Southeast Service Cooperative

Connections

October 2024

Changemaker Hub Program P2



Internships Available on FutureForward P9



We Share Solar Program Highlights P15





Inspiring Success



FutureForward™

WORLD SAVVY

A career-connected learning experience for high school students in SE MN.

Southeast Service Cooperative

in partnership with our generous sponsors: FutureForward and World Savvy



Future of Work, Future of Schools

Tuesday, November 19, 2024
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

at the Southeast Service Cooperative's Wood Lake Meeting Center in Rochester

FREE TO PARTICIPATE
(includes lunch and refreshments)

Leveraging World Savvy's expert facilitation and Knowledge-to-Action process, a Changemaker Hub is an innovative design thinking experience. Participating high school students will be joined by educators, school administrators, community partners, and business professionals to think critically and creatively about how schools can and should best prepare students for the future.

IN ACTION VIDEO
bit.ly/FFchangemaker

REGISTER NOW
bit.ly/FFCHregister

1 STUDENT COLLABORATION

World Savvy facilitators teach skills to help students use their own lived experiences as well as new information that they gather to think critically and creatively about what school can and should look like to best prepare our youth to be ready for their future careers!

2 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

While the students collaborate, adults engage in professional learning around workforce readiness competencies and how to facilitate active learning experiences that build on students' interests, elevate their voices, and develop the essential skills we know young people need.

3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A big part of this day is the dialogue that takes place between adults and youth. Business and community leaders, educators and administrators, and students from across multiple districts or schools will engage in conversation to learn from and with one another.



FutureForward™

WORLD SAVVY

October 11, 2024 - Deadline to Indicate Intent to Participate

Email khartman@ssc.coop with the following information:

- Y/N commitment that your district intends to participate.
- Identify 1-2 key district contacts and provide name, title, email, and phone.
- Indicate your group size preference. Groups can range in size from 8 students along with 2 adults, up to 32 students with 8 adults.

October 14, 2024 - SSC District Min/Max Group Size Assignments

Once preferences are reviewed, SSC will assign a pre-determined number of seats to each participating district. This number will be communicated via email to each district's key contact(s).

October 15, 2024 - NOON - Virtual District Launch Meeting - https://zoom.us/j/4231381073

Our World Savvy friends will meet with whomever will be coordinating student registration on behalf of your high school should join our World Savvy friends to dig into the details for identifying and signing up students. We will also ask for suggestions for community members to invite!

District Participant Selection and Preparation

As you focus on identifying and inviting students to participate, we recommend targeting students with a breadth of lived experience, ideally in grades 10 or 11. Total team composition should be approximately 75% students and 25% adults. Of the adult contingent, aim for half to be educators and half to be community members. SSC staff will assist with identifying and inviting invested business advocates in your community!

November 12, 2024 - Registration Deadline - bit.ly/FFCHregister

At this point, you'll be entering information for each individual participant, including name, grade level or title, email, and any dietary restrictions.

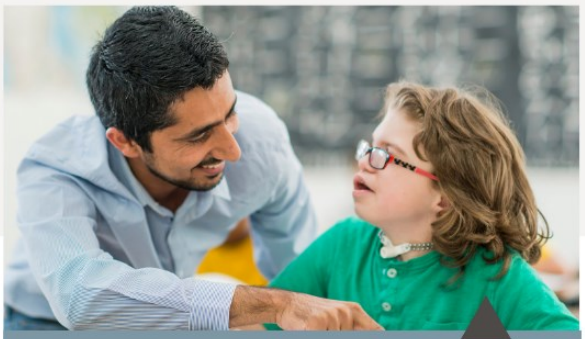
Spotlight on

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Paraprofessional recognition week is the last week of January each year.

The most essential people in a school building are often the ones who work behind the scenes. Great paraprofessionals not only keep daily operations running smoothly but also create an environment where every child feels supported, valued, and cared for. School administrators and teachers know that great paras are hard to find and even harder to hold onto.

One way to ensure that your paras are performing at their best is to provide high quality, easily accessible, and relevant professional development. According to LinkedIn Learning's 2024 report, 70% of employees say learning opportunities enhance their connection to their organization. Moreover, 94% of employees say they are likely to stay longer with companies that invest in their professional growth.



120+

PARAEDUCATOR LICENSES

In the past year, over 120 paraprofessionals in SE Minnesota have utilized this program.

Don't miss out—enroll today!

PARAEDUCATOR

ParaEducator, offered by Master Teacher, provides access to over 110 online courses, covering a broad range of topics including behavior management, strategies for working with diverse disabilities, age-specific guidance, and academic subject reviews. These resources equip paraprofessionals to support individual students and small groups, helping them thrive academically and socially.

SSC is your regional source for ParaEducator from MasterTeacher.com. Contact Christi Fosland for a tour of the site and a full list of online professional development courses available. Individuals seeking a job as a paraprofessional can upskill and pass necessary assessments in preparation for interviews and job applications. Organizations can provide professional development and proctor assessments at your site when it works for your schedule.

ParaEducator ONLINE TRAINING



CUSTOM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SSC also offers in-person training for paraprofessionals. Our custom PD offerings are designed to meet the needs of the audience.

- *Christine Gregory* is available to help paras navigate Artificial Intelligence as it changes the teaching and learning landscape.
- *Angie Ellsworth* from TimeOut Behavior Coaching can help your paras manage behavior in any school setting, from one-to-one intervention to playground supervision.

Have another idea? Let us know, and we'll work with our team to create the perfect solution.



Contact Christi Fosland at cfosland@ssc.coop or (507)281-6684 to plan professional development for your paras.

Welcome to SSC!



Jen Bayley

COMPASS Regional Literacy Network Coach

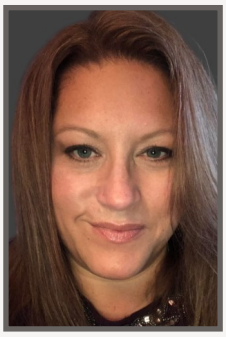
Jen has worked in the field of education for over 23 years. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Gustavus Adolphus College, her Masters in Educational Leadership from Argosy University, a second Masters in Curriculum and Instruction from Argosy University, and her Principal K-12 licensure from Winona State University. She is presently finishing up her superintendent's licensure and Ed D from Winona State University. Jen has successfully worked in various district leadership positions, and also has experience as an elementary teacher (Fox 9 Teacher of the Year nominee), literacy coach, and turnaround specialist. When not working, Jen loves spending time with her wonderful husband, whom she has been happily married to for the past 21 years. She also loves watching football (Go Broncos!), going for Jeep cruises, spending time and with friends and family, and snuggling up with her three fur babies. Jen is passionate about helping all students succeed and looks forward to working with you!



Jessica Denter

COMPASS Regional MnMTSS Lead

Jessica Denter has been in public education for 20 years now. Her journey includes being a middle school English teacher in San Antonio, Texas, a high school English teacher in Rochester, MN, a middle school reading interventionist and an instructional coach in Kasson-Mantorville and over the past 6 years has served as the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment in Byron Public Schools. She earned her bachelors degree in secondary education from Winona State University in 2003, then went on to obtain her Masters of Arts in Literacy and Reading license from Hamline University in 2012. Her work as an instructional coach then prompted her to go back and get her K-12 Principal-Administration degree from University of Minnesota Mankato in 2017. Jessica is passionate about ensuring ALL students get the supports they need to be successful along with building teacher and leadership capacity to ensure systems are working to break down barriers and provide access for all learners. Jessica lives in Kasson with her husband and four busy children.



Christine Meshak

COMPASS Regional Literacy Network Coach

Christine was a CLSD Grant Literacy Coach Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) before transitioning to the Southeast Service Coop as a COMPASS Regional Literacy Coach in 2024. During her time at MDE, she was part of the Literacy Unit co-charged with informing and carrying out the 2023 MN READ Act legislation. Her passion is bringing culturally and linguistically responsive education to our MN students through coaching Pre-K-12 educators in evidence-based literacy practices through a structured literacy approach and coaching school leadership in system level continuous improvement through the MnMTSS Framework. Christine was also an elementary classroom and Middle School Language Arts teacher for 17 years. As a teacher, she discovered her love for curriculum work and supporting other teachers and earned a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from St. Mary's University. She served 6 years as elementary school Principal and worked in higher education at St. Paul College as a Curriculum Associate. She enjoys biking, gardening, the child-like freedom of being an empty-nester, spending time with family and friends, and everything music.



Gina Morken

COMPASS Regional Supervisor

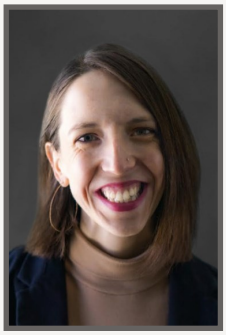
Gina joined SSC to help lead the COMPASS and READ Act support system for southeast Minnesota. Prior to this position, Gina was the Assistant Superintendent and Transformational Leader in Spring Grove, MN where she supported student-centered and human-centered systems. She is a big picture and innovative thinker with experience as an educator and leader in public and charter schools, non-profit and community organizations, and as an adjunct professor and university supervisor in higher education. She has experiences with place-based and multi-disciplinary learning, competency-based systems, Montessori education, whole child learning and co-design of learning experiences. Outside of work, Gina enjoys adventures with her children. She loves to travel both nationally and internationally. She lives in Spring Grove where she enjoys connecting with farm life.



Kristina Robertson

Multilingual Education Specialist

Kristina Robertson is a Multilingual Education Specialist with the SSC Project Momentum team. She has 28 years of teaching and leadership experience in English learner programming and instruction. She has a Masters in TESOL from the School for International Training and is completing her doctorate in Educational Leadership for Diverse Learning Communities at Molloy University. She has been an English language program district leader in Roseville Area Schools and Saint Paul Public Schools. However, her passion is teaching, and she teaches adults part-time in St. Paul at the Hubbs Center and as adjunct faculty of an ESL Methods course at Hamline University. As an MLL Education Specialist at SSC she is developing a comprehensive curriculum and resource instructional library to provide easy-access to standards aligned language curriculum. Her strengths include positivity, community-building, empathy, and creativity. Her professional experience as an author and presenter will enhance the collaborative work on this grant. In her spare time, she enjoys crocheting, quilting, puzzles, camping, hiking, reading and watching British shows. Kristina lives in St. Paul, MN with her husband, Paul. Their six children are grown and living their dreams, so Kristina has filled the home with two rescue pups and two cozy calico cats.



Merissa Russie

Licensure Pathways Specialist

Merissa Russie is the Multilingual Education Licensure Specialist for Project MOMENTUM and an accomplished educational leader specializing in multilingual learner education and program development. She began her career as an English Language Development teacher in Minnesota's northern suburbs before teaching dual-identified MLLs in a district serving primarily students in Setting IV Special Education and Alternative Learning. Transitioning to a charter school in her neighborhood of South Minneapolis, Merissa developed a large and thriving program for multilingual learners, emphasizing co-teaching and collaboration. Merissa also managed a Grow Your Own grant which aims to increase the number of licensed staff of color by providing significant financial assistance for teacher preparation programs in Minnesota. Merissa's dedication to education has taken her around the world, including teaching experiences in Jordan and Palestine, as well as with adult learners in the Twin Cities. Merissa holds a K-12 School Principal License, an M.S. in Community & Social Services, and a B.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language. Passionate about advocating for multilingual learners, Merissa excels in instruction, program design, and professional learning. She is committed to enhancing educational outcomes and supporting educators in their development.

Kari Kubicek Promoted to Regional Funding Manager



SSC staff member Kari Kubicek has recently taken on a new role at SSC as the regional funding manager and is responsible for identifying, applying for, and managing grant initiatives to build on current and future programming. If interested in having an SSC faculty member facilitate professional development at your organization, please get in touch with **Christi Fosland**, SSC's educational support coordinator. If you have questions related to SSC regional PD offerings, please contact **Amy Grover**, associate director at SSC.



This summer, SSC Board Chair Bree Maki was the recipient of the Minnesota Service Cooperatives Outstanding Service Award. This award honors individuals who exemplify leadership and the contributions that further the mission of their service cooperative. This description perfectly fits Bree, who is a terrific champion of SSC's mission and vision.

Congratulations Bree - we are so proud of you and appreciate your service at Southeast Service Cooperative!

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

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



Finding Their Metier:

Southeast Minnesota Teachers Dive Into Innovative Middle School Career Exploration

By Sarah Ness



Imagine a classroom where students aren't just learning facts about industry, but exploring their passions and discovering what careers might make them come alive. That's the goal of the Metier program, a new experiential learning and lifestyle design curriculum piloted in Southeast Minnesota.

What is Metier?

Métier (pronounced meh-tee-ay) is a French word meaning "occupation or activity that one does well; a calling." The Metier program, designed for grades 5-8, uses activities and games to guide students on a journey of self-discovery. Through this process, students:

- Identify their strengths and interests
- Explore different career clusters
- Develop essential life skills
- Design a future that aligns with their passions

Pilot Program Takes Flight

In August, a dedicated group of Southeast Minnesota teachers from 7th and 8th grade classrooms from Houston/MNVA, Pine Island, and Spring Grove participated in a pilot program and Metier training session in Rochester. The training equipped them with the knowledge and tools to facilitate the program in their classrooms, helping students navigate the exciting world of career exploration.



Thank You!

- Thank you to the Metier trainers for their expertise and guidance: Jordan Heroman and Kevin Votaw.
- Thank you to the participating teachers for their dedication and enthusiasm: Peter Johnson, Luke Kjelland, Tracy Lermon, Michael Mangen, and Weston Riley.
- Thank you to the Minnesota Service Cooperatives for your financial support from the MN CTE grant.

Join the Waitlist!

The Metier pilot program is creating a buzz, and with good reason. If you're an educator interested in bringing this innovative program to your school, **email** Sarah Ness.

In the meantime, we encourage you to learn more about Metier by clicking **here**.

Internships Now Available on Future*Forward*!

By: Sarah Ness

Youth, internship coordinators, and parents can now check out industry led paid internships at **www.futureforward.org/jobs**.

Last spring, **Mayo Clinic**, **The Hormel institute**, and **Dodge Center Ambulance** piloted internship postings on Future*Forward*. The goal was to host nine internships during the summer of 2024. In one month, the three posts yielded 1,100 views and 660 clicks to view the full posting. The employers were so thrilled with the traffic, they found more professionals to lead internships. We surpassed our goal and we were able to support 14 paid internships!



Photo credit Mayo Clinic

FutureForward™

Let's get connected!

Please share this resource with your students! Current school year internships are now live! Please share this resource with your business partners! It's free to market a paid internship, mentorship, or job shadow on the website. Each month SSC will highlight internships in the *Career-Connected Learning Quick Connect* newsletter.

Current Internships:

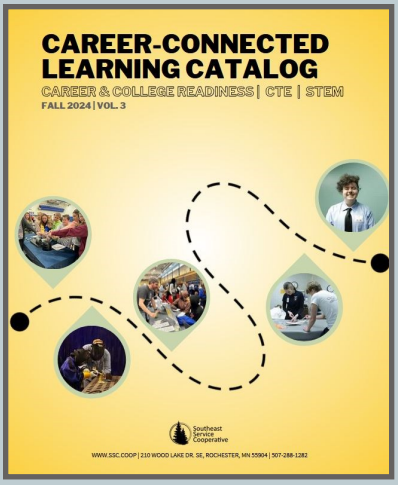
Engineering Internship | Flex Craft | Post available through 10/15

***Note for employers, please reach out to your local workforce center for information on their youth programming grant funds to pay for student wages. Contact Megan Horton for WDI information (mhorton@wdimn.org).*

Career Connected Learning Catalog

Tired of sifting through endless resources for career-connected learning? Look no further! Our **Career-Connected Learning Catalog** is your go-to hub for the latest awards, educator professional development, grant opportunities, resources, and youth experiences from trusted community partners like Perkins, Southeast Service Cooperative, Workforce Development Inc., and more!

Stay in the know with regular updates on the hottest trends, innovative programs, and inspiring stories. Whether you're a student, educator, or industry professional, this catalog has something for everyone.



Sponsor Career-Connected Learning and Empower Youth

By Sarah Ness



Are you passionate about fostering a thriving community and investing in the future of our region?

Southeast Service Cooperative's Career-Connected Learning Solutions (CCLS) is dedicated to bridging the gap between businesses and the future workforce. We believe in empowering young people with the skills and opportunities they need to succeed.

Did you know that the average cost per hire for one position is nearly $4,700?

By investing in CCLS, you can:

- **Build your talent pipeline**
  Gain access to a pool of qualified and motivated students interested in your field.
- **Reduce recruitment costs**
  Connect with potential employees early on and save time and money.
- **Enhance your brand awareness**
  Showcase your company as a leader in workforce development.
- **Invest in innovation**
  Benefit from fresh ideas and perspectives brought by CCLS interns and mentees.
- **Maximize your ROI**
  Build a strong talent pipeline for years to come.

How can you support CCLS?

- **Become a CCLS sponsor**
  Invest in our programs and gain access to a pool of talented and motivated students.
- **Partner with us on career exploration events**
  Help us connect youth with local businesses and industries.
- **Donate to CCLS**
  Your financial support will help us expand our reach and impact more lives.
- **Share CCLS with your network**
  Spread the word about our programs with your staff (who are parents in your local community) and encourage others to get involved.

Together, we can make a difference!

By supporting CCLS, you're not just investing in the future of our youth, but also in the prosperity of our entire community. Join us in creating a brighter tomorrow for Southeast Minnesota.

View this brief video to learn more.

For more information, click here or contact Sarah Ness.

Bridging the Gap: Expanding High-Quality Instructional Resources for Multicultural Learners in Minnesota

By Claudia Tabini

As one of the fastest-growing student populations in the state, multilingual learners face significant barriers due to inadequate instructional resources. According to the 2023 Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) report, there are 77,473 students, or 8.9% of the total student population identified as English Learners in the state.

While Minnesota has a strong statutory foundation for improving instruction for multilingual learners, the professional capacity for supporting these students has some considerable gaps, with up to 55% of educators reporting not feeling prepared to work with multilingual learners (2022 MNSPIRE). The academic outcomes of multilingual students also reflect this opportunity gap: the graduation rate for multilingual learners across the state is 63.4%, significantly lower than the four-year graduation rate for all students which is 83.3% (Minnesota Report Card, MDE, 2024). When it comes to language development growth, only 28.91% of English Learners are meeting or exceeding their language growth targets (MDE, 2023). The limited progress toward language proficiency and the low graduation rates for multilingual learners suggest that systemic changes are needed to support multilingual learners in Minnesota. One high-leverage factor that can impact system-wide school improvement is high-quality instructional materials.

As part of SSC's commitment to high-quality education for all, Project MOMENTUM is excited to partner with Closing Educational Opportunity Gaps (CEOG) from MDE to design and disseminate a curriculum overlay that aligns with WIDA English Language Development Standards and with Minnesota State Standards in content areas. Through the CEOG initiative period, SSC will develop a series of toolkits for educators, administrators, and families of multilingual learners to advance more equitable instructional practices through high-quality instructional materials. This grant project will support schools by providing resources built on principles of reciprocal development and designed to advance much-needed conversations about the quality and relevance of instructional materials. The identification of high-quality instructional materials for multilingual learners as the focus for this initiative was informed by collaborative efforts with multiple stakeholders. Through Project MOMENTUM, SSC regularly engages with teachers of multilingual learners through professional learning. Collective feedback from project participants, along with statewide surveys and research reports from Wilder Research have continued to highlight the need for greater attention on resources for multilingual learner programs. In greater Minnesota, the need for high-quality instructional resources is compounded by increasingly challenging staffing issues for K-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.



During this two-year grant initiative, Kristina Robertson, SSC's new Multilingual Curriculum Education Specialist, will spearhead these efforts. With almost 30 years of ESL teaching and leadership experience in Minnesota, Kristina sees SSC's efforts as key to addressing teacher shortages and increasing academic achievement for students identified as English Learners. In her new role, Kristina is determined to make a difference for educators and multilingual learners and looks forward to leveraging our collective brainpower to access quality language instruction materials. Her focus will be on collaborating with educators to develop lessons, materials, and guidance that are user-friendly, turn-key, practical, and easily implementable in a variety of educational settings

If you have questions about the CEOG grant or want to reach out with resources, please contact Kristina Roberston.

For more information on Project MOMENTUM, click here.

Southeast Minnesota School Crisis Response Team

By Nicole LaChapelle-Strumski

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

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

There are currently 15 professionals (school social workers, counselors, public health nurses, etc.) who serve on the SCRT.

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

If you have questions about the school crisis response team, or are interested in becoming a team member, please contact the team coordinator, Nicole LaChapelle-Strumski.

omada

Minnesota Healthcare Consortium

Medica.

Foods that Fuel Immunity Webinar with Omada

November 13 at 11:30 a.m. CT

Join Omada to discuss how some of our food choices can help support both our immune health and overall health.

With Omada®, you'll have help to create healthy habits to manage both conditions and improve your overall health.

Register Today Here



A Vision for 2024-2025

By Sarah Ness

This year, the STEM Forward Full Advisory Committee is excited to expand on our continued programming and introduce new initiatives! Participants can look forward to:

- **Computer Science Cohorts**
  Engage in peer-to-peer professional development and learning aligned with the Minnesota Department of Education's Computer Science Plan.
- **Solar Suitcase Pilot**
  A pilot program where schools integrate STEM learning and social impact by engaging students in renewable energy curriculum and equipment while partnering with energy-scarce communities in Africa. *A waitlist is now available for new teachers/schools looking to utilize the Solar Suitcase Lending Library.*
- **Full Advisory Presentations**
  Each meeting will showcase innovation happening in our schools and community.
- **STEM Micro-Internships**
  Funding is now available through our grant partners to help catalyze micro-internships in STEM fields. .

Not part of STEM Forward? Join us for in-person and virtual gatherings to help build STEM capacity and opportunity in your community. **Contact** Sarah Ness for more information.

Welcome New STEM Forward Executive Committee Members

Kyle Casper



Kyle is an Instructional Facilitator for Secondary Science and Math at Rochester Public Schools. He taught secondary science in rural Alaska and Rochester, Minnesota for a combined sixteen years. His approach to teaching involves creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment that encourages students to ask questions, explore, and investigate. In his current role, he facilitates teacher professional development and the implementation of new curriculum, standards, and teaching strategies. Kyle also serves on the Minnesota Science Teachers Association Board as the Region 10 Representative, He has a BS in Science Education from St Cloud State University and an MS in Science Education from Montana State University, Bozeman.

Megan Horton



Megan oversees the youth programs at Workforce Development Inc. in southeast Minnesota. Megan shared, “Our program helps remove barriers for youth to find gainful employment in high demand high wage career fields. We aim to help youth explore careers and pursue their interests.” Megan added, “I am excited to serve on the STEM Forward Executive Committee to advance career opportunities in emerging STEM fields.”

Amy Thuesen



Amy leads the Technology Integration program at Austin Public Schools. As a Technology Director, she plays a pivotal role in ensuring technology is effectively integrated into the classroom. She works closely with her team and teachers, providing professional development and support to enhance their use of technology for teaching and learning. Amy's expertise in various technology areas, combined with her passion for educational innovation, makes her a valuable asset to STEM Forward’s Executive Committee.

STEM FORWARD

2024-2025 OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025
5:30-7:30 PM

For 33 years, we've been recognizing our area's best educators. Join STEM Forward in celebrating a teacher who fosters high K-12 student achievement, exhibits leadership and support for continuous improvement, promotes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers, and demonstrates collaboration among K-12 schools, businesses, and higher education.

NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE TODAY!

The submission deadline is December 1, 2024.



STEM Forward Lights Up Solar Education with We Share Solar!

By Sarah Ness



STEM Forward is thrilled to announce a groundbreaking partnership with We Share Solar, bringing a new Solar Suitcase Lending Library directly to your classrooms. These portable solar labs, packed with educational resources, offer a unique opportunity to transform your science lessons.

Here's what you can explore:

- **Free Program**
  Did you participate in our recent We Share Solar training? If so, you're eligible to borrow a solar suitcase for a two-week period during the upcoming school year. Utilize the engaging We Share Solar curriculum to guide your students on a journey of discovery!
- **Empowering Young Minds**
  Delve into the world of solar energy! Students will explore its applications, its role in combating climate change, and even contribute to a global cause by building a solar suitcase for an energy-scarce community in Africa.
- **Top-Notch Curriculum**
  The curriculum has received the thumbs-up from Rochester Public Utilities, a long-standing supporter of STEM education. This ensures you have a high-quality learning experience ready to roll!
- **Unlock Grant Potential**
  The Solar for Schools grant program offered by the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTS) can help bring solar power directly to your school! Peter Lindstrom, CERTS contact, recently presented on the grant application process. The We Share Solar curriculum meets the required standards for teaching renewable energy in schools that pursue the grant.

Ready to Light Up Your Classroom?

If you'd like to be notified about training opportunities for the summer of 2025 to utilize the Solar Suitcase Lending Library next school year, please contact STEM Forward.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to illuminate the future of science education with your students!

Explore these resources

- **Learn more** about the Solar for Schools Grant Program
- **Join** the vibrant STEM Forward Network for educators!

The program made national news!

we share solar®

CTE in Every Classroom Teacher Externship Pilot Soars!

By Sarah Ness

We're excited to share an update on the innovative CTE in Every Classroom Teacher Externship pilot program, a collaboration between the Minnesota Centers of Excellence, Southeast Service Cooperative's STEM Forward, and the MN STEM Ecosystem.

This program empowers grade 5-12 teachers (from art to science!) to integrate real-world, trades-based skills into their curriculum.

Here's a glimpse into the success so far:

- **Engaged Educators**
  Our pilot cohort of 10 teachers participated in virtual and in-person professional development, including a hands-on day in St. Charles at CHS.
- **Learning by Doing**
  Teachers practiced mock externships, participated in design thinking exercises, and collaborated on interdisciplinary curriculum connected to agriculture, engineering, and energy.
- **Free Resource Integration**
  Teachers learned about **Future*Forward*** a free platform to find externship providers, industry professionals, and career pathway resources. This will help them further enhance their classrooms!

What's next?

These passionate educators are now conducting externships in their chosen fields. Their journey culminates at the **Career and Technical Education Summit** (Nov 19 -20) where they'll share their experiences through breakout sessions.



Isaac Ydste, Kasson-Mantorville, presenting to the cohort at CHS in St. Charles in August.

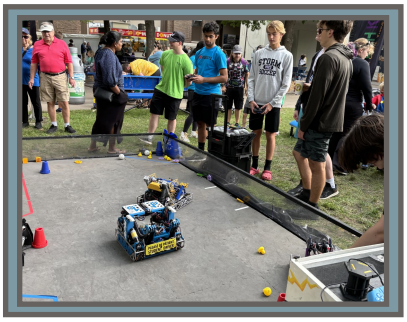
Inspired to Get Involved?

Future*Forward* is a fantastic resource for ALL Minnesota educators! Don't see your industry listed? No problem! Utilize the Future*Forward* **"Contact Us"** page and our statewide team will work their magic to find relevant connections and resources.

Register to attend the Career and Technical Education Summit.

STEMtastic Success at the State Fair

By Sarah Ness



We're thrilled to share a roaring success story from this year's STEM Day at the Minnesota State Fair, hosted by SciMathMN, where our very own STEM Forward team proudly volunteered and read the Governor's STEM Day proclamation on the Dan Patch Park stage.

This year marked a momentous milestone - the 15th anniversary of STEM Day at the Fair! Despite some rainy challenges, the event was a huge success, captivating thousands of curious minds and leaving a lasting impression on families.

One grateful parent, Erin Anderson de Laffitte, perfectly encapsulates the magic of the day:

> *"My family of 3 boys are still talking about all the displays and experiments they participated in. Everyone working was so engaging and patient. Every booth had interesting content and activities. Wow! Bravo!"*

Erin's story highlights the heart of why STEM Forward participates in STEM Day at the Minnesota State Fair. It's about igniting a passion for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in our youth, fostering a love for learning through interactive experiences, and reaching parents to empower their children to engage in STEM.



Educators Learn Practical Strategies at AI Summit

By Emily Saed

The Minnesota STEM Ecosystem and the Minnesota State Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence recently hosted the AI Education Summit at Bemidji State University. With a focus on equipping educators and STEM program providers with the knowledge and tools necessary to incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) into their curricula, the summit was designed to prepare students for success in an increasingly digital and AI-driven economy.

As AI continues to shape the future workforce, the demand for AI literacy has never been greater. According to a recent survey conducted by aiEDU, 75% of educators and administrators agree that AI-related materials should be integrated into school lesson plans. However, many also admitted to limited familiarity with generative AI tools, with 45% of respondents reporting never having used generative AI tools, despite recognizing their potential impact on education.

The AI Summit aimed to bridge this gap by providing educators with practical strategies for integrating AI into their classrooms. Supported by TIES Teach, a national organization fostering STEM education ecosystems across the country, the Summit offered hands-on breakout sessions, expert-led workshops, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

The AI Summit concluded with a dynamic panel discussion centered on the theme of "The Impact of CS and AI in Education and Workforce Development." The expert panelists explored the evolving role of AI and computer science in shaping future workforce needs, and discussed innovative strategies to bridge education and industry, to foster talent and a savvy workforce for Minnesota's future.

The AI Education Summit showcased the importance of AI integration in schools and its potential to impact education and workforce development.

Click here to learn more about the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem.

MN STEM Statewide Convening - October 14

By Emily Saed

The Minnesota STEM Ecosystem is uniquely positioned to develop statewide equity-centered strategies. Over the past year, the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem has developed a strong cross-sector, cross-system network of business and industry, education, government, afterschool programs, museums, non-profit and community organization. Join us as we bring together folks from across the state on October 14th from 1 – 4:30 pm at Dean Lakes Education Center in Shakopee, for our Statewide STEM Convening.

Highlights include:

Small Group Discussions: Inclusive Environments, Fund Development, STEM Program Alignment, Volunteer and Participant Engagement, and Building Partnerships.

Breakout Sessions:

- **Developing Effective STEM Networks**
  (presented by the MN STEM Ecosystem and Ignite Afterschool)
  Looking for STEM activities, tools and resources in your area? This session is for you! Learn about the outcomes, challenges and opportunities during the asset mapping pilot project over the past year, next steps and how you can play a role in your regional network!
- **Building Forward Discussion**
  (a focus group by SciMathMN) Meet with the SciMathMN Board of Directors as they chart a course forward to better serve STEM educators and learners.
- **Empowering students to Create with Technology with Code Clubs**
  (presented by the Raspberry Pi Organization)
  Did you know Minnesota was chosen as one of only two states to have the Raspberry Pi Foundation invest in computer science education? If you want to learn more and hear what they are doing and HOW you can be a part of it- this session is for you!

The day will conclude with a panel discussion: **Meet the Minnesota State Centers of Excellence** Did you know Minnesota State hosts eight Centers of Excellence? Agriculture, Energy, Engineering, Healthforce, IT, Advanced Manufacturing, and Transportation - each serves a major industry that faces serious workforce challenges. The centers collaborate with industry and educators to attract and prepare students for success in high-demand careers. All of the Centers engage in both outreach and professional development opportunities!

*Learn more and register **here**.*

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Cooperative Purchasing News

Tremco: Get the Indoor Air Quality Answer Book for Schools

Prioritizing indoor air quality in schools is not just a matter of compliance, it's an investment in the health and academic performance of students and staff. Experts from Tremco Roofing have compiled this "answer book" to address commonly asked questions about indoor air quality, including:

- What does the EPA say about indoor air quality?
- How do I evaluate indoor air quality in my facilities?
- What areas are prone to mold growth and what can be done to prevent it?
- What role does HVAC play in indoor air quality?
- How does the building envelope impact indoor air quality?
- What indoor air quality best practices should schools implement?



By taking a proactive approach, facility managers can ensure that their school buildings are well-prepared with optimal indoor air quality and a healthy and functioning HVAC system. Click **here** to download the IAQ Answer Book or visit this **webpage**.

Tremco was awarded a contract with Cooperative Purchasing Connection after going through the competitive sealed solicitation process. As part of their contract, they are able to bring in local subcontractors through the National Cooperative Contractor Network.

Watch a short video about Tremco Contract Network →

Learn more about CPC's contract with Tremco →

Help for Facility Managers from Hillyard



Facility managers often face the challenge of justifying the purchase of new cleaning equipment. With limited budgets and numerous demands, convincing upper management to invest in new machines can be challenging. However, by following a few tips and strategies, facility managers can make informed decisions and successfully justify their cleaning machine purchase.

- Start with a thorough analysis of your current process
- Calculate the equipment return on investment (ROI)
- Consider other factors besides the purchase price
- Think about the entire cleaning process, not just the equipment function
- Consider leasing versus buying equipment
- Ask for help

Read through every step of the process in the full article →

When purchasing Hillyard products through the CPC Contract you receive 21% off of the entire Nilfisk-Advance catalog, remain in compliance with federal and state procurement laws and guidelines, and support public nonprofit service cooperatives.

Remember to reference contract number **AEPA 023-B** on all purchases through Hillyard.

Learn more about CPC's contract with Hillyard →

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

Tips on Providing a Safe Classroom

By Chris Berry
Senior Environmental Technician, IEA, Inc.

Ensuring safety in the classroom is crucial for a productive learning environment. Adhere to these guidelines to prevent accidents and maintain a secure space for students and staff.



Electrical Safety

- Inspect cords for damage; do NOT use if ground prong is missing.
- Use extension cords and power strips only temporarily, plug them directly into outlets, avoid running through doors, rugs, or walls, and ensure GFCI protection in wet areas; do NOT connect power strips or staple cords.
- Unplug appliances when not in use, avoid overloading outlets, ensure appliances are UL-rated, and keep electrical panels clear.
- Holiday lights must be temporary (90 days or less) and should be unplugged when not in use.

Preventing Falls

- Do not use chairs, especially those with caster wheels, to reach objects; use a proper ladder instead.
- Keep walkways clear of clutter and obstacles, including computer chargers, to prevent tripping hazards.

Fire Safety

- Do not block emergency exits; ensure they always remain easily accessible and unobstructed.
- Space heaters are required to have a tip-over safety shut-off feature that automatically turns off the heater if it tips over, reducing the risk of fire.
- Wax warmers and fragrance wax melters are prohibited in the classroom.

Chemical Safety

- All chemicals must be clearly labeled with their contents and hazards to ensure safe handling and identification, including spray bottles of water.
- Always consult with your school administration before bringing any outside chemicals into the classroom to ensure they are approved and safely managed.



For more information on school safety, call Angie Radel at the Institute for Environmental Assessment at 507-281-6682, or e-mail angie.radel@ieasafety.com.

SSC Board Actions and Information

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

April

- Approved the MOU with High Tech Kids for DEED internship grant.
- Accepted $1000 in sponsorship from Local 6 Plumbers and Pipefitters for the 2024 SE MN Student Welding Competition.
- Accepted $2500 in sponsorship from Ziegler Cat for the 2024 SE MN Welding Competition.
- Accepted $3000 in sponsorship from Mississippi Welders for the 2024 SE MN Welding Competition.
- Approved hiring Kari Kubicek as the Regional Funding Manager, shared 50/50 with the City of Farmington, effective May 1, 2024.
- Approved hiring Merissa Russie as the Licensure Pathway Specialist for Project MOMENTUM.
- Approved the Pay Equity Case Status and Compliance Results.
- Approved fees for 2024-2025.

May

- Approved the 2023 MHC Regional January 1 Pool Health Insurance Settlement.
- Approved an increase of 5% for 2024-2025 and 4% for 2025-2026 for both staff salaries and ranges, effective July 1, 2024, except for RCE Advocate positions, Merissa Russie, Kendra Katnik, and Kari Kubicek. *(Due to recent hiring/salary adjustments.)*
- Approved an increase of 3% to RCE Advocate staff salaries and a $5,000 increase for all of the COMPASS Lead Positions for 2024-2025, pending final approval of the budget by MDE.
- Approved an adjustment to Dr. Kendra Katnik's Project MOMENTUM salary, effective June 1, 2024.
- Approved policy changes to allow for a 205-day work year for COMPASS positions.
- Approved policy changes to extend full health insurance contributions at 0.70 FTE and above.
- Approved the hiring of all READ Act jobs.
- Approved the Memo of Understanding between High Tech Kids (Ignite Minnesota) and SSC.
- Approved acceptance of $656.03 for sponsorship of Middle School Career Academy from WBC.
- Approved acceptance of the 2-Year MDE CEOG Grant for $500,000.

June

- Approved the hiring of Jessica Denter, Jen Bayley, and Christine Meshak.
- Approved the 2024-2025 budget.
- Approved new associate membership for Shattuck St. Mary's School.

August

- Approved the contract for $45,000 with MSC to provide Future Forward support to participating MSCs.
- Approved a contract in the amount of $93,000 with MSC to provide CTE and Career-Connected Learning marketing and communication support at the statewide level.
- Approved the contract with Wilder Foundation for micro-credentialing for educators of multilingual learners.
- Approved the contract with Wilder Foundation for the Closing Education Opportunities Grant.
- Accepted funding from Mayo Clinic Community Contributions in the amount of $18,000 to support Mobile Science Lab and Career-Connected Learning student events.
- Approved agenda items 5.3.1 through 5.3.5. This included accept the resignation of Eli Zimmerman, approved transfer of Cindy Mullins from COMPASS Advocate to COMPASS Regional Literacy Coach, approved hiring of Kristina Robertson for curriculum specialist position, approved a salary adjustment for Nick Wobig, and approved a salary adjustment for Mike Schnell.
- Approved opening a 1.0 FTE Career-Connected Learning Specialist position.

September

- Accepted $750 from Mayo Community Contributions for the SE MN Together Housing Bus Tour.
- Accepted $1,000 from Bremer Bank of Austin for the SE MN Together Housing Bus Tour.
- Approved a $25,000 payment to Workforce Development for CTE work in the Bluff Country Collaborative.
- Approved the contract for Claudia Tabini for her continued work with Project MOMENTUM.
- Approved employee health plan cost share rates effective January 2025.

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

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

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Shaping the Future
for communities of leaders and learners

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