source/Author: Monica Thompson, LCSC Coordinator of Technology Integration and Academic Challenges



Region 4

MINNESOTA SERVICE COOPERATIVE
KNOWLEDGE BOWL



Celebrates a Successful First Year of 5th and 6th Grade Knowledge Bowl

The inaugural season of the Region 4 5th and 6th Grade Knowledge Bowl was a resounding success!

Thirteen schools—Browns Valley, Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley, Hawley, Hillcrest, Minnewaska, Morris, Osakis, Perham, Hancock, Holy Rosary, New York Mills, Pelican Rapids, and Underwood—came together to participate in this exciting new program.

Teams, consisting of up to six members, competed in a challenging 45-question multiple-choice written test and four oral rounds with 30 questions each. The competition gave students the opportunity to showcase their knowledge on a wide variety of topics, while also learning the importance of teamwork and collaboration.

Many students and coaches reflected on the positive impact of this program. "They loved working together to test their trivia knowledge, and having snacks available after the written round was much appreciated by the always hungry students," shared one coach. Another commented, "The students enjoyed the challenge of Knowledge Bowl. It was a great opportunity for them to learn how to work together."

As the first year concludes, it's clear that Region 4's 5th and 6th Grade Knowledge Bowl has laid a strong foundation for years to come. The excitement and enthusiasm from students and coaches alike promise a bright future for this program. Here's to more seasons of learning, teamwork, and friendly competition!

MINNESOTA SERVICE COOPERATIVE
KNOWLEDGE BOWL

Senior High Knowledge Bowl Season **Kicks Off with Enthusiasm**

Source/Author: Monica Thompson, LCSC Coordinator of Technology Integration and Academic Challenges

The Senior High Knowledge Bowl season began with energy and excitement as students from across the region gathered to showcase their academic skills. Hosted by the Minnesota Service Cooperatives, Knowledge Bowl competitions are interdisciplinary contests that challenge students in grades 7-12 to apply their knowledge across a wide range of subjects.

These contests emphasize recall, problem-solving, and critical thinking in written and oral rounds, fostering both teamwork and academic enrichment.

Results for the December 20 Competition

In the AAA Division, the top six teams.

1. Fergus Falls Fuchsia
2. Fargo North Neon
3. Fargo South Sage
4. Fargo North Night
5. Alexandria Agate
6. Fergus Falls Flame

In the AA Division, the top six teams.

1. Park Christian Plasma
2. Park Christian Pearl
3. Hawley Hibiscus
4. Park Christian Periwinkle
5. Hillcrest Huckleberry
6. New York Mills Navy

In the A Division, the top six teams.

1. Richland Rose
2. Barnesville Beige
3. Brandon-Evansville Bittersweet
4. Breckenridge Burgundy
5. Breckenridge Bold
6. Hancock Honeydew

A DOUBLE KICKOFF AT CONCORDIA COLLEGE, MOORHEAD

The season's kickoff was scheduled for two consecutive days at Concordia College in Moorhead. However, due to a snowstorm, the competition originally planned for 83 teams to compete on Thursday, December 19, was postponed to Friday, January 3. Despite this change, the Friday, December 20, meet went ahead as scheduled, bringing together 67 teams for a day of spirited competition.

The weather disruption didn't dampen spirits, as students returned eager to compete. The teams battled for top honors in a display of teamwork and sharp intellectual skills.

As the season continues, teams will have further opportunities to test their knowledge and refine their strategies. Teams will have two more regular season competitions before the postseason starts.
The Senior High Knowledge Bowl season promises to be an exciting journey, with plenty of challenges and triumphs ahead. Congratulations to all participating teams for a strong start, and best of luck as the season progresses!

Friday, January 3rd Concordia Knowledge Bowl Meet

Small Schools- A Division

1. Ulen-Hitterdal Umber
2. Ashby Apple
3. Chokio-Alberta Copper
4. Underwood Ultraviolet
5. Battle Lake Blue
6. Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley Canary
7. Rosholt Royal

Mid-Schools- AA Division

1. Morris Misty Blue
2. Morris Mahogany
3. West Central Area Walnut
4. Osakis Onyx
5. West Central Area Wheat
6. Morris Mango

Large Schools- AAA Division

1. Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Delta
2. Perham Papaya
3. Detroit Lakes Declans
4. Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Diamond
5. Perham Purple
6. Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Dawn
7. Minnewaska Maroon





WDAY covered a story about Knowledge Bowl during the Concordia Meet. You can find the article at the following link: [Students Test Their Skills at Concordia's Knowledge Bowl]



COLLIN CURRAN'S CANOE

Take on that thing You may never get another chance to do it!

Source: Collin Curran, Lake Park Audubon High School Senior; Janelle Hueners, Lake Park Audubon High School Ag Teacher
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communications Generalist

"I think for a long time, I did not have a solid answer for why I was building a canoe," shared Collin Curran, a Lake Park Audubon High School senior. "I wanted to do something I thought was impossible, but maybe I could learn how to do it, even though it was outside my realm."

Curran's venture into woodworking started in the eighth grade with an "Intro to Woods" class, which served as his only formal exposure to the craft.

After viewing a YouTube video featuring four men paddling down the Mississippi, he recounted that he stumbled upon a link detailing how to build a cedar strip canoe. Captivated by the idea, he clicked the link, which marked the beginning of his canoe-building journey.

The idea for the 17-foot, 50-pound canoe project was conceived in September 2023. Curran dedicated a few months to research throughout 2023, and by December, he began ordering the necessary materials.

The materials arrived in January 2024, but Curran faced an unexpected setback shortly after due to illness. He shared that he was diagnosed with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND). "Essentially, my brain lost the ability to send and receive signals to my limbs," Curran explained. This diagnosis caused production of the canoe to halt, as he could manage only about an hour of work on it each day for several months. During this period, he had to be cautious about the hazards of working with power tools.

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“There were times when I met with a doctor every other day.” - Collin Curran

Curran researched the disorder extensively by reading books, conducting online research, and consulting with his doctors at the Mayo Clinic. They concluded that he was likely born with this condition, which had manifested through various symptoms over time, including syncope (fainting spells). He experienced further effects and symptoms related to the disorder and had regular appointments with physicians.

In June, he returned to work on the canoe after completing various forms of therapy. "Working on the canoe always lifted my spirits a bit. It was an activity I could do independently, allowing me some time alone," shared Curran.

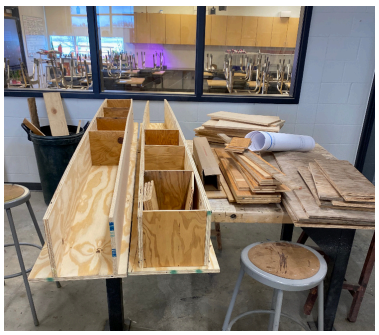
During this time, he continued his regular high school classes and enrolled in an independent study with Ag Instructor Janelle Hueners. He then enrolled in the summer Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). During this time, Curran worked hard to complete the canoe project.

When asked how he felt emotionally during this project, he shared that he had a book by Ted Moores called Canoecraft. “They call it the bible of canoe building,” said Curran. He explained that after reading a chapter, he would research everything about the chapter and then execute it.

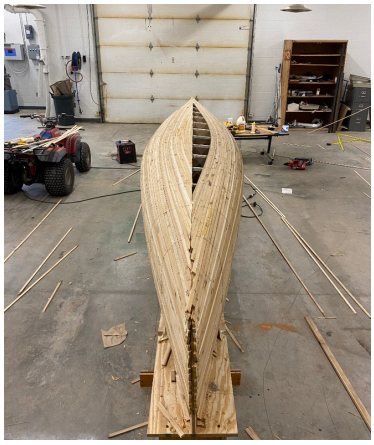
“Reading the book made it feel less like the giant project of building a canoe and more like sub-divided projects. It is step by step; for example, one day, I might break up strips from a two-by-four, then route an edge, and next, I will glue the strips together. You must subdivide each step because if you take it all on at once, it is too much for your brain to comprehend,” explained Curran.

Curran obtained all the cedar required to build the canoe from a nearby supplier, Hawleywood Lumber Company. The overall cost for constructing the canoe was between $1,000 and $1,300, although he believes several minor expenses might not be accounted for in that range.

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The wood used for the canoe paddles was donated. Additionally, Curran used the Industrial Tech equipment at Lake Park Audubon High School, which he accessed free of charge. He estimates that he dedicated over 300 hours to the canoe's construction.

There were several highs and lows and valuable learning moments when errors occurred. Some strips from the hull had to be redone. "The project required much patience. I realized that while it's possible to push through fatigue, knowing when to stop for the day is essential. You can easily find yourself working endlessly, which leads to careless results. Instead, it's better to go home, rest, and return to produce higher quality work," shared Curran.

TWO Crucial Elements

Curran continued explaining that two crucial elements exist in constructing a canoe. The first is known as the “whiskey strip.” This is the final strip added when assembling the hull. It requires considerable effort to position correctly, as it must be placed perfectly on the first attempt. If it’s not done right, you'll need to disassemble it, resulting in a lot of extra work. He managed to get it right on his first try.

The second phase involves the main journey and launching the canoe into the water for the first time.

Curran expressed that he experienced considerable anxiety leading up to the voyage, worrying, “I’ve invested a year in this project, and what if it doesn’t float…?” It was a solo expedition, and his mother filmed the experience. “You could see the moment I sat down, and my shoulders relaxed in relief, realizing the project was successful and the 50 lb. canoe was indeed floating.”

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From Left: Janelle Hueners, Lake Park Audubon High School Ag Teacher, and Collin Curran, Lake Park Audubon High School Senior

Curran's parents were incredibly supportive, providing both encouragement and financial assistance to help bring the project to completion.

Curran shared that his Ag teacher, Janelle Hueners, was instrumental in helping him succeed in the canoe project. Hueners shared that when Collin first discussed the idea of building a canoe, she told him to come up with a list of supplies and a plan, and a few days later, he was back with the plans and a quote for lumber. She saw that he was serious and was excited to see his enthusiasm to work on a large project. While not having a background in canoe building, Hueners shared that it was hard to say no, and she was looking forward to learning alongside Curran.

"It's been great to see the project come together and the photos of him successfully getting on the water. That was a very proud moment for me as his teacher," said Hueners. "Collin has inspired many other students in the school who felt they could not do a project like that but now feel they have permission to do a unique project.

Students are now considering how to level up their projects and consider an Independent Study class to help them move toward a more complicated and bigger project."

Curran is thrilled about the wealth of knowledge he has acquired, the relationships he has built, and the fact that he now owns a canoe.

"It's a fantastic addition to your resume," Curran remarked. He referred to a price quote from J-Stroke Handcrafts, noting that a new canoe of this quality starts at a base price of $9,750.

Curran revealed that he originally aspired to become a pilot, but that dream is no longer feasible due to his recent diagnosis. He is interested in crafting canoes, although the current market conditions present challenges. After graduating in the spring of 2025, he is considering attending college at North Dakota State University and exploring an Emergency Management career.

Curran's most significant lesson from this project is the importance of dedicating time to tasks and gradually making progress. He ended by saying, "Take on that thing! You may never get another chance to do it!"



Lakes Country Service Cooperative

2025 Board Election



Ashby School District Board Member Suzanne Wing and Parkers Prairie Public Schools Board Member Judith Moeller were successful in their bids for re-election.

LCSC welcomes Moorhead Area Public Schools Board Member Scott Steffes and Alexandria Public Schools Board Member Maureen Eigen to their first terms on the LCSC Board. Fergus Falls City Council Member James Fish was re-appointed to a one-year term.

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2025 LCSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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