Southeast Service Cooperative

Connections

February 2025

School Mental Health Conference P2

Outstanding Educator Awards P6

Discover Healthcare Event Highlights P10









Resources in Action



Thursday, March 20, 2025
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

$25 Registration Fee
Lunch Sponsored by Medica

schedule and speakers are subject to change

SOUTHWEST WEST CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE
SWWC
Education & Administrative Resources
1420 East College Drive
Marshall, MN 56258

Register at bit.ly/register-swwc

Southeast Service Cooperative
210 Wood Lake Drive SE
Rochester, MN 55904

Register at bit.ly/register-ssc

SCSC South Central Service Cooperative
2075 Lookout Drive
North Mankato, MN 56003

Register at bit.ly/register-scsc

Keynote Spotlight:

We are excited to welcome Kathryn Goetzke, Founder, Chairman, and Chief Hope Officer at The Shine Hope Company. Kathryn is a leader in the science of hope, creator of the evidence-based college course *Hopeful Mindsets*, and founder of the nonprofit Ifred, which has developed award-winning programs like *Hopeful Minds* and *Hopeful Cities*. She is also the author of *The Biggest Little Book About Hope* and host of the podcast *The Hope Matrix*.

SHINE HOPE™





Keynote Spotlight:

The Professional Dangerousness Collective, co-founded by Jessica Hoeper of Ray of Hope and Brëanna McMullen of McMullen Consulting, offers enriched opportunities to explore the critical topic of Professional Dangerousness (PD). Grounded in real-life examples and shared challenges, their collaborative approach empowers meaningful, connective, and purposeful change. Experience their dedication to nurturing compassion in this session.

Project MOMENTUM: A Year of Growth

By Claudia Tabini

As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with gratitude and pride for a year that brought incredible growth and transformative milestones. From CEU courses to micro-credentials, presentations at professional conferences, and supporting educators as they seek their K-12 ESL Additional Licensure, our efforts are dedicated to providing equitable access to high-quality professional learning opportunities that improve instruction for multilingual learners.

Educators across Minnesota welcomed news about the approval of Project MOMENTUM's K-12 ESL Additional Licensure program by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) in November with great enthusiasm. The admissions process was highly competitive with 140 educators from across the state submitting their applications. Forty-one teachers started Project MOMENTUM's first cohort on January 6th. Additionally, our team is supporting 16 candidates through the process of obtaining their K-12 ESL Additional License via portfolio.

We now proudly offer 20 free high-quality, self-paced courses and six different paths for educators to obtain micro-credentials to demonstrate their expertise. Educators from over 200 school districts across the country have completed a cumulative total of 2,946 CEU completion hours. This year, our team had the opportunity to lead engaging professional development sessions at prestigious educational conferences, such as the 12th International Language Teacher Education Conference, Leading in Equity, Action, and Diversity (LEAD), Cradle to Career, MEA and MELEd conferences. Additionally, we were invited to a poster presentation at the Office of English Language Acquisition, National Professional Development Project Director's' Meeting in San Diego.



Our dedication to providing equitable access to high-quality professional development opportunities to educators to improve instruction for multilingual learners continues to be our guiding light. Thank you for being part of this very important journey. Together, we continue to transform education

Receive your insurance through MHC/Medica? Don't miss this incredible opportunity!



BONISM ID207 SMARTWATCH

The BONiSM is currently available in the Personify Health store. It is a budget-friendly smartwatch packed with features to help start and maintain a fitness journey. This smartwatch has tons of features including:

- 14 sports modes
- 24/7 heart rate monitoring
- Blood oxygen monitoring
- Easy to use VeryFit app for tracking metrics
- Tracked metrics: heart rate, sleep, steps, calories burned, distance, and active minutes
- Up to 8 days of charge
- Exercise modes: outdoor run, indoor run, outdoor walk, indoor walk, hiking, cross training, rowing and more
- Water resistant up to 50 meters
- Stopwatch & Timer
- Multiple personalization options like watch face options, adjustable brightness, and a variety of notifications

Exciting News for 2025!

Medica is offering a special subsidy on the **BONiSM ID207 Smartwatch**, available in the Personify Health store, for just $9.00.

Eligibility Details:

- My Health Rewards (MHR) members are eligible for one subsidized device while enrolled in the program.
- If you have not used your subsidy on a prior device, you can purchase the smartwatch for $9.00.
- If you have already used your subsidy, the smartwatch will be available for $19.99.

How to Purchase:

- Log into your MHR account. Medica.com/MyHealthRewards
- The "**Spend**" tab will appear if you have Pulse Cash available.
- If you do not have Pulse Cash, select "**More**", then navigate to the store from the dropdown menu.
- The smartwatch will initially display as $19.99 in the store.
- Once added to your cart, the price will automatically update to **$9.99 (plus tax)** at checkout. **Shipping is free**!

For any **questions or assistance** with your MHR account, please contact **Personify Health Member Services at 833-450-4074.**

SSC Awarded Wellness Honors

We're very proud of our culture at SSC. We place a high value on work-life harmony and offer our staff members a robust well-being program, that focuses on whole-person wellness. We feel very honored to have been named a Five-Star MSP Wellness Champion and to have once again been awarded Gold level status from the American Heart Association's Well-being Works Better Program.

msp Wellness CHAMPION

HEALTHY WORK CULTURE
American Heart Association. Well-being Works Better™
2024
GOLD

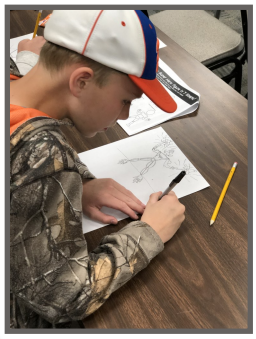
Save the date for the 38th Annual

Young Authors, Young Artists Conference

May 20-22, 2025

Young Authors Young Artists

Students in grades 3-5 are welcome to join in learning from over 14 professionals in their field. Some topics include: sculpting, comic drawing, creative storytelling, pastel and acrylic painting, origami, song writing, and so much more!









For more information please visit:
www.ssc.coop/student-programs/yaya

Southeast Minnesota School Crisis Response Team

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.

Southeast Minnesota School Crisis Response Team
Proudly Coordinated by Southeast Service Cooperative

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.

View this brief video to learn more.

Celebrating Southeast Minnesota's STEM Champions: Outstanding Educator Award Winners and Nominees

By Sarah Ness

STEM Forward is thrilled to announce the winners of the **2024-2025 Outstanding Educator Award**! This prestigious award recognizes educators who go above and beyond to inspire students, promote STEM excellence, and shape the future of science, technology, engineering, and math in southeast Minnesota.

Congratulations to Our Outstanding Educator Award Winners:



Sara Mangan
Goodhue Public Schools
Sara's creative teaching methods and problem-solving approach empower her students to embrace challenges and develop a love for STEM.



Denine Voegeli
Plainview-Elgin-Millville Public Schools
With a remarkable 30-year career, Denine inspires curiosity and environmental stewardship in her students through her passion for earth sciences.





Ashley Kaplan & Lindsey Hess
Kasson-Mantorville Public Schools
This innovative duo has revolutionized technology education, implementing advanced computer science curricula and fostering impactful industry partnerships.

Recognizing All Our Amazing Nominees

We also celebrate the contributions of all ten nominees, whose dedication and creativity are transforming STEM education:

- **Staci Waltman**, Albert Lea Public Schools
- **Riley Buchheit**, Stewartville Public Schools
- **Nick Richmond**, Red Wing Public Schools
- **Mark Poppe**, Austin Public Schools
- **Josh Burton**, Byron Public Schools
- **Jeff Jenson**, Albert Lea Public Schools

The 33rd Annual STEM Forward Gathering took place on February 12 at The Workshop in Rochester. This inspiring event honored our winners and nominees, provided opportunities to connect with fellow educators and community leaders, and showcased the impact of STEM education in our region.

This event is more than an awards ceremony—it's a tribute to the educators who inspire students to dream big, think critically, and achieve greatness. Whether you're an educator, business leader, or community member, your support helps amplify the impact of STEM in southeast Minnesota.

For more information on STEM Forward, contact **Sarah Ness at** sness@ssc.coop or visit **www.ssc.coop/stemforward**.

Let's celebrate the achievements of these exceptional educators and their contributions to building a brighter future!

Welcome to our new network partners Xcel Energy and Zumbro Education District!

*Click **here** to view all the current network members.*

AI Unleased 2025: Join the Educator Forum!

The **Educator Forum** is back on February 26 from 4:30-7:30 PM at the Wood Lake Meeting Center, and it's bigger and better than ever!

Experience the Power of AI and Explore Cutting-Edge STEM

We will delve into the exciting possibilities of artificial intelligence in education. From crafting personalized learning experiences for English Language Learners to making STEM accessible to all students, you'll discover how AI can revolutionize your classroom.

Featured Sessions:

- **AI + EL: Crafting the Perfect Prompts for Differentiated Language Learning:** Learn how to leverage AI to create customized learning materials for your diverse learners.
- **Breaking Barriers: Using AI to Make STEM Accessible to All:** Discover strategies to ensure all students, regardless of their background or learning style, can thrive in STEM.
- **Ethics & AI in the Classroom:** Explore the ethical considerations of AI in education and learn how to responsibly integrate AI tools into your teaching practices.
- **Visual Storytelling and Generative AI:** Unleash your students' creativity with hands-on activities using AI to create stunning digital stories.



Last year's Educator Forum

Beyond the Sessions:

- **Tech Playground:** Get hands-on with the latest STEM equipment and resources, including the Solar Suitcase Lending Library and First Robotics demonstrations and grants.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with other educators, share best practices, and build valuable relationships within the STEM community.
- **Continuing Education Units and Dinner Provided:** Free for educators from participating STEM Forward districts.

All are Welcome!

Whether you're a seasoned educator, a future teacher currently in high school, or simply passionate about STEM, the Educator Forum is for you.

Register Today!

****Don't miss this opportunity to:**

- **Gain valuable insights and practical strategies** to enhance your teaching.
- **Explore the latest advancements in STEM education.**
- **Connect with a vibrant community of educators.**
- **Elevate your teaching and inspire the next generation of learners.**

The Educator Forum has consistently received a World Class Net Promoter Score, a testament to its high-quality content and valuable impact on educators.

We look forward to seeing you there!

STEM FORWARD

Celebrating Our Sponsors:
Driving Career-Connected Learning in Southeast Minnesota

Thanks to the unwavering support of our industry and community sponsors, SSC brought in $1.9 million in additional resources to advance career-connected learning for students across Southeast Minnesota. These contributions help us inspire and prepare students, from elementary school to post-secondary, for the thriving careers of tomorrow.

This incredible impact would not be possible without the generosity and commitment of our partners. Whether through sponsorships, grants, or collaborative partnerships, your support ensures access to innovative programming, hands-on learning, and pathways to success for all students, including those in rural and economically disadvantaged communities.

A Special Thank You to Our 2023 and 2024 Grantors & Sponsors

We are grateful to the following organizations for their vital contributions:



Your generosity has been instrumental in fostering opportunities such as manufacturing tours, welding competitions, Solar Suitcase projects, and Future*Forward*™ career fairs. Together, we are building a stronger, more equitable future for the region's students.

Join Us in 2025

As we look ahead to 2025, SSC invites new and returning sponsors to partner with us in shaping the future workforce. By becoming a sponsor, you will:

- Support innovative, career-connected learning programs.
- Engage with students to inspire their career aspirations.
- Invest in the economic vitality of Southeast Minnesota.

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, complete our **online form** or visit the last page of our **online sponsorship catalog**.

Together, let's continue to empower the next generation of skilled professionals. Thank you for your dedication to advancing education and workforce readiness in our region!

Southeast Minnesota: A Hub for Manufacturing Careers

Manufacturing ranks as one of Southeast Minnesota's top industries, powering the region's economic success. With technological advancements and the opportunities created by the CHIPS Act, the demand for skilled workers in advanced manufacturing, trades, and fabrication is rapidly increasing. The Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC) is leading efforts to ensure students are not only prepared but inspired to pursue careers in this thriving sector.

A Holistic Approach to Career Preparation

SSC's innovative programming uses the 3E's Roadmap—Exploration, Exposure, and Experience—to connect students with the resources they need to succeed. Over 12,000 students have engaged in hands-on learning opportunities, including:

- **Manufacturing Month Tours**: Students explore local manufacturers, experiencing cutting-edge technologies and discovering career possibilities.
- **Future*Forward*™ Career, College, and Jobs Fair**: With over 1,400 students and 100 exhibitors in 2024, this event fosters meaningful connections between students, employers, and post-secondary institutions.
- **Future*Forward*™ Digital Platform**: This robust resource connects students with internships, career events, and industry professionals. The platform has hosted 460+ employee profiles, facilitated 14 internships, and experienced a 101% increase in users over the past year.

These initiatives prioritize equitable access, ensuring rural and economically disadvantaged students can benefit from these opportunities.

Empowering Educators to Drive Change

Preparing students for advanced manufacturing careers starts with equipping educators. SSC's **Advancing Computer Science Grant** will reach 2,938 students in four rural districts, training teachers in coding, robotics, data analysis, and other essential skills.

The **Solar Suitcase Lending Library**, serving 1,350 students annually, bridges renewable energy innovation with manufacturing. Students gain hands-on experience in assembling and troubleshooting real-world systems—critical skills for careers in precision assembly and quality assurance. Educators also receive professional development to integrate sustainability and advanced manufacturing concepts into STEM curricula.



2024 SE MN Welding Competition

Adding to this, SSC's **STEM Forward Educator Forum** provides a yearly platform for peer-to-peer learning on cutting-edge technology, pedagogy, and artificial intelligence (AI). Teachers explore AI's transformative impact, ensuring students understand its critical role in the industry's future.

Showcasing Talent and Building Connections

The annual **SE MN Welding Competition** offers students a platform to demonstrate their skills. In 2024, the competition drew over 400 participants, with 40% from rural or disadvantaged backgrounds. One student remarked, "The event made it so that I could see first-hand other welders and others' abilities. It was cool to see how I compared to them!"

Strengthening Industry Partnerships

Collaboration fuels SSC's success. Through partnerships with local manufacturers and the SE MN Career-ConneCTEd Work Group, workforce gaps are identified, and resources are aligned to meet industry needs. "The SSC coop is getting involved with helping our youth understand the great possibilities for their future in manufacturing." shared Travis Bretzman, Training

Continued on the next page…

Manufacturing Hub continued…

Facilitator at McNeilus Steel. “They have found new creative ways to showcase our area with things like the weld competition held in Rochester. This event not only helps the students but it also gets the teachers engaged with the opportunities that are available for their students.”

Building the Future Workforce

Looking ahead, SSC plans to expand FutureForward™ and enhance programs like the Solar Suitcase Lending Library and SE MN Welding Competition to increase access and equity. By empowering students, supporting educators, and collaborating with industry leaders, Southeast Minnesota is solidifying its position as a leader in advanced manufacturing workforce development.

To learn more or join these initiatives, visit www.ssc.coop or contact SSC’s Career and College Readiness team.



2024 STEM Forward Educator Forum

Discover Healthcare Event Connects Students with Medical Careers

On January 10, 10th-grade students had the opportunity to explore a variety of healthcare careers at the Discover Healthcare event, held at Rochester Community & Technical College’s Heintz Center.

Students chose from a range of healthcare specialties, including Trauma, Child Health Specialty, Clinical Neurophysiology, and Veterinary Technology. Each session allowed students to interact with professionals from various fields and learn about potential career paths.

With the goal of giving students insight into the diverse healthcare industry, this event was an excellent opportunity for them to explore different fields, ask questions, and make connections with professionals.

“We’re thrilled to provide students with hands-on opportunities to explore healthcare careers,” said an event organizer, Jami Schwickerath. “By meeting



industry professionals, students gained valuable knowledge that will help them make informed decisions about their future education and career choices.”

Thank you to all the professionals who made this event a success and helped inspire the next generation of healthcare workers.

Empowering Future Careers: Encourage Students to Explore Internships Through Future*Forward*

Internships are a powerful bridge between education and the workforce, offering students hands-on experience, valuable career insights, and connections with local industries. Through Future*Forward*'s **Internship Board**, schools, city and county organizations, and nonprofits have a unique opportunity to connect students with real-world experiences that can shape their futures. Whether it's through partnerships with local businesses, municipal departments, or nonprofit initiatives, these internships give students the chance to explore career paths while contributing to their communities.

Future*Forward* makes it easy for school staff, counselors, and community partners to share these opportunities with students. Additionally, funding resources through SSC and Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI) may be available to help offset costs and ensure every student can participate, regardless of financial barriers.

We encourage schools and community partners to collaborate with their employer networks to identify summer internship opportunities and post them on Future*Forward*. Together, we can prepare students for success, strengthen community ties, and build a thriving future workforce.

Visit FutureForward.org to learn more about connecting your students with these valuable experiences!

Perkins Update: Program Approval Update

Program approvals are due on **November 1, 2025**, but we strongly encourage teachers to have these ready for submission by **June 2025** (or before leaving for summer break).

While the official state forms have not yet been released, we recommend teachers focus on enhancing their syllabi to align with state recommendations, including:

- **Rigorous and Relevant Instruction**: Ensure content is aligned with workforce needs and current industry standards.
- **Integration of National Programs**: Embed recognized national programs into the curriculum.
- **Student Leadership Development**: Provide opportunities for students to develop specific leadership skills and access leadership growth through student organizations or other methods.
- **Experiential Learning**:
  - **Career Awareness**: Introductory courses focused on broad career exploration.
  - **Career Exploration**: Advanced courses offering deeper insights into specific career fields.
  - **Career Preparation**: Opportunities for internships or mentorships.
- **Work-Based Learning Programs**: Develop engaging programs that include **40 hours or more** of work-based learning experiences.

Important Reminders:

- Each CTE area is responsible for completing its own program approval.
- **Two courses** are required for a pathway to qualify as an approved program of study.



- Appropriate licensure is needed for program approval.

We encourage teachers to begin planning and refining these components early to ensure successful program approval.

Thank you for your dedication to providing high-quality career-connected learning experiences for students!

Welders Welding Wisdom:
Teachers Prepping for the Competition

Calling all Welding Instructors Coming to the SE MN Welding Competition!

Join us for a special workshop designed to enhance your welding knowledge and better prepare your students for success in the SE MN Welding Competition and beyond. This collaborative event brings together industry professionals from Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC), Lincoln Electric, Crenlo, McNeilus Steel, Local 6 Plumbers & Pipefitters, and more.

Workshop Details

- **Date:** Wednesday, February 19
- **Time:** 4:30 PM - 7:30 PM
- **Location:** RCTC Heintz Center (Enter through Door H8 and proceed to the Weld Lab)
- **Instructors Only**
  No students, please.
- **Bring Your Own PPE:** Safety first!
- **Pizza Provided:** Enjoy a complimentary meal.
- **CEUs Offered:** Earn valuable continuing education credits.
- **Registration:** **Email** Nick Wobig

Workshop Focus

- **Refresher/Crash Course:** Gain in-depth knowledge of welding processes essential for competition success.
- **Industry Insights:** Learn from experienced professionals in the welding field.
- **Practical Skills:** Master welding symbols, plan reading, and efficient teaching techniques.
- **Valuable Resources:** Take back practical resources and implement them in your classroom.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with industry leaders and other welding instructors.

Competition Day
April 30

- **Student Attendance:** Encourage all students, especially those interested in welding, manufacturing, engineering, trades, and the military, to attend the competition.
- **Full-Day Participation:** We strongly encourage you and your students to stay for the entire competition, including the awards ceremony.
- **Raffle Prizes:** Exciting prizes will be awarded to student attendees.

Resources

Competition Preparation Page: **Visit our website** for valuable resources, including a video of what to expect on competition day.

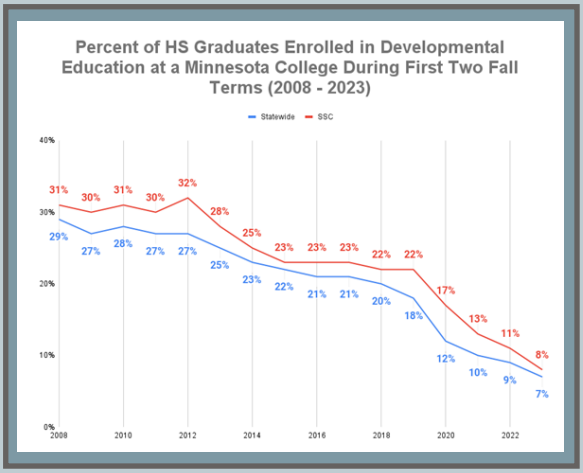
Questions? Please don't hesitate to **contact** Nick Wobig with any questions or concerns.

We look forward to seeing you there!

SLEDS Data

The percentage of students needing developmental education upon entering two- or four-year colleges has **SIGNIFICANTLY** decreased since 2008. This change highlights the dedication of SSC schools and educators to academic excellence and the determination of Southeast Minnesota students.

Want to see how your school stacks up? Contact Mike Schnell, Southeast Minnesota SLEDS Regional Data Coach at **mschnell@ssc.coop** or 507-281-6683.





Facilitated by Shannon Helgeson and Ross Herdina of Agile Ideas Leadership, this is an opportunity for instructional coaches of all levels of experience, and for those who want to strengthen their facilitation skills. Participants will have opportunities to share ideas, practice conversational and coaching strategies, increase their professional skills, and establish strong systems that will help your coaching program flourish. Instructional coaches and others who lead teams and give feedback are encouraged to participate. Sessions are in-person at SSC's Wood Lake Meeting Center in Rochester.

Registration Fee - SSC Member $99 / Non-Member $109
Register NOW at www.ssc.coop/register

Southeast Service Cooperative

April 9, 2025
8:30 - 11:30 AM

Supporting the Resistant Educator: Interacting with Theories of Action

- How can we better understand why people resist support or making change?
- How can we process Theories of Action so we can better support growth?
- What are the steps to guiding difficult conversations?
- How can we create reflective structures for teams?

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.



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KEVIN BILLS, AIA
Education Business Unit Leader



SUE PETERSON
Education Strategy Specialist



THAD DAHLING
Facility Management + Planning Strategist



CHARLOTTE NIENHAUS, AIA
Architect

"ISG genuinely listened to us throughout the process. They took our ideas and created something remarkable. Our new facility is more than a school, it's a foundation for every generation that walks through these doors. The future is being built here."

DAN ANDERSON
Superintendent Maple River School District

Architecture + Engineering + Environmental + Planning | ISGInc.com

Cooperative Purchasing News

5 CPC Conference Questions!

CPC attends over 20 conferences, trade shows, and association meetings every year. We always enjoy great conversations with our members, but we also understand that it can be tough for some people to converse with people that they've never met in real life.

But as always - CPC is here to help! Here are 5 great questions that have led to really productive conversations between CPC members and the CPC Team:

How can CPC help with Referendum planning?

CPC vendors will work with your architects and project planners to provide contractually negotiated costs for your upcoming projects. Ask us how!

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 commons 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 talk you through our vendors' offerings and point out opportunities to save!



Hard at work to save you money and time! Julia Dangerfield and Jerome Evans

How does CPC help us to get money back on electronics?

That's right! CPC awarded a contract to a tech buyback vendor that will actually pay you for your electronics! This one is always a popular topic.

How exactly does using CPC support your local service cooperative?

Our favorite question! CPC is a program of 8 Minnesota Service Cooperatives and we're always happy to talk about how the partnership between members, vendors, and the CPC Team supports our service cooperatives!

Find us online at
PurchasingConnection.org

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

Radon in Public Schools

By Dan Tranter, MDH, Indoor Air Unit

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that naturally comes from the soil. Radon can enter any building and result in a high indoor radon level. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. The only way to measure the radon risk is to test the air in the school for radon. The Environmental Protection Agency action level is 4.0 pCi/L. If high levels of radon are detected, a mitigation system can be installed to reduce radon.

Schools are not required to test, and testing is recommended. If they choose to test, they must follow the state testing plan, use licensed professionals, and report results to MDH and the school board.

MDH conducted a study of public schools' radon test results. We analyzed school reported radon testing and professional radon licensee testing data to identify how many schools and school districts tested for radon from 2018-2022.

Overall findings:

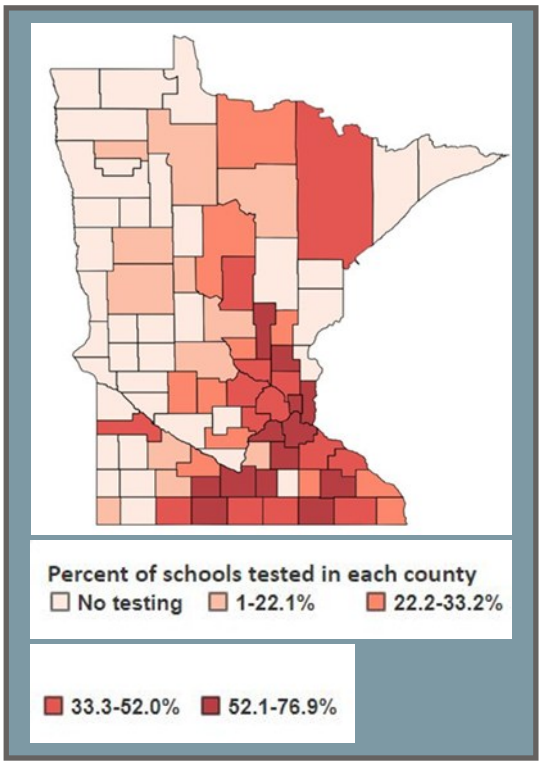
- 39% of schools had at least one room tested for radon.
- 25% of school districts had at least one school tested for radon.
- Of schools that were tested, 16% (130 schools) had elevated radon in at least one room.
- Nearly half (49%) of school districts that did test had at least one elevated test.
- Charter schools had lower testing (1.5%) than independent districts (43%).

Public school radon testing is not evenly distributed across Minnesota.

- 37 counties, mostly in western Minnesota, had zero school districts that tested for radon.
- Counties in the metro, south central, and southeast area had a higher percentage of school districts that tested for radon.

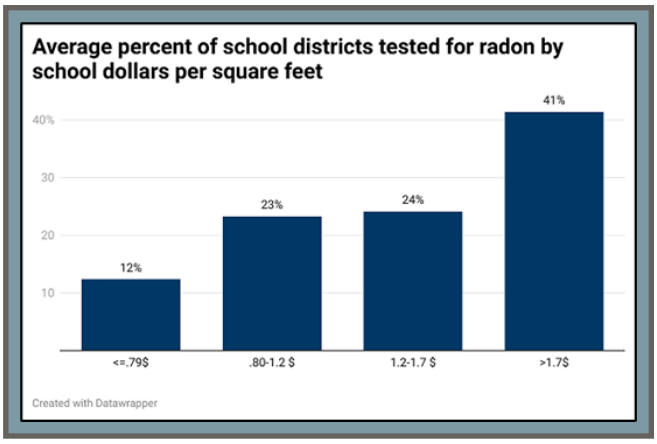
Public school districts with a higher proportion of low-income students were less likely to test for radon.

- School districts with the most students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) tested an average of 20% fewer schools in the district for radon than school districts with the fewest students eligible for FRPL.
- Charter schools proportionally had more students who qualify for FRPL than independent schools.



Public school districts with less facility funding were less likely to test for radon.

- School districts in the highest funding category had an average of 29% more schools per district tested for radon than the lowest funding category.
- The Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Program (LTFM) can be used for radon testing and mitigation. LTFM funding is based on the number of students, school building square footage, and other factors; funding amounts



Learn more about radon in Minnesota schools and the school study.

Hoist and Lift Inspections

Regular inspections of hoists and lifts are essential to ensure safety, compliance with OSHA and Minnesota regulations, and to prevent equipment failures. Keep your facility safe by adhering to required inspection standards.

By Chris Berry
Senior Environmental Technician, IEA, Inc.

Inspections are required at least **annually**, or more often based on manufacturer recommendations, operating conditions, or after significant repairs. This includes basketball hoops, curtain/wall systems, overhead hoists, aerial lifts, automotive lifts, and other lifting equipment.





Train operators on proper use, load limits, and emergency procedures to meet OSHA and Minnesota regulations. Schedule regular refresher trainings to maintain safety and document all training records to ensure compliance.

How IEA Can Help Make Your Facility Safer

- Aerial lift operator and safety training.
- Evaluate hoist types and quantities for safety compliance.
- Development of comprehensive management plans.
- Coordinate hoist and lift annual inspections.



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.

Welcome to SSC!



Jeannie Meidlinger

Career-Connected Learning Specialist

Jeannie Meidlinger joins Southeast Service Cooperative as a Career-Connected Learning Specialist after 19 years in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. With extensive experience in career and technical education, workforce development, and partnership-building, she has led initiatives that connect students with meaningful career pathways. A dedicated advocate for career-connected learning, she has successfully managed grants, developed statewide programs, and collaborated with industry leaders. A Southeast Minnesota native, Jeannie is excited to support the region's schools and businesses. Outside of work, she enjoys time with her husband and daughters, reading, and catching up with friends and family.



Al Roder

SSC Board Member

We welcomed Al to our board at the January 2025 board meeting.

Al has worked in the public sector for 32 years in a variety of positions, including economic development, county administration, and city management. He has been Byron's city administrator since 2022. Al and his wife have 7 children and 10 grandchildren. When Al is not working, he enjoys golf and camping in the summer months, and curling in the winter months.



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Check out some of our recent videos here.

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.

October

- Approved the contract for Jeannie Meidlinger for the Career Connected Learning Specialist position.
- Approved acceptance of the Computer Science Education Advancement Grant Award.

November

- Approved the SSC Fiscal Audit 2023-2024.
- Approved the SEMNET Audit report 2023-2024.
- Approved a 2.5 percent increase for Merissa Russie under the Project MOMENTUM grant effective December 1, 2024.
- Approved membership for Fillmore County Soil & Water Conservation District.
- Approved waiving paper ballot use for board elections.
- Approved the annual report and plan.
- Approved the RST-SSC-SWWC insurance contract.

December

- Approved the board nomination forms.
- Approved the election return report.
- Accepted a grant for $5,000 from Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council to support the Young Artists Young Author's Conference.
- Accepted $250 from the Housing Commission in Honor of Sheila Kiscaden for Southeast Minnesota Together.
- Approved a contract for $35,000 with Minnesota State for Nitro X Camps effective January 1, 2025.

January

- Approved to keep the same slate of SSC Board Officers that served in 2024.
- Approved the MSC Board appointments.
- Approved and accepted the items on the consent agenda including minutes of the December board meeting, December balance sheet, December revenue expense, December bills, mileage rate change to .70 effective January 1, 2025, 2025 board meeting presentation schedule, designation of depositor as US Bank Minnesota school district liquid asset fund (MSDLAF) Moreton Capital Market, and designation of the *Post Bulletin* as the official newspaper/publication.
- Approved the 2025-2026 board meeting schedule.
- Approved the 2026-2027 board meeting schedule.

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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