

THE REVIEW

FALL 2018



By Lisa Gregoire
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& Learning Services
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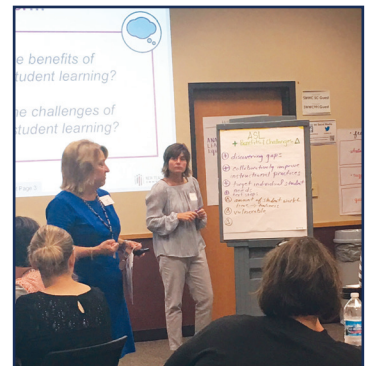
WHAT IS THE INNOVATIVE TEACHER SUPPORT NETWORK?

The Region 6 & 8 Innovative Teacher Support Network is off to an exciting start! What is it you ask? It is five districts (GFW, JCC, Marshall, Pipestone and Worthington) and SWWC, working together with the New Teacher Center, to collaboratively learn about and implement evidence-based strategies and tools to support new teachers.

What is the New Teacher Center? The NTC provides a strengths-based mentoring/coaching model that focuses on accelerating teacher practice in order to improve student achievement. Some unique features that the NTC offers include training on the implementation of high-leverage tools, alignment to both academic and teaching standards, data collection, principal and leadership training, and on-site support.

The five districts and SWWC have committed to two years of training and implementation in order to build capacity in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. Mentors/Instructional coaches began their training in July. On August 14, principals and school leaders met for their first training, and on September 20, the Region 6 & 8 Innovative Teacher Support Network Leadership Team met for the first time. This team has representation from the various roles and districts involved. Trainings are facilitated and led by Dr. Lori Bird from the NTC.

Participating districts have already shared early success stories and expressed interest in starting another cohort as soon as 2019-20. If your district is interested or you would like to learn more about the New Teacher Center model, please contact me at 507-537-2294.





By Cliff Carmody
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IN THIS ISSUE

Page	Article/Topic
3	Big Changes for the CLC
4	Regional Center of Excellence Update
5	Classroom Engagement Model
6	LYFT Career Pathways Update
6	Career Expo 2018 Recap
7	SWWC Star Implementation Cohort
9 - 10	Student Enrichment Updates
11	Risk Management Update
12 - 16	School Articles
16	Glassy Treasures & Decor

RECOGNITION IN OCTOBER


As we come to the end of October, I wanted to take a quick look back and say a big thank you to all the school principals in our region. October was National Principal's Month - a time to remember that great schools have great principals! On behalf of SWWC, I want to take a moment to honor and thank all the principals in our region for their hard work and dedication to the education of our children!


In addition, I would like to specifically recognize, honor and thank the leaders of the SWWC Educational Learning Centers. The administrators at our learning centers do a phenomenal job providing outstanding leadership to these programs. Student success at SWWC's ELCs depends on the effectiveness of our school leaders and I cannot say enough about the work they do.


If you didn't get a chance to thank your principal in October, make sure you thank them anyway. The work of the school principal is demanding! We know that critical to student success is the leadership of the school principal - so take time today to honor and thank your principal.


IT'S NATIONAL PRINCIPALS MONTH!


We thank the leaders of our educational learning centers!


Lori Dierks
North Central Learning Center


Dawn Holtz
Cosmos Learning Center


Tony Miller
Belview Learning Center


Patrick Archibald
Red Rock Ridge Learning Center


Steve Rops
Blue Mound Learning Center

Be sure to #ThankAPrincipal this month!

NATIONAL

PRINCIPALS

MONTH



GREAT SCHOOLS HAVE GREAT PRINCIPALS

#THANKAPRINCIPAL

BIG CHANGES FOR THE CLC

We have a lot of exciting news for the Cosmos Learning Center and upcoming school year, starting with staff changes.

- Bailey Rettmann, who has been at the CLC for nine years as a teacher and principal, is now serving as SWWC's Regional Director of Educational Learning Centers. In this role, Bailey will basically run the show for all of the ELCs within SWWC.
- With his departure, we hired Dawn Holtz as our new principal. She comes to us from Hutchinson Public Schools and has 27 years of experience in education in a variety of roles. Her vast expertise is going to be a great addition to the CLC.
- Lastly, I have been promoted from school counselor to Dean of Students. We are excited to have the extra administrative support due to the growth we are experiencing. We now have over 60 staff at the CLC and almost 60 students! That is a huge jump from where we started in 2009 (seven employees and seven students).

With progress in mind, the state legislature approved funding that will come in the form of a grant to ACGC Schools to repurpose the school building. The funding will help update the school to make it safer for our kids and staff and help meet the unique needs of students in our program. SWWC thanks our friends at ACGC, and especially Nels Onstad and Representative Dean Urdahl, for their hard work to get this funding in place. We are beyond excited at the prospect of having an updated building to better serve our students, staff and to allow us to continue to provide these services in a great community.

Lastly, our tradition of fall activities continues.

- We had our Fall Festival with our kids again with a hayride, donut challenge, potato sack races and other activities. It was awesome to see a 4-wheeler pulling a wagon full of very excited children around the school!
- We recently took a group of kids to the Nelson Family Farm, despite some snow that morning. Fun was had by all even though it was about 35 degrees out!
- We will be doing our Spooktacular event on October 31. The kids will get to dress up in costumes, trick or treat in the building and have a spooky dance in the gym. This is always a big hit with the kids and staff.

Throughout the year, we hold numerous school events like this, and with the help from some amazing groups like the Hutchinson Lions Club and Kiwanis, we can do some fantastic activities for the students and their families. We are also looking forward to working with the City of Cosmos so some of our older students can work on vocational skills and get some work experience in some of the city buildings. It is going to be an exciting year at the Cosmos Learning Center!

www.swsc.org/elc



By Jason Northrup
Dean of Students
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SWWC EDUCATIONAL LEARNING CENTERS





By Nicole Lydick
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You can find more information on the Southwest Prairie RCE at
www.swsc.org/rce.

REGIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE NEWS

Meet the Southwest Prairie Regional Center of Excellence Team! If you have any questions or want more information, please contact me at 231-878-1925.

Mary Jenatscheck is our Principal Leadership Specialist. She works with principals in Southern Minnesota, both in cohorts and individual coaching. If you are interested in support, or would like to learn more, please contact Mary at 507-838-8310.



Brittany Larson is our District Support Specialist. She works with districts and schools that have been identified as needing Targeted Support (TSI). Her work is done in large groups as she helps districts and schools through the Continuous Improvement Process. Brittany is also available to help the identified district/schools on site if the need arises.



Heather Giese is our Graduation Specialist. She works with schools that have been identified as needing Continuous Improvement (CSI). She has several schools assigned to her and she provides onsite coaching and guidance as the school moves through the Continuous Improvement Process.



Jonelle Mellstrom is our Reading Specialist. She works with schools that have been identified as needing Continuous Improvement (CSI). She has several schools assigned to her and she provides onsite coaching and guidance as the school moves through the Continuous Improvement Process.



LOOKING FOR MORE NEWS?

Visit www.swsc.org/news to read our current news releases and see our latest publications.

Visit www.swsc.org/newsarchive to read past issues of the Review, the Member Newsletter and our Annual Reports.



/SWWCSC



@SWWC_SC

CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Classroom Engagement Model is a set of research-based teaching practices that leads to increased engagement and full participation of every child in the classroom, which in turn leads to more learning, increased skill acquisition and better outcomes.

What are the benefits?

- Families team with teaching staff to meet their child's goals and learn more about using routines to engage their child in learning at home and at school.
- Children increase independence, social skills and engagement in learning activities; fully participate in classroom routines with their peers; and practice skills throughout the day to increase mastery.
- Teaching staff learn new ideas for engaging all children and have more opportunities to team with each other.

Marshall Public Schools is in their fourth year of implementation. The Marshall Team is focusing on family engagement and increasing school to home connections.



Murray County Central Schools is in their second year of implementation and the MCC team is focusing on increasing family engagement this school year.



Pipestone Area Schools is just beginning the installation of the CEM within their Early Childhood program. They are currently going through CEM Module training and are beginning to incorporate evidence-based practices in their preschool classrooms.

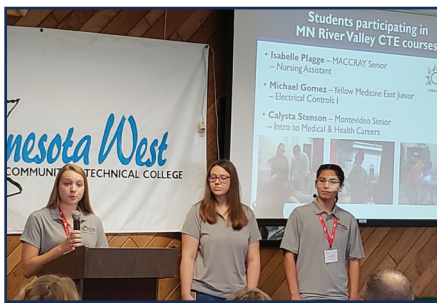


By Hollie Pater
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By Tom Hoff
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CHANCELLOR MALHOTRA PRAISES LYFT CAREER PATHWAYS

During a state tour, Devinder Malhotra, Chancellor of Minnesota State (formally MnSCU) visited the Minnesota West-Granite Falls Campus to learn more about the Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) Career Pathways project. The chancellor heard from a variety of project partners and three high school students about the impact of career and technical education (CTE) and the growth of courses that are being shared between school districts. LYFT was established through a \$3 million Minnesota Legislative Grant in 2017 to develop a new model for the delivery of high school CTE. So far, 16 projects have been funded totaling nearly \$500,000 to initiate projects such as Auto Mechanics, Aquaculture, Precision Manufacturing, Certified Nursing Assistant, Agricultural Drones, Introduction to Medical Careers, Pharmacy Technician, Project Lead the Way and more.

Chancellor Malhotra learned about one LYFT project that is poised to become a model for rural school district and business cooperation around CTE. The Minnesota River Valley CTE Collaborative was officially formed in July of 2018 by Yellow Medicine East, Renville County West, MACCRAJ, Montevideo and Lakeview school districts (and their business partners) to develop CTE experiences for their students that they could not offer or sustain on their own. The newly formed collaborative has quickly mobilized to offer eight shared CTE courses in the fields of healthcare, manufacturing/engineering, education, and information technology.

[Read the full article on the LYFT Career Pathways website.](#)

CAREER EXPO 2018 = SUCCESS

The 2018 Southwest Minnesota Workforce Council Career Expo was held on September 25 and September 26 at the college campuses of Southwest Minnesota State University - Marshall and Minnesota West - Worthington. The event provided valuable career and education information to high school students, plus highlighted regional businesses and the type of jobs they provide in our communities. During the two expo events we served almost 1,800 students from 30 schools, which involved teamwork from over 300 volunteers from these partners:

- Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium
- Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- Southwest Minnesota State University
- SWWC
- Job Service
- Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce
- Marshall Area Chambers of Commerce
- Marshall, Montevideo, and Worthington Workforce Centers
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Southwest Regional Development Commission
- Regional businesses and service agencies

We had 125 total exhibitors from a large variety of career fields and heard from several teachers, students, and exhibitors that it was a valuable opportunity to expose students to what Southwest Minnesota has to offer. Find more information at www.swsc.org/careerexpo.



SWWC STAR IMPLEMENTATION COHORT

An Innovative Project in Cooperation with SWWC's Region 6 & 8 Low Incidence Projects & STAR® Autism Support

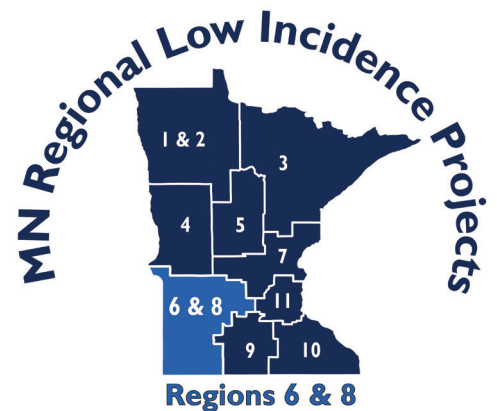
The STAR Program is a comprehensive behavioral program that incorporates the applied behavior analysis strategies of Discrete Trial Training, Pivotal Response Training and Teaching Functional Routines. STAR also promotes the use of positive behavior interventions and environmental supports (visual supports, visual schedules, etc.) in inclusive and self-contained settings. After a few years of providing STAR trainings in Regions 6 & 8 with little evidence of implementation with fidelity, we felt there was a need to better ensure we are able to determine the effectiveness of this training throughout the area. Implementing a system-wide approach will better allow districts to improve student outcomes, increase efficiency and improve staff satisfaction. The goal of this plan is to ensure teams are developing research-based outcomes to increase student outcomes through fidelity of implementation rather than just providing a single training each year.

The STAR Implementation Cohort is an innovative project for the 2018-19 school year designed to increase the district team's capacity to work effectively with children with developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), during the critical years of brain and behavior development. The goal is to develop capacity inside Regions 6 & 8 to serve students with autism and other developmental disabilities at the elementary level by providing sustainable local resources (coaches and training sites) and curriculum to assist with implementation of evidence-based practices. The benefits of the STAR program are that it uses evidence-based instructional practices. It provides a comprehensive curriculum-based assessment and documents progress on IEPs. This program meets the individual needs of students at various developmental levels. The comprehensive materials include a program manual, lesson plans, and ready to use manipulatives, photo cards, and other instructional tools. Participating teams are learning effective instructional strategies for teaching students with developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders, in a high quality early learning environment.

The four training sites for the 2018-19 school year are **Willmar Public Schools'** Roosevelt Elementary School and Jefferson Learning Center, and **Glencoe-Silver Lake's** Lakeside Elementary School and Lincoln Elementary School Early Childhood Learning Center. These training sites are being developed as STAR model classrooms and district coaches are being trained to assist with implementation throughout the district. The sites are gaining valuable resources for implementing a comprehensive curriculum. They are integrating inclusive practices with proven effective instructional strategies and learn evidence-based strategies. By participating in this cohort, each site received training at a two-day STAR Workshop for the site teams and four visits of individualized, on-site STAR program coaching and support. They also receive administrator and related service staff resources. Training site staff are guided to implement the STAR program with fidelity through consultation and assistance in implementation of research-based curricula and evidence-based strategies.



By Cassandra Johnson
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By Andrea Anderson
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SWWC
STUDENT
ENRICHMENT



Days fill up fast, so get your
registration in by November 2.

Visit our website at
www.swsc.org/caip
for brochure and registration form.

CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

Do you know students who are talented story tellers or love to read books? Get them involved in the 15th Annual Creative Writing Contest. This contest is open to students in grades 3-12 in our 18-county region. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to use their imaginations to generate creative fiction and nonfiction stories and poems.

Use this as a classroom project or encourage students to enter on their own. Contest rules and guidelines must be followed for a chance to be one of the top three place winners. The submission deadline is January 18, 2019 - so encourage your students to use time over the holiday break to write incredible stories.



The guest speaker at our Creative Writing Contest Awards Ceremony in April will be Megan Maynor. Megan is a Minnesota picture book author who teaches writing and loves to talk about books and reading.

See rules and guidelines at www.swsc.org/cw.



MEET AN AUTHOR OR ILLUSTRATOR

We encourage your school to spend time with an author and/or illustrator during the 2019 Children's Author & Illustrator Program. SWWC has lined up two great presenters: Terri DeGezelle Michels and David Geister. They will walk through how they create ideas for books and illustrations, explain what it takes to be an author/illustrator and show the end result. They will definitely get your kids excited about writing.

Register your school and give your K-6 students the opportunity to interact with these professionals and get motivated to use their imaginations to create their own book. The program is held in the spring and is available for a half day, full day or multiple day residencies.



Terri DeGezelle Michels
Author/Photographer



David Geister
Illustrator

YOUNG WRITERS CONFERENCE

Join us on January 9 for the 26th Annual Conference for Young Writers. Encouraging students in grades 3-8 to write is what this conference is all about. Students will learn:

- to write fiction and poetry
- to write about villains, monsters, pirates
- about whirling words
- about journaling
- to write to the mood of music.

There are many sessions for students to choose from.

Find out more by visiting www.swsc.org/yw. Here you will find the conference brochure that includes session topics, conference guidelines and registration instructions. Chaperones and students must be registered online by November 20 to qualify for the early bird registration fee. The final registration date is November 27.

The conference keynote speaker will be Douglas Wood (www.douglaswood.com).



January 9, 2019
SMSU, Marshall

SCIENCE & NATURE CONFERENCE

Students in grades K-8 LOVE to explore science topics such as stars, archaeology, rocket building, cryogenics, how roller coasters work, electricity, minerals, STEM and so much more. These are the types of sessions student can attend at the 2019 Science & Nature Conference.

Mike Zacher from Raven-Aerostar Industries will be the keynote speaker. Raven-Aerostar Industries manufactures stratospheric balloons and airships.

More information about the conference will be available after the new year. Please visit our website for more details at www.swsc.org/sn.



May 15, 2019
SMSU, Marshall



By Doug Deragisch
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NEW INSURANCE SPECIALIST

SWWC is proud to introduce a new member of our Risk Management Team, Mari Wagner. Mari joined SWWC in August.

As the SWWC Insurance Specialist, Mari will provide one-to-one service to our school and CCOGA (cities, counties and other governmental agencies) members. In addition to providing support for health insurance, she will also help our members explore other ancillary offerings. She will also market our risk management programs to other eligible members.

Mari comes to us from an insurance agency in the region where she sold Personal and Commercial, Health and Life, and Crop Insurance. She has been a part of the insurance industry for almost 15 years.

If you have any questions on our insurance program offerings, Mari can be reached at mari.wagner@swsc.org or 507-706-0471.



SHARE YOUR DISTRICT NEWS!

The Review is published three times a year. We welcome submissions from schools - so if you have news to share, send it to us!

If you have suggestions, comments or items for submission, contact Shelly Maes at shelly.maes@swsc.org.

LOOKING FOR PD?

SWWC's Professional Development Catalog is online and updated regularly. We will no longer print/mail copies to each school in the region. However, you can still get a printed copy by downloading the catalog as a PDF.

If you don't see the training you need, let us know - we might be able to provide it for you. Contact Shelly Maes (shelly.maes@swsc.org) with any training requests.

Visit www.swsc.org/workshops for a full list of offerings and to register.

[Click this link to view the Professional Development Catalog.](http://www.swsc.org/workshops)



2018-19
Professional Development Catalog

www.swsc.org/workshops

DIBELS MATH AT MT LAKE CHRISTIAN

By Kim Friesen, Principal

How exciting! Mountain Lake Christian School has been selected to participate in the DIBELS Math Early Release program. Our students have been assessed using DIBELS Reading over the past few years, but DIBELS Math is a new assessment from the Dynamic Measurement Group. DIBELS Math provides indicators as to potential student success in math and intervention needs. Mrs. Siebert has taken the lead on this project and completed her first round of testing on September 28. Students in grades K-6 will be tested three times a year.

We anticipate that this new assessment will provide excellent data for our MLC staff as we work to meet the changing needs of our students. DIBELS is one of the assessment tools used at MLC to identify students who will receive intervention support in our Extended Learning Center (ELC). DIBELS scores will be available during October parent teacher conferences. Participation in ELC is fluid, according to identified need. It is the goal of MLC to give students the assistance and tools they need to be successful in all academic areas and to service them in the regular classroom as much as possible. For more information, contact Mrs. Kim Friesen at Mountain Lake Christian School.



WWG EXPANDS STAFF/SPACE FOR SPED SERVICES

By Paul Olson, Elementary Principal

Westbrook-Walnut Grove Schools continue to expand special needs services by adding another full-time special education teacher to our elementary staff. The WWG School Board has helped in so many ways when it comes to helping our students. We have also added another classroom now that we have expanded to four full-time special education teachers.

Jessica Read joined WWG this past spring as a full-time ECSE birth-to-six teacher. She had recently completed her student teaching with us in sixth grade and did a wonderful job with our students. She recently graduated from SMSU. SMSU continues to provide WWG with top-notch teachers, not only in the area of special education, but in all areas of education. Jessica joins the team of Lisa Mischke (Mankato State), Stephanie Doubler (SMSU) and Karley McClellan (SMSU). These ladies make up our hard working special educational elementary team.

WWG continues to see our program grow in numbers due to the compassionate care and the hard work of these ladies. Many families have moved to our small communities in recent years because of the caring educational services that are given each day by these teachers.

We have twenty-one full time paraprofessionals who work one-to-one with students of various needs. Our entire student body has also benefitted directly from their special needs classmates as they have learned to be patient, kind, and compassionate to each other. They are a wonderful group to work with each and every day!



Pictured (left-right) Stephanie Doubler, Lisa Mischke, Jessica Read, and Karley McClellan, WWG Elementary Special Education Staff



LESTER PRAIRIE IS FLEXIBLE

By Kaitlyn Larson, Fifth Grade Teacher

“Awesome!”, “Cool!”, “Fun!”, “Energizing!” and “Amazing!” Those are a few comments from my fifth grade students when I asked them what they thought about flexible seating. They also emphasized that they like the choice of where to sit throughout the day, as opposed to being stuck in their desks all day.

The old standard of students constantly sitting in a desk can be difficult for many children. Jan Smith, kindergarten teacher, commented, “[Flexible seating] is a positive way to meet their needs. It’s good to have appropriate furniture. Kids stand anyways, so may as well have furniture for that.” In a flexible seating classroom you will find wobble stools, kneeling tables with pillows, standing tables and desks, benches, table and chairs, exercise balls to name a few! As Bodil Empting, special education teacher, said: “It’s good for kids who have a lot of energy. They can get their wiggles out without running around the room.”

Herman Miller did a study in 2008 and drew the conclusion that “giving people some control over their surroundings adds to their sense of well-being.” A study completed by the University of Minnesota in 2012 found that students participated 48% more in discussions in classrooms with collaborative groups seating.

For myself, flexible seating empowers my students to collaborate, have the freedom of choice, and become more engaged in their work. Katie Carmine, fourth grade teacher, summed it up nicely: “I like flexible seating because kids get to choose where they work their best.”



CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Canby Elementary
Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart Elementary
Red Rock Central High School



The SWWC region is home to **THREE** of the eight 2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools in Minnesota. Schools are recognized based on their overall academic excellence or progress in closing achievement gaps among student groups.

SWWC is proud to be your partner in education!



EDUCATION 2.0 AT SLEEPY EYE

By Samantha Schmit, Third Grade Teacher

With every great new era comes innovation and change. Such is the case with the Bronze Era, the Industrial Revolution, and the Age of Computers. Following suit is a new era of education, and it, too, will introduce innovation and change. This new instructional approach, most commonly referred to as Personalized Learning, is currently underway at Sleepy Eye Elementary School - one of only a few districts within the area to lead the way in this educational revolution.

Inherent to this style of instruction is the premise that each child is best able to learn new information at their own pace and in their own way. At Sleepy Eye Elementary, learners in grades 2-4 have been placed in studios where they acquire information at individualized levels. This means one third grader may be revisiting second-grade concepts within a given subject area, while another is engaged with fifth-grade concepts in that same area. The individual learner progresses at an optimized pace for them to garner and maintain a solid understanding of a particular concept. Groups, or studios, are flexible and ever changing with respect to the needs of the learners. Within these studios, the "teacher" is no longer found standing at the front of the classroom; instead, students work independently or receive coaching sessions from a facilitator.

Although Personalized Learning at Sleepy Eye Elementary School is still in its infancy, its anticipated changes are already evident, affording learners a greater understanding of what they need to become successful, life-long learners.

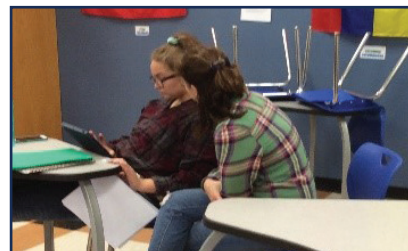


LAKEVIEW REACH 18-19

By Nan Lalemann, REACH Team Member

The Lakeview REACH program is in its third year, and this is my second year with the program. The part I love about the program is we focus on the students. Some of our main goals are addressing student needs, making connections, encouraging personal growth and working alongside each student. With the help of teachers, parents and staff, we all play a very large role making our program its very best.

As of today, we have 18 students active in the REACH program. My main goal is to REACH out and serve students who need support at school, home or even in their personal life. Finding the positives and success in each student and working on the negatives to fit each student's desires is part of my daily goal. I truly believe we can make a difference in each student's academic growth and personal lives on a daily basis.





TEACHING THAT COMES ALIVE

By Wade McKittrick, Superintendent

"I'm teaching the concept of inferences today" Michelle Nichols, 5th grade teacher at Wabasso Elementary, told me this morning. So of course it made perfect sense that when I walked into her classroom the room had been transformed from a classroom to a living game of Clue.

Wait a minute! Did I say a living game of clue? I walked into Ms. Nichols classroom this morning to find that all the desks, student and teacher, had been eliminated and the room was transformed into the study, dining room, kitchen, and library from the game Clue. "I wanted the kids to have a unique experience as we learn the concept of inferring and inferences" said Ms. Nichols, "so I transformed my room into the game of Clue and created an activity that would allow the kids to apply the concept we've been learning. After introducing the concept of inferences to my students, I brought them to my classroom to engage in a real life game of Clue where they needed to figure out the suspect, weapon used in the crime, and the room the crime was committed in."

Students searched for clues, read biographies, and began to draw conclusions based upon the clues. What could kids infer from seeing a sculpture with (fake) blood on it? What did the footprints mean? Who had a relation to the sculpture? "The kids were completely engaged in figuring out what each item in the room inferred and from those inferences they solved the crime" stated Nichols. "Yes, it was a lot of work to pull this together, but seeing how engaged the kids were and how well they understand the concept of inferences made it all worth it."

Author Dave Burgess says in his book *Teach Like a Pirate*, "light yourself on fire with enthusiasm and people will come from miles around just to watch you burn!" What Burgess was referring to is for teachers to do the uncommon to help students learn. If educators make learning interesting and engaging, students will come to the classroom not only to learn, but excited to learn. Michelle Nichols clearly understands what Burgess was referring to. By transforming her room into the game of Clue, students came excited to learn!



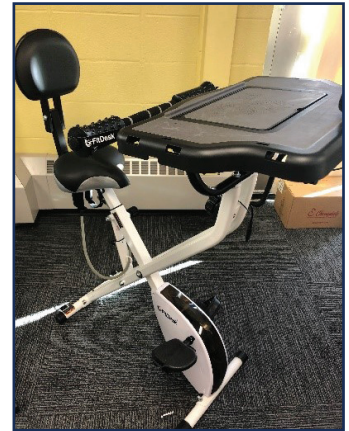
KINETIC CLASSROOM MOVING MINDS AT NL-S MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Megan Field, Director of Communications

This year, a kinetic classroom (FitDesks) is “moving minds” in Mrs. Blomker’s grade 6 classroom. Like many public-school classrooms, new desks were a need. Administration with a desire to continually improve our students’ educational experience sought to fulfill the need while creating an opportunity. Standard desks and chairs at the time of purchase were \$182.52 and FitDesks were \$335.00. Middle School Principal, Dr. Perry, had been seeking alternative funding to cover the difference in cost.

Moving Minds - This is more than just trying something new; Blomker has researched mental, emotional, and physical health benefits that kinetic classrooms have on youth. “Research strongly correlates physical activity with increased mental performance. It’s found that both long and short-term memories are increased when engaged in kinetic activity ... creativity is improved as well. Students were better able to focus, showed increased achievement, and improved ability to regulate emotions.” Blomker will study working memory, information manipulation, and testing within her classroom.

Ask the Students - When asked how they felt about the desks, students had great feedback, “I love the desks! I haven’t had any late assignments, that’s new for me!” Another shared, “Yes, thank goodness for gym and the bikes, I don’t feel like I need to get up so much.” Students had great insight into improvements as well, “I want a basket attached for my stuff and the desktop shouldn’t have an emblem ‘cause sometimes my pencil pokes through the paper.” Overall, students stated the best approach would be a variety of seating, “I have tried the standing desks, exercise balls, regular desks, and pedal bikes. I think students need a variety. Somedays, I don’t want to be active. Somedays, I’m crawling out of my skin!”



Congratulations Erin Hoffman!

SWWC Assistant Director of Special Education, Erin Hoffman, has been appointed to the Governor’s Special Education Advisory Panel.

The Minnesota Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) provides policy guidance for the Minnesota Department of Education with respect to special education and related services for children and youth with disabilities in Minnesota.

Erin will do a GREAT job advocating for the needs of rural school districts. Congratulations Erin and thanks for serving!



TOP 20 TRAINING IN WINDOM

By Melissa Radeke, Grades 4-6 Principal & Director of Teaching and Learning

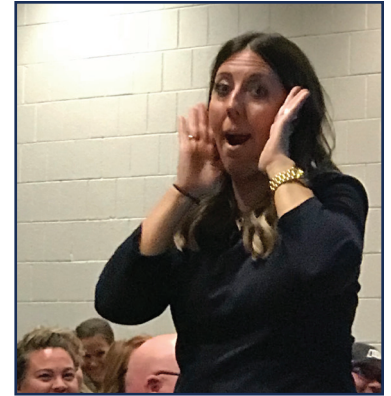
Top 20 Training is happening in the Windom Area Schools! What is Top 20 Training? It's learning and using powerful self-awareness and social awareness strategies that help all members of a school community develop to their highest potential. The key word is ALL members of the school community. The Top 20 culture rests on four key pillars that all members of a Top 20 School follow: Help Others Succeed; Communicate You Matter; Honor the Absent; and See the Problem, Own the Problem. Top 20 is helping Windom Area Schools create a "we" culture where people think, learn, and communicate effectively; make responsible decisions; develop and sustain healthy relationships; and focus on making a positive difference in the lives and experiences of others and themselves.

Top 20 Training concepts are simple, yet powerful. Some concepts focus on becoming aware of our thinking so that we can live Above the Line and interact positively with others. Other concepts focus on effective ways to respond to our own mistakes and to the mistakes of others. Conflict resolution, focusing and listening techniques, and reducing negativity in our thinking and social conversations all help to create a culture of safety and trust.



Top 20 Training is not just for the students and staff in our school. Our learning community extends beyond the walls of our buildings. Families and members of the business community can all benefit from Top 20 Training. The positive concepts are easily transferrable to all settings!

On October 8th, Willow Sweeney, cofounder of Top 20 Training, worked with all Windom Area School staff – including teachers, support staff, secretaries, food service, and custodians - to dig deeper into developing a strong, healthy Top 20 culture. Several representatives from area businesses and school board members were also in attendance. It is our vision that we are a Top 20 School District in a Top 20 Community.



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