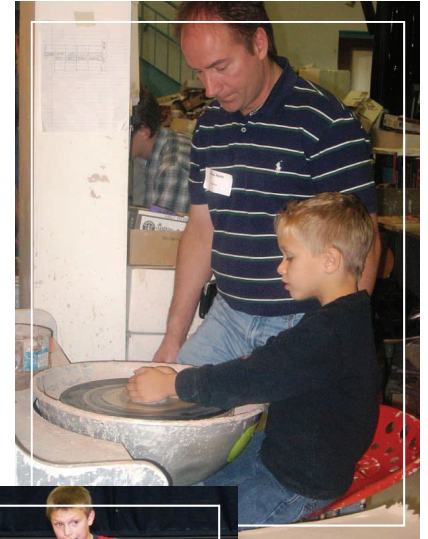


Annual Plan and Report



2009-2010



Partnership. Innovation. Leadership. Service.

Dear Friends of SW/WC Service Cooperative:

The staff, administration, and Board of Directors of the Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative are committed to providing high quality programs and services to our members!

Our mission highlights partnership, innovation, and exceptional leadership as the basis for all that we do! We believe this past year exemplified our efforts to reach for our mission. Using a model of shared services, that includes high quality, flexible, and responsive programs/services, our agency works hard to meet the ever changing needs of our members.

Authorized by statute in 1976, the history of our agency dates back to 1965 when the Southwest and West Central Minnesota Educational Research and Development Council (ERDC) was created. A pilot Educational Service Area (ESA) was established in 1973 and the Minnesota Legislature authorized our enabling legislation in 1976. This enabling legislation allows our agency to provide the programs and services to our members that we provide today! A “quasi-governmental agency” we receive no direct state aid, but through contracts and fees for service we generate the revenue to support our various programs.

We are a membership driven organization! We are committed to working collaboratively with our members to bring opportunities, efficiencies, and innovative services to our region. In this annual report and plan, you will learn more about our programs and services. We are proud to be partners with our school districts, cities, counties, and other governmental agencies as we embark on providing high quality programs and services for our members.

As we continue to plan for the 2010-11 year, we recognize the impact and burden our members face due to an ever-growing reduction in revenues. Because we are a reflection of our members, we are committed to a financial plan that reflects the challenge of the current budget problems. As a result, we will do our best to manage our revenues and fee increases, while maintaining tight controls over our expenditures. At the same time, we will continue to challenge our agency in finding new and innovative programs and services that assist our members in their day-to-day operations.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, we want to thank you for taking time to review our annual report and plan. As we continue to strive for transparency and accountability, we believe it is important to report back to our members the status of our agency.

Just as we believe it is important to report to you, we also believe it is critical that we listen to you. Tell us what you are trying to do and are having difficulty getting done! In addition, please feel free to contact us with your thoughts, comments, and concerns!

Sincerely,



Cliff Carmody
Executive Director
SW/WC Service Cooperative



50,000

Number of students within the
SW/WC Service Cooperative
Region

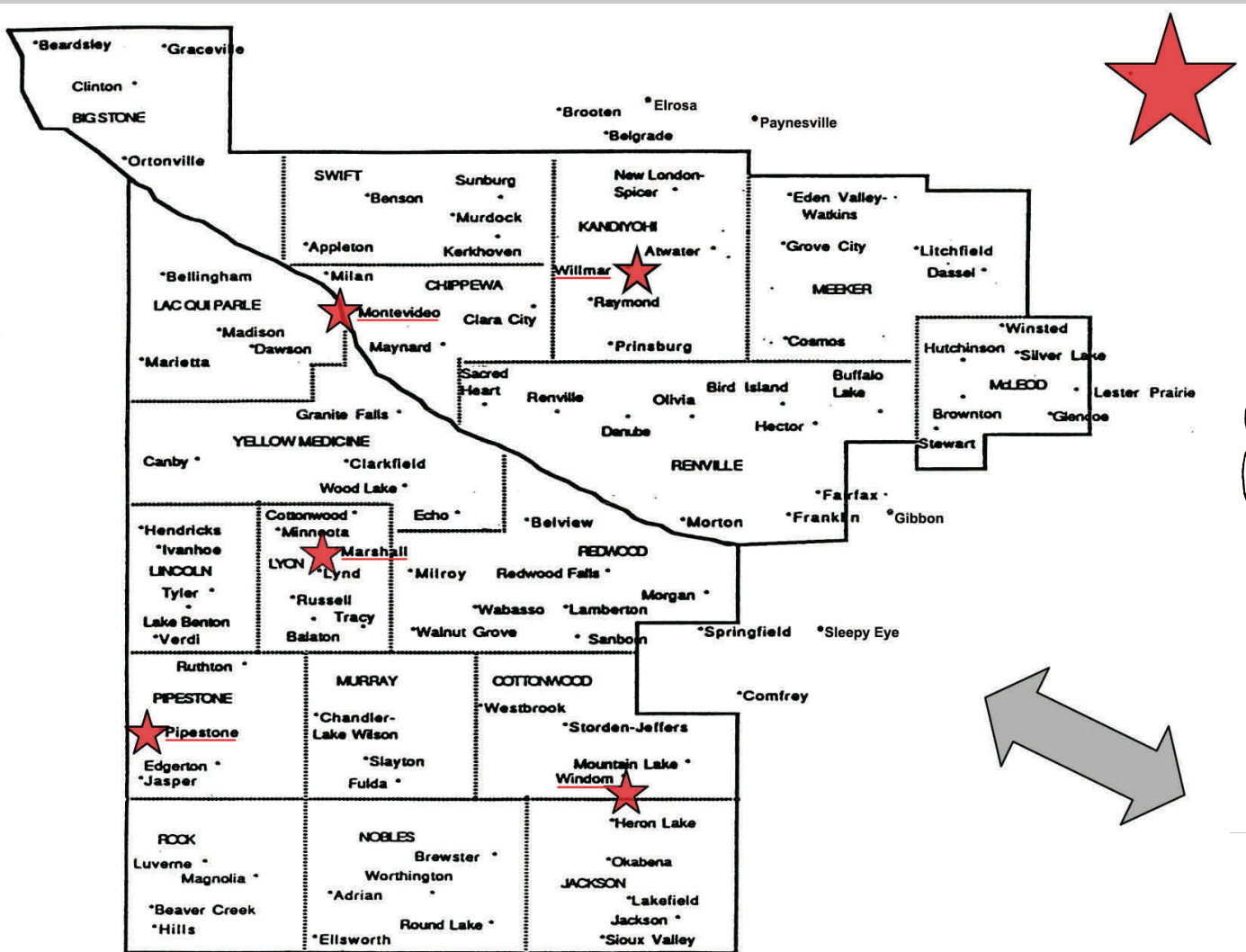
18

Number of counties served by the
SW/WC Service Cooperative

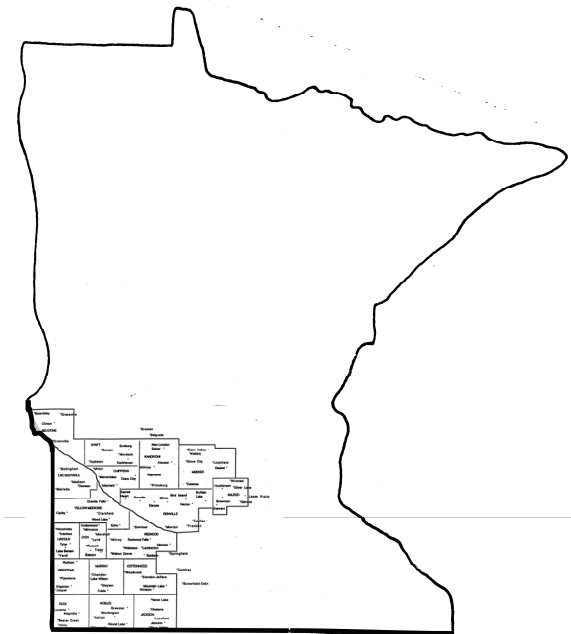
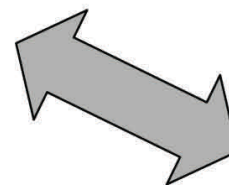
12,500

Square miles in the SW/WC
Service Cooperative Region

Map of the SW/WC Service Cooperative Region



Represents Office locations



A Glimpse of the Past

An adequate history of the SW/WC Service Cooperative is difficult to piece together. Its roots are deep into such places as the Granite Falls Fire Hall, Montevideo's Hotel Hunt, the Cyrus Public School and the Universities at Morris and Marshall.

Cooperative activities in the 1960s included a series of meetings beginning in Morris in 1965, that led in 1966, to the creation of the Southwest and West Central Minnesota Educational Research and Development Council (ERDC). The ERDC was independently organized by area school superintendents who were willing, without federal support, to develop a dues structure to fund the council.

The ERDC was succeeded in 1973 by a pilot organization authorized by the State Legislature, the Southwest and West Central Educational Service Area (ESA). The Educational Media Center, begun by the Montevideo School District with a 1965 Title II grant, was donated to the ESA and was one of the first services offered by the ESA.

The ESA was so successful that in 1976 the Legislature expanded the concept to all regions of the state, and renamed the agencies ECSUs (Educational Cooperative Service Units). Governor's Planning Regions 6 & 8 combined to form one administrative entity and the SW/WC ESA became the SW/WC ECSU on July 1, 1976. The rest of the governor's planning regions formed their own ECSUs, as well, making a total of nine ECSUs in Minnesota.

The purpose of the ECSUs was to perform educational planning on a regional basis and to assist in meeting children's specific educational needs that may be better provided for by an ECSU than by the individual districts.

The 1992 State Legislature changed the enabling legislation for ECSUs to include providing services to cities, counties, and other governmental units. This legislative change reflects the state's attitude toward government operating in an efficient manner.

On July 1, 1995, through legislative action, the Minnesota ECSUs became Service Cooperatives. The Service Cooperative's Board of Directors officially named Regions 6 and 8 the Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative on August 23, 1995.

“The SW/WC Service Cooperative supports the efforts of the many districts it serves, by continually looking for programs that will support both the students' needs and the needs of the school district. Providing quality educational programs is a top priority.”

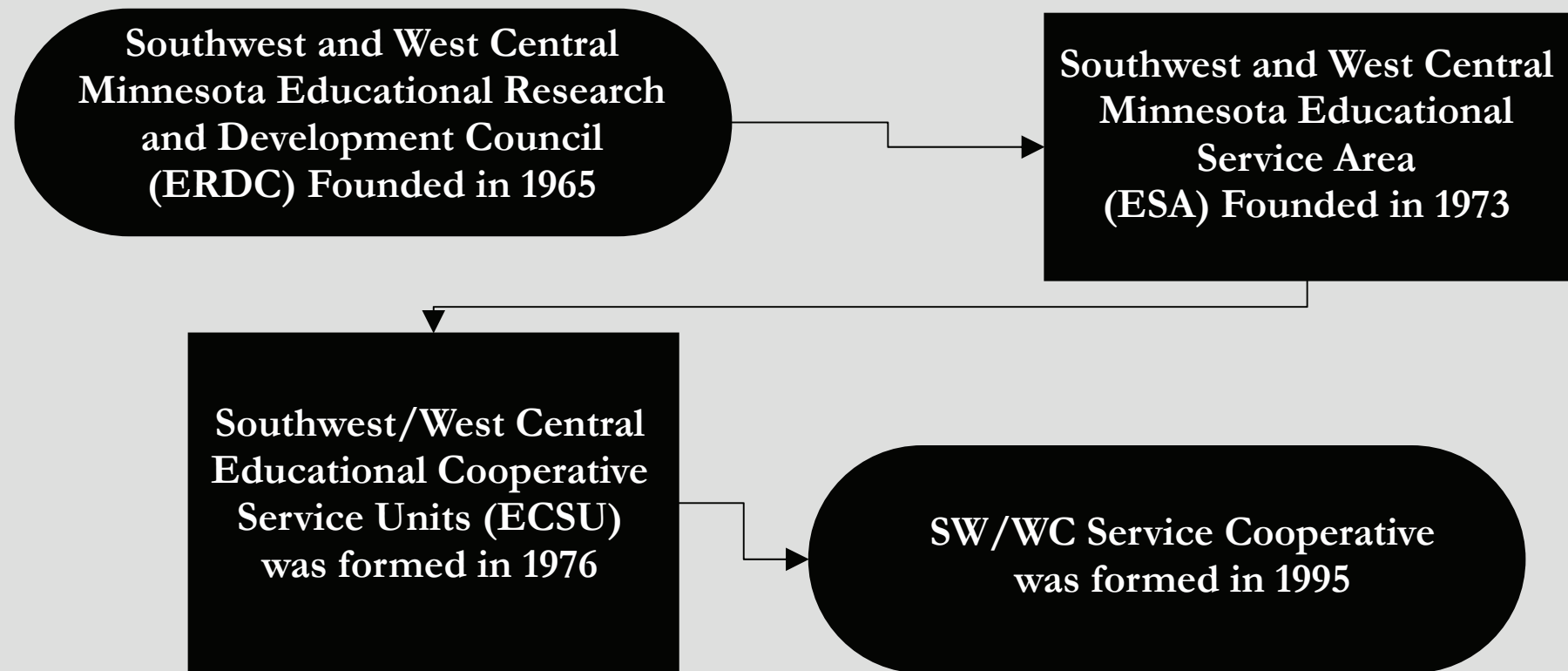
~ Gary Fisher

Superintendent

Luverne Public Schools



SW/WC Service Cooperative's Name Timeline



“The SW/WC Service Cooperative has been *THE* catalyst for meaningful collaboration among school districts throughout southwest Minnesota. The Executive Director and his staff are possibility thinkers! They are constantly looking for opportunities to help school leaders work together to improve the quality and efficiency of education. They have not been “stuck in the rut” but rather “have illuminated” the path for school leaders striving for improvement.

Perhaps at no time in it's history has the Service Cooperative's effectiveness been so evident as it has in the past year. The Cooperative facilitated the emergence and approval of the Flexible Learning Year proposal; it worked to improve efficiencies and quality of services by dissolving ‘special education territories’; and it advanced the regional RtI initiative on a continuum that makes it possible for all participating schools to benefit.”

~Rick Ellingworth
Superintendent
Redwood Area Public Schools

SW/WC Service Cooperative's

Divisions Of Excellence

*A Division of Excellence
combines comprehensive services
with highly experienced and educated staff
to deliver quality programs and services to our members.*

Mission

Through partnership, innovation, and exceptional leadership, our programs and services will meet the diverse needs of our members.

Vision

We will be known as the agency of choice that provides high quality, flexible, responsive, and innovative services to our school, city, county and other governmental agency members.

The priorities of the SW/WC Service Cooperative:

- ↪ We will develop a process for analyzing, developing and implementing programs and services that is based on an assessment of our members needs.
- ↪ We will continuously seek new opportunities to develop and maintain partnerships that result in added value and benefit to our members.
- ↪ We will continue to be innovative in our efforts to develop new programs and to re-design our current programs through assessing needs, conceptualizing solutions, and securing resources.
- ↪ We will provide clear communications to our key stakeholders in an effort to increase understanding and awareness of our vision and mission.
- ↪ We will provide high quality programs, combined with excellent service, in order to ensure and maintain strong fiscal health.
- ↪ We will utilize new and existing technologies to support and enhance the work we do.

Division of
Special Education
Services



Division of
Teaching & Learning
Services

Division of
Risk Management
Services

Division of
Administrative
Services



Division of Special Education Services



Teresa Ostlie
Director of Special Education
Montevideo Office



Dave Lammers
Director of Special Education
Pipestone Office



Dr. Mary Palmer
Director of Special Education
Willmar Office



Erv Marquardt
Director of Special Education
Windom Office

Number of students served through
Special Education Programs:
~**Over 5,200**

Number of students who received
hearing screenings through audiology
services:
~**875**

Number of students who graduated
from Red Rock Ridge School, Windom,
in June 2010:
~**30**

Number of educators who attend the Day
of Excellence Conference:
~**136**

Special Education Programs

The Special Education Offices, located in Montevideo, Pipestone, Willmar and Windom, provide direct services to students and member school districts. The SW/WC Service Cooperative employs occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, and many other specialists.

Each office provides numerous training and workshop activities on a variety of topics, as well as bring a number of staff development activities to the region. They continue to find ways to collaborate on regional activities, as well as customizing training activities for the schools in their area.

All of the offices utilize a web-based IEP software system. The Special Education Forms software is a valuable tool for special education teachers in the region. The service SW/WC Service Cooperative also oversees the third party pay system and to date have helped districts access millions of dollars in revenue from this system. We continue to assist member districts in completing their applications for state and federal funding. In addition, the information for the state EDRS system was reported by the SW/WC Service Cooperative to ensure local funding for special education programs. We have also created a web based TSES Manual (Total Special Education System).

Educational Resource Library

The Educational Resource Library, housed in the Montevideo Office, is available to staff in participating school districts. By working with regular and special education teachers, the resource library will assist district staff in locating and using valuable instructional support materials for their classroom, such as teaching machines, instructional kits, videos, multi-media kits, games and books, and computer programs; all of which are designed to facilitate learning programs for children with special needs.

Alternative Learning Programs

Another part of the special education division includes the following programs: Belview Learning Center in Belview, Cosmos Learning Center in Cosmos Heartland Ranch School in Benson, and the Red Rock Ridge School in Windom. These programs provide educational settings for a wide range of students with varying abilities.

Interpreter Training & Mentoring Project

This project is designed to assist interpreters to obtain training and certification, and to offer certification test opportunities. It is a partnership with MN West in the development of a Deaf Studies Program.

Developmental Cognitive Disability (DCD) Training and Network Project

This project establishes networking activities for individuals serving DCD students. It provides instruction in behavioral strategies specific to DCD, training opportunities in the area, a state DCD network, and training for paraprofessionals relating to the DCD student.

Speech Language Tele-practice

One of our newer services is Speech Language Tele-practice. Using interactive voice and video technologies, an ASHA certified speech language pathologist provides individualized speech language services at the child's school during the school day. The speech language pathologist is located in the Benson School District. Special video equipment paired with Internet technology enables the child and speech language pathologist to see and hear each other during live interactive speech language sessions. Additional programs, pictures or Internet pages may be shared to elicit communication. Both speech and language skills may be addressed. SW/WC Service Cooperative staff have been called upon to provide technology assistance and training to other agencies across the country.

Autism Training Project

This project provides customized training for teams at the local district level, with a goal of establishing teams in each district with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorder. This is a collaborative effort between all the local districts, SW/WC Service Cooperative, and MDE.

Regional Assistive Technology Project

The Assistive Technology Lending Library and Demonstration Lab lends equipment and materials to school districts which enhance special education learner outcomes and quality of life. Items are available for short-term loan to assist the school team in determining the effectiveness of specific forms of technology. The Lab provides on-site assistance in enhancing a special needs learner's outcomes through consultation, training and demonstration. The Lab is located at the Marshall office, and also works with Project Discovery to help assure appropriate accommodations in vocational assessments of students with disabilities. The Used Equipment Referral Project assists school districts and families who have assistive technology equipment they are no longer using and desire to sell.

Outreach Clinics

Gillette Outreach Clinics are available to anyone (people of all ages with disabilities, families, therapists, teachers, counselors, social workers, etc). Clinics can provide general information, demonstrations, hands on work and/or training for many types of assistive technology, as well as, discussing specific needs and product recommendations.

Transition Outcomes Project

This is a 6-phase project aimed at improving transition services for junior high and senior high students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The project provides training to special education teachers, families, and agency staff to develop practical transition plans using a student-centered process.

Regional Low Incidence

Project Consultants serve as ongoing resources for school personnel, families and others serving students with Low Incidence handicaps. Regional Low Incidence staff rely on a multidisciplinary approach to meeting the student's education needs. Students served range in age from birth to 21.

The consultants are available to assist with: in-service, consideration of assistive technology, reviewing progress, developing educational strategies, for organization related skills, effective design of the physical environment, self-advocacy skills, evacuation plans, mobility issues, access to curricular and education experiences, transition planning from one setting to another as well as transition to life after high school.

Low Incidence refers to children who are: deaf/hard of hearing, visually impaired, deaf/blind, physically impaired, autistic, other health impaired, have a developmental cognitive disability, or have a traumatic brain injury.



Division of Teaching and Learning Services

We strive to be a valuable partner with our member districts in their efforts to provide quality education by:

- Recognizing and responding to local needs of member schools and districts
- Building effective relationships with administration and teaching staff
- Building capacity and creating sustainability for a continuous school improvement process
- Working collaboratively with other SW/WC Service Cooperative programs and staff

Number of:

- Districts Receiving School Improvement/AYP Services: **18**
- Schools in Minnesota West Carl Perkins/Tech Prep Consortium: **40**
- Schools Participating in Math Science Teacher Academy: **11**
- Schools Participating in Shared Curriculum Services Project: **6**

Number of students attending:

Children's Author & Illustrator Program: **4,935**

Science and Nature Conference: **1,174**

Conference for Young Artists: **703**

Conference for Young Writers: **703**

Culinary Skills Challenge: **193**

Technical Skills Challenge: **119**



Bob Braun
Director of Teaching
and Learning



Student Activities

SW/WC Service Cooperative plans and coordinates quality programs, conferences and competitions for students in the eighteen counties of southwest and west central Minnesota. The activities are for all students including regular ed, students with special needs, gifted and talented, home schooled, etc. The popularity of these activities is evident by the continued growth in participation with over 23,000 participants last year.

Conferences

- *Conference for Young Artists (grades K-8)
- *Conference for Young Writers (grades 3-8)
- *Science & Nature Conference (grades K-8)

Competitions

- *Creative Writing Contest (grades 3-12)
- *Culinary Skills Challenge (grades 9-12)
- *Junior High Knowledge Bowl (grades 7-9)
- *Senior High Knowledge Bowl (grades 7-12)
- *Regional Chess Tournament (grades K-12)
- *Spelling Bee (grades 5-8)
- *Technical Skills Challenge (grades 9-12)
- * "Water is Life" Art Contest (grades 9-12)



Other Programs

- *Career Exploration Days (grade 10)
- *Children's Author & Illustrator Program (elementary schools)

Math & Science Teacher Academy (MSTA) Grant

The Math and Science Teacher Partnership (MSTP) is a continuation of the Math and Science Teacher Academy Grant from 2008-2009. We provide services to participating districts and teachers. During the 2009-2010 school year, the project worked specifically with grades 3-8 math teachers on the Accelerating Student Mathematics Achievement to Grade Level. This project is in partnership with the Minnesota River Valley Education District (MRVED) and Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU). Eleven districts (59 teachers) participated in the project this past year. This grant is continuing through the 2010-2011 school year & will focus on The Nature of Science & Engineering strand of the 2009 MN Science Standards with teachers in grades 3-6.

Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Services

The SW/WC Service Cooperative can provide many services in the area of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to our member districts. This year, we worked with a group of districts to coordinate curriculum mapping software and textbook purchases. We also provided professional development opportunities in a wide variety of areas. Additionally, we contracted with 6 districts to provide direct services within a district, such as curriculum mapping, curriculum coordination, staff development, standards alignment and more. We strive to meet the needs of our districts in the most efficient, cost effective manner possible.

Carl Perkins and Technical Education

The Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium is comprised of 40 high schools and Minnesota West Community and Technical College, our post-secondary partner. The consortium works closely with regional agencies, businesses, and other consortiums throughout the state in order to offer the best services possible to participating high schools. High schools that are involved in the Minnesota West Carl Perkins/Tech Prep Consortium have the opportunity to make improvements to their state-approved career and technical education (CTE) programs using consortium funds. All proposed improvements must meet strict state and federal guidelines. To be eligible to make local improvements, schools complete an application that specifies the approved program and the expenditure they would like to make. If approved, the expense is paid by the SW/WC Service Cooperative, the consortium's fiscal host, directly to the vendor. Each year several hundred thousand dollars worth of improvements are made to regional CTE programs. Examples of improvements include: text books that link to industry standards, consulting services, mileage and sub fee reimbursement for staff development, commercial grade equipment, industry based software, instructional videos, etc. Many schools in the region use Carl Perkins funds to purchase career assessment instruments and on-line career information systems to support career development activities in their school.

The consortium also works with numerous agency and post-secondary partners to provide career and education planning experiences through an interactive "Career Expo" event and through "Project Discovery" a regional career assessment and exploration program. Having students demonstrate what they have learned and giving them a chance to develop leadership skills are central goals for the consortium. Our consortium provides strong support to student organizations (FCCLA, BPA and FFA) and is proud to have some of the strongest in the state. We also host two very popular regional competitions each year: "Culinary Skills Challenge" and the "Technical Skills Challenge". These events are led by industry partners and provide students the opportunity to learn about the expectations of industry and to participate in competitions that help them reach high standards.

School Improvement Project

The SW/WC Service Cooperative is in its fourth year of providing a team of school improvement specialists to work with school districts not making adequate yearly progress. The overall goal of the team is to help districts increase student achievement. School improvement specialists assist AYP schools and district teams to increase their knowledge and skills in the school improvement process. They assist schools in developing improvement plans in order to identify strategies for school improvement and professional development. Some activities include conducting needs assessments, and cleaning, analyzing and interpreting their testing data.

The school improvement team can provide specific assistance to districts in areas such as data retreats, NWEA, curriculum mapping, assessment processes, and cohorts for formative assessments, leadership development and sheltered instruction. School improvement specialists provide help and coordinate the provision of professional development, including workshops and on-site consultation. Another role they have is to help schools and districts identify and implement effective strategies for improvement. They help them build internal capacity through data/assessment retreats and curriculum mapping. This allows school districts to use data to drive decision making regarding instructional curriculum. The school improvement department also provides support for schools as they analyze their own performance and their student achievement, as well as build relationships with leadership teams in order to support internal efforts at school improvement.

Division of Administrative Services

Number of people attending:

Technology Conference: 145

School Business Conference: 130

SMARTBoard Conference: 104

The Division of Administrative Services is committed to delivering high quality, reliable services to our members and partners, which exceed expectations for responsiveness and expertise.

“I have always found the SW/WC Service Cooperative staff committed to working collaboratively with their member school districts in providing unique programs and opportunities for students in southwest Minnesota. The SW/WC Service Cooperative staff serve as a reliable and trusted resource consistently delivering professional and high quality services to members. The SW/WC Service Cooperative has proven to be a valuable nexus for us in southwest Minnesota.”

~Keith Kottke
Superintendent
Springfield Public Schools



Darin Jensen
Director of Administrative Services

RMIC

Regional Management Information Center (RMIC) provides finance, human resource, payroll, and student administrative support services to districts and educational cooperatives.

Business Services are provided to all contracted districts and educational cooperatives. Besides assisting the districts with maintaining their school district records, our staff provide advice and assistance with accounting, payroll, HR and bookkeeping procedures. They also serve as a regional liaison between local districts and the Minnesota Department of Education school finances staff and other various state agencies. Accounting assistance services may be purchased as an alternative to hiring an accountant or contracting from an auditing firm to perform accounting functions.

SMART HR services are provided to the districts that use SMART Systems HR/payroll and eR Modules, which produce payroll, retirement, direct deposit, leave, quarterly and year-end tax reports. The program is also capable of storing and reporting a wide range of human resource information, as well as tracking employee flexible benefit and leave information. An online employee self service website is available for employees to view pay and leave detail, tax, flex info, emergency contact and licensure information.

STAR (Staff Automated Reporting) reporting consists of reporting licensed and non-licensed school staff data to the Minnesota Department of Education. The data reported on STAR will be used to determine licensure violations, highly qualified staff, supply and demand studies, and to fulfill state and federal reporting requirements.

MARSS (Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System) reporting consists of automated reporting of student data to the Minnesota Department of Education. Data elements are maintained and reported by school districts for each student attending a public school in Minnesota. The primary focus of MARSS information is the accurate accounting of students resulting in payment of state and federal dollars.

Health and Safety

The Environmental/Occupational Health and Safety Management Program operated jointly by SW/WC Service Cooperative and MacNeil Environmental, Inc. (MEI), provides program services including: Employee Right-to-Know, Bloodborne Pathogens, Infectious Waste, Accident Reduction Program/AWAIR, Emergency Action Plan, Asbestos, Lockout/Tagout, Hearing Conservation, Confined Space Entry, Laboratory Standard/Chemical Hygiene Plan, Compressed Gas Safety, Aboveground/Underground Storage Tanks, Community Right-To-Know, Respiratory Protection, Personal Protective Equipment, Lead in Water, Radon, Hazardous Waste, Indoor Air Quality, Integrated Pest Management, Forklift Safety, Machine Guarding, Playground Safety, Food Safety, and Electrical Safety.

The Health and Safety Management Assistance Program provides consultation and coordination of services related to the management of environmental health and safety concerns for school districts. These services may include: Assist schools in identifying and prioritizing health and safety plans and programs, Conduct on-site management assistance work for a minimum of two site visits per district per fiscal year, Interpretations of mandatory requirements from the Minnesota Department of Education, Assistance completing mandatory reports such as Attachment 99, IAQ information and development, machine guarding, etc., Assistance to determine what is allowable under Health & Safety funding, Mock OSHA building walk-through, Assistance with Machine Guarding, and Playground Safety Inspection.

The Drug and Alcohol Management Program is provided by MEI, and complies with the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines. The program includes drug/alcohol management plan development, supervisor training, random selection for drug/alcohol testing, on-site alcohol testing, and on-site specimen collection.

Cooperative Purchasing

The Cooperative Purchasing program offers a wide variety of products and services with excellent volume discounts to members. By combining the purchasing power of the members of SW/WC Service Cooperative and service cooperatives throughout the state, we achieve volume pricing on quality products and services from reputable vendors. All programs are a result of bids or negotiated contracts. Many of our agreements with vendors were established through a formal bid process. Purchasing from these vendors satisfies Minnesota competitive bidding requirements. Members can purchase directly from the vendors and purchase only what they need, when they need it. No need to buy in large quantities to get a great price. The Cooperative Purchasing team is dedicated to providing you with the best price, quality and service available. We strive to make sure that you will receive the best experience possible when purchasing from our partnered vendors.

Technology

The staff of SW/WC Service Cooperative's Information Technology Department continues to provide our members with access to high-quality technology services to meet their diverse needs. In the current times of economic hardship we have continuously found new ways to expand our shared services offerings in the technology field such as Technology Coordination and Integration Services. These services provide districts and organizations with full access to a staff of IT professionals who are available at your fingertips to help out with planning and issues as needed. We are confident that the access that we provide you with these services will provide the best value you can find anywhere. Our Technology Coordination program has become well-known throughout the state and we are now offering oversight and assistance to other Service Cooperatives in providing technology services to their own members. The expansion of our services to other Service Cooperatives serves as a testament to the quality and need for these services not only in our region, but throughout the state. Topping off our Technology Coordination Service is the incorporation of our Technology Integration Program, which will provide training and mentoring in the use of your IT resources to operate more effectively and provide the greatest impact for the use of technology for instruction.

We continue to expand the functionality of our Student Information System, TSIS, and Data Warehouse Application, Cognos, through our partnership with TIES, a cooperative based in St. Paul. The developments and new features added to this reliable and robust system are continually making it the top choice for Student Information Systems and Data Driven Decision Making tools in Minnesota. New advancements in Personal Learning Plans, a new philosophy for the use of technology systems in regular education are now entering the national spotlight. The incorporation of Personal Learning Plans, TSIS, Cognos and our new Lite Lunch Point of Sale System make our Student System offering the most valuable and comprehensive student data management systems available. Top that with the continuous enhancements made to the system based on the feedback and suggestions from our districts and it is also a student data management system that our schools can feel ownership in.

Two of our veteran programs, the Wide Area Network and Distance Learning continue to thrive. Our Wide Area Network continues to perform at a very satisfying level, and the use of Internet2 has taken off. An upgrade to our Internet capacity will take place on July 1, 2010 to provide our districts with the added bandwidth necessary to bring our districts into the future. Together our districts will be able to continue to leverage the WAN to jointly purchase technologies that districts cannot afford to purchase on their own. The coming year will bring forth a number of joint technology acquisition and grant opportunities that simply would not be feasible for any one of our member districts to pursue on their own, an added value to the collaborative effort our Wide Area Network Consortium brings to its members.

Division of Risk Management Services

The Goal of the SW/WC Service Cooperative's Health Insurance Pool Program is to:

1. Reduce the individual risk for our member groups.
2. Stabilize rates for our members on a year-to-year basis.
3. Negotiate with the claims administrator, on behalf of our members, a competitive price, product design options, and services.
4. Provide educational trainings and workshops for our members and their employees.

Our Risk Management Team:

Cliff Carmody, Executive Director
Doug Deragisch, Director of Risk Management
Bobbie Carmody, Administrative Assistant
Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator
Annette Miller, Director of Finance
Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services
Dan Weir, Consultant

~Our School Pool has 60 groups totaling 4,469 members.

~Our CCOGA Pool (cities, counties and other governmental agencies) has 123 groups totaling 5,367 members.

“There isn't an easy fix to our health insurance issues. The Service Cooperative provides the pooling ability along with the expertise to assist us as we look for solutions to help our employees.”

~*Loy Woelber*

Superintendent
WWG Public Schools
School Pool Advisory Committee Chair



Doug Deragisch
Director of Risk Management

History of the Pools

In 1985, the SW/WC Service Cooperative entered into its first operating agreement to provide a school district insurance pool for its members. Since that time, the risk management services have focused on a “minimum premium plan” that provides a self-insured health insurance product for schools, cities, counties, and other governmental agencies.

In 2003, the research and development of VEBA products was completed, with availability of the VEBA plan for schools in July, 2003, and cities, counties, and other governmental units in January, 2004. In 2008, Health Savings Account (HSA) became an available plan option for all groups. The development of new programs and services continued with the advent of the Care Support Program focusing on the management of chronic conditions, and an emphasis on health and wellness initiatives through the Worksite Wellness Program.

Today, risk management services provide a cost-efficient health insurance option for our members. With flexibility and choice of plan design, a complete network with deep discounts, low administrative and stop-loss fees, and new consumer-directed health products, we believe our school pool and city/county/

other governmental agency pool have worked in helping our members find the best option for their health insurance dollar.



Health Cost Management Program Available

With approval from the School Pool Advisory Committee the SW/WC Service Cooperative initiated a Health Cost Management Program (wellness) for the 2008-09 school year. The program was evaluated in the Spring of 2009, and based on the positive feedback was approved by the School Pool Advisory Committee to continue the program in 2009-10. The intent of the program is to assist school groups in developing and implementing an employee health cost management program. Incentive grants were made available based on school size to help groups offset the cost of running their program. The overall goals of the program are to have; 1) healthier individuals with improved self-esteem, 2) employees that perform optimally at work and home, and 3) lower health plan utilization. In the second year of the program 17 districts took advantage of the Health Cost Management Program with approximately 35% of all employees in the pool involved in this year's program.

“In these chaotic times with healthcare being a focal point of national debate and costs continuing to rise at exponential rates it is good to have an organization that one can rely on for straight answers to those difficult questions. The SW/WC Service Cooperative insurance pool and its related Risk Management Services provides that needed advice and help as districts work to contain the spiraling healthcare/insurance costs that they are faced with. By participating in the insurance pool a district receives the best options, information, advice and pricing that are available in these most uncertain times .”

~Bruce Lamprecht

Business Manager

Marshall Public Schools

Benefits of Pooling

Strength and Security in Numbers. Statewide, there are over 500 groups who partner with their regional service cooperative for health care coverage.

Leveraged Purchasing Power. Partnering with the SW/WC Service Cooperative protects your employees and your bottom line. Public employer groups of all sizes achieve purchasing power usually reserved for very large employers. This collective group participation maximizes your limited health benefit dollars.

Great Stability Through Shared Risk. Pooling results in more stable and predictable health care rates. With insurance pooling, your risk is spread among similar public employer groups participating in the plan. This reduces the need for sizable rate increases following a year of high claims, and promotes a willingness to pay a little more in years of low claims. Smaller yearly rate fluctuations contribute to greater stability, enhanced risk management, and long-term financial security for your organization.

The Health Plans People Want. The SW/WC Service Cooperative, along with the other Minnesota Service Cooperatives, have teamed with Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) to offer the state's most comprehensive health care coverage. The array of benefit plans features innovative and flexible plan designs, competitive pricing, member health management and improvement programs, and dedicated customer service and support.

Preserving Your Group's Autonomy. When you join forces with other public employer groups in your area, you maintain your group's independence and local autonomy.

Keeping Your Health Care Local. BCBS has the state's largest provider network, in addition to dedicated customer service, operations, sales and account management teams.

Good Health is Good Business. There are many health plan support programs and services through BCBS.

Lower Costs. There are lower administrative fees, a 20-25% lower stop loss rate than the commercial market, lower target loss ratio for stop loss claims, and consumer directed plans such as VEBA and HSAs.

Fiscal Integrity

*SW/WC Service Cooperative is a public agency.
No state or local tax dollars are used
to fund our programs and services.
Operating revenue is derived
from membership fees and grants.
We invite corporate and foundation sponsorship
of student and adult
enrichment programs and services.*

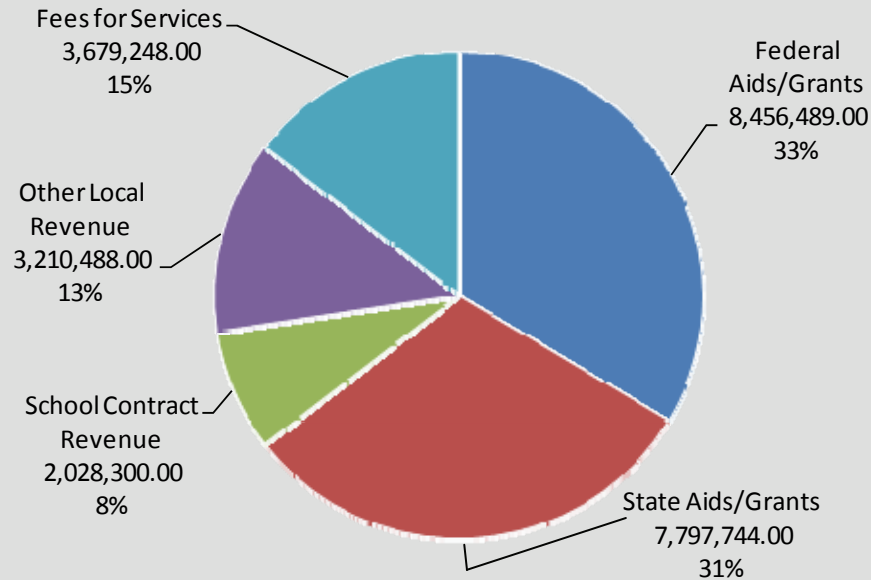
“It has been a positive experience for our staff to have the opportunity to be a part of this specialized training in math conducted by Service Cooperative staff and teaching personnel at Southwest State. Staff return from the meetings having received something that they feel they can use in their classroom. I know that the opportunity to work with fellow peers that teach at their grade levels has been a real positive addition to the program. We are glad to have been offered this learning opportunity. It is all for the students and their improved learning and increasing their level of excitement about math learning.”

*~Raymond Staats,
Middle/Secondary Principal
Pipestone Area Schools*



Annette Miller
Director of Finance

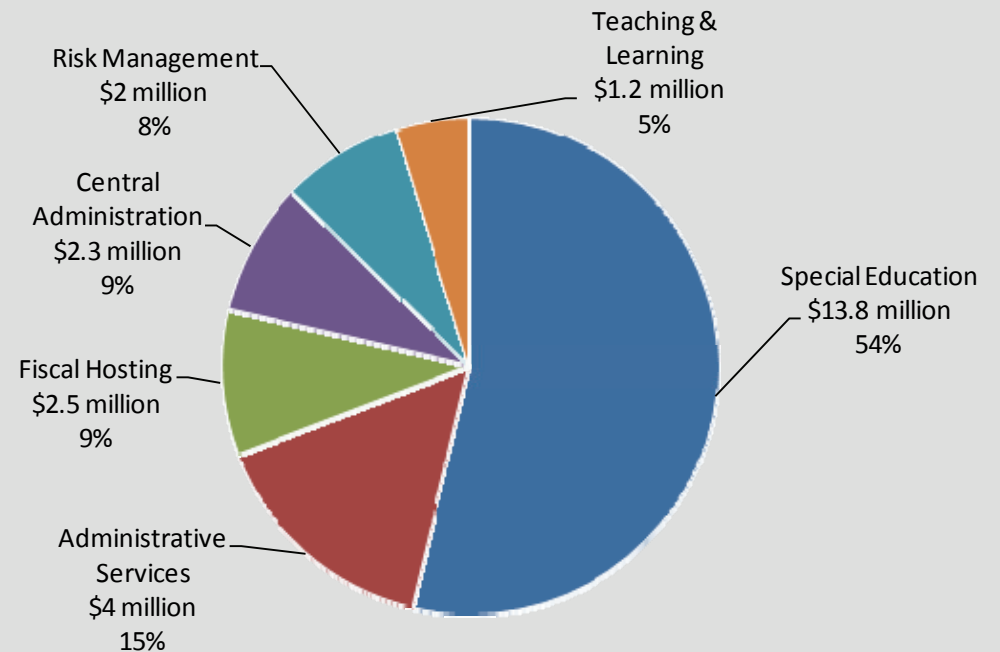
**Budgeted 2009-10 Annual Revenues - \$25.2 million
(Excluding Insurance Premiums)**



“I feel that the Math and Science Teacher Grant program has been very beneficial in my growth as a classroom teacher. Over the past 2 years I have gotten to meet and talk to a number of teachers in our area and collaborate on the curriculum. I am teaching and finding ways to improve its effectiveness.”

~*Keven Larson*
Elementary Teacher
Minneota Public Schools

**Budgeted 2009-10 Annual Expenditures - \$25.8 million
(Excluding Insurance Premiums)**



“Buffalo Lake/Hector School District was hit hard by the economic issues of the state. But following the realization of the depth of those issues, BLH like every other public school in Minnesota, will continue to deliver quality opportunities for our students—working with our colleagues, assisting each other with support as needed.”

~*Rick Clark*
Superintendent
Buffalo Lake/Hector Public Schools

Valuing Employees

“I have really enjoyed my time working for the Service Cooperative. My favorite thing has been working in districts with great teachers and administrators, who do the complex work of education with skill and heart. I want to thank all the districts with whom I’ve worked and the wonderful colleagues with whom I’ve had the privilege to collaborate.”

~Carol Svingen

Response to Intervention Supervisor
Retiring July 1, 2010, after 16 years of
dedicated service



Edna Gossen
Operations Manager

The SW/WC Service Cooperative employs a wide range of employees. Below is a sampling of some of the varied professionals we have on staff. Out of 241 employees...

Title	Number of Employees
Audiologist.....	2
Autism Specialist.....	2
Bilingual Paraprofessional.....	5
Career Accommodation Specialist.....	1
Career and Tech Project Coordinator.....	1
Coordinator of Educational Programs.....	5
Cultural Liaison.....	3
ECSE Coordinator and Teachers.....	5
Health Cost Management Specialist.....	1
ITV American Sign Language Teacher.....	1
LAN/PC Specialist/Technicians.....	2
MARSS/Student Services Coordinator.....	1
Math Specialist.....	1
Mental Health Professional.....	2
Occupational Therapist/COTAs.....	19
Physical Therapist/Physical Therapist Assistant.....	4
RtI Supervisor and RtI Coordinator.....	3
Sales and Marketing Coordinator.....	1
School Improvement Specialist.....	4
School Psychologist.....	13
School Social Worker.....	9
Speech/Language Pathologist.....	12
Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing.....	6
Technology Coordinator.....	5
Technology Integration Specialist.....	1
Third Party Billing Assistant.....	1



Cliff Carmody, Executive Director, received the 2009 MREA Distinguished Service Award



Josh Sumption, Information Technology Manager, received the TIES 2009 District Technology Leader Award.

Terri Collins, special education teacher at the Heartland Ranch School in Benson, received a 2009-10 College Access Champion Award from the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation.

We value and practice initiative, ingenuity, and creativity.

Donna Day Beck, teacher at the Red Rock Ridge School, was named as a regional honoree in the WEM Foundation's 2009 Outstanding Educator Awards program.



Belview Learning Center Staff

“What a terrific group! The people who work at SW/WC Service Cooperative make its mission statement come alive! They are personable, friendly, responsive and expert servants who make a difference for students and staffs in our part of the state.”

~Bill Strom
Superintendent
Mountain Lake Public Schools
Superintendents' Advisory Council Chair

The SW/WC Service Cooperative serves as fiscal host and provides HR and Administrative Services to the following two programs:
CRIC-Cottonwood River Integration Collaborative, New Ulm
WCIC-West Central Integration Collaborative, Willmar



Marshall Office Staff

Member Services

56

Number of Regular Public School Members

22

Number of Charter and Non-Public School Members

61

Number of City Members

16

Number of County Members

44

Number of Other Governmental Agency (OGA) Members

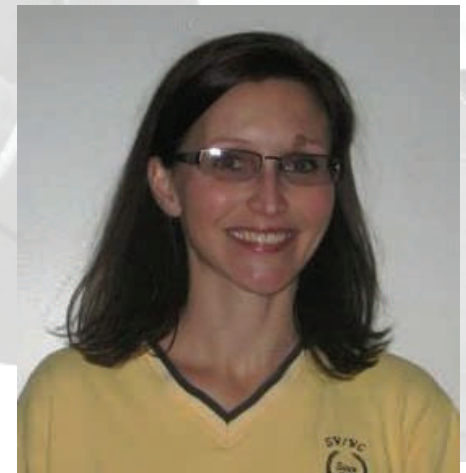
“The SW/WC Service Cooperative has provided the Renville County West school district with expertise in many areas of school operation and educational programming. They are, without a doubt, an integral part of assisting us in providing the quality of education and opportunities our students, families and community members have come to expect.”

~*Lance Bagstad*
Superintendent
Renville County West Public Schools

“The SW/WC Service Cooperative provides on-going professional development opportunities for administrators and staff members that we could not provide without their partnership.”

The professionals from SW/WC Service Cooperative consistently provide realistic, relevant, and research-based guidance to the members of our school improvement team thereby enriching our efforts and ensuring our progress.”

~*Daron VanderHeiden*
Superintendent
Hutchinson Public Schools



Shelly Maes
Manager of Member Services

2009-2010 Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative Members

Adrian Schools	City of Jasper	Cottonwood County DAC	Marshall Area Christian School	Renville County
Adult Client Training Service	City of Kerkhoven	Countryside Public Health	Marshall Municipal Utilities	Renville County SWCD
Advanced Opportunities	City of Lake Elmo	Dawson/Boyd Schools	Marshall Schools	Renville County West Schools
Area II MN River Basin Projects, Inc.	City of Lakefield	E.C.H.O Charter School	Meeker County	Rock County
Atwater/Cosmos/Grove City Schools	City of Lamberton	Eden Valley/Watkins Schools	Mid-MN Development Commission	Rock County DAC
Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center	City of Madison	Edgerton Schools	Milroy Area Charter School	Round Lake Schools
Belgrade/Brooten/Elrosa Schools	City of Marshall	Ellsworth Schools	Milroy Schools	Russell/Tyler/Ruthton Schools
Benson Schools	City of Maynard	Fulda Schools	Minneota Schools	Rural Enterprises for Acceptable Living/SWCIL
BOLD Schools	City of Mendota Heights	Gibbon/Fairfax/Winthrop Schools	Montevideo Schools	St. Anne's School, Wabasso
Brewster Schools	City of Milroy	Glencoe/Silver Lake Schools	Mountain Lake Christian School	St. Edward's School, Minneota
Buffalo Lake/Hector Schools	City of Minneota	Heartland Community Action	Mountain Lake Schools	St. Mary's School, Bird Island
Butterfield Schools	City of Montevideo	Hendricks Schools	Murray County	St. Mary's School, Tracy
Canby Schools	City of Mountain Lake	Heron Lake/Okabena Schools	Murray County Central Schools	St. Paul Conservatory for the Performing Arts
Cedar Mountain Schools	City of New Prague	Hiawatha Manor-Pipestone	Murray County DAC	St. Peter's School, Canby
Cedar Riverside Community School, Minneapolis	City of Newport	Hills/Beaver Creek Schools	New Heights School, Stillwater	St. Raphael School, Springfield
Chippewa County	City of Oak Grove	Holy Redeemer School, Marshall	New Life Treatment Center	Samuel Lutheran School, Marshall
City of Adrian	City of Oakdale	Holy Trinity School, Winsted	Nobles County	Sleepy Eye Schools
City of Appleton	City of Pipestone	Hospice of Murray County, Inc.	Nobles County SWCD	Southwest Regional Development Commission
City of Atwater	City of Plymouth	HRA of Jackson	Odyssey Charter School, Brooklyn Center	Southwest Christian School, Edgerton
City of Benson	City of Prior Lake	HRA of Redwood Falls	Ortonville Schools	Springfield Schools
City of Bird Island	City of Renville	Hutchinson Schools	Ortonville Area Health Services	SW MN Housing Partnership
City of Buffalo Lake	City of Rosemount	Ivanhoe Schools	PACT 4 Families Collaborative	SW MN Opportunity Council (SMOC)
City of Canby	City of Round Lake	Jackson County	Parkview Home, Belview	Swift County
City of Carver	City of Russell	Jackson County Central Schools	Parkview Manor, Ellsworth	Swift County-Benson Hospital
City of Cosmos	City of Sacred Heart	Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg Schools	Paynesville Schools	Tracy Area Schools
City of Cottonwood	City of Scandia	Kandiyohi Area Transit	Pioneerland Library System	Wabasso Schools
City of DeGraff	City of Slayton	Kandiyohi County	Pipestone Area Schools	Westbrook Public Utilities
City of Ellsworth	City of Slayton	Kandiyohi County SWCD	Pipestone County	Westbrook/Walnut Grove Schools
City of Fairfax	City of Spicer	Lac qui Parle County	Pipestone County Medical Center	Western Community Action
City of Franklin	City of Springfield	Lac qui Parle Valley Schools	Pipestone County SWCD	Willmar Schools
City of Fulda	City of St. Paul Park	Lake Benton Schools	Prairie Five Community Action	Willmar Municipal Utilities Comm.
City of Granite Falls	City of Stewart	Lake Minnetonka Conservation District	Prairie Lakes Youth Programs	Windom Schools
City of Greenfield	City of Stillwater	Lakeview Schools	Prinsburg Schools	Worthington Schools
City of Hanley Falls	City of Tyler	Lester Prairie Schools	Progress, Inc.	Worthington Area Language Academy
City of Hendricks	City of Vadnais Heights	Lincoln County	Red Rock Central Schools	Yellow Medicine County
City of Heron Lake	City of West St. Paul	Lincoln County SWCD	Red Rock Rural Water Systems	Yellow Medicine East Schools
City of Hugo	City of Willmar	Lincoln/Pipestone Rural Water	Redwood Area Schools	
City of Ivanhoe	City of Windom	Luverne Schools	Redwood County	*60 Cooperative Purchasing Members from South Dakota
City of Jackson	Clara City Nursing Home	Lynd Schools	Redwood County SWCD	
	Clarkfield Area Charter School	Lyon County	Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area	
	Cologne Academy, Cologne	MACCRAY Schools		
	Comfrey Schools			
	Community Christian School, Willmar			
	Cottonwood County			

Governance

*An elected board of directors
representing our membership governs us.
Advisory committees provide
planning and evaluation input.
We operate as a regional system
delivering programs and services
responsive to our members and others.*

2009-2010 Superintendent Advisory Council

Bill Strom, Chair, Mountain Lake Public Schools
Dan Deitte, Vice Chair, Minneota Public Schools
Gary Fisher, Past Chair, Luverne Public Schools
Lance Bagstad, Renville County West Public Schools
John Brennan, Red Rock Central Public Schools
Rick Clark, Buffalo Lake/Hector Public Schools
Carol DeSmet, Holy Redeemer School
Rick Ellingworth, Redwood Area Public Schools
Roger Graff, Adrian Public Schools
Loren Hacker, Canby Public Schools
Martin Heidelberg, KMS Public Schools

Luther Heller, Montevideo Public Schools
Sharon Kabes, Southwest Minnesota State University
Dave Marlette, Tracy Public Schools
Chris Sonju, Glencoe/Silver Lake Public Schools
Allen Stoeckman, YME Public Schools
Ted Suss, Wabasso Public Schools
Robert Tews, Cedar Mountain Public Schools
Daron VanderHeiden, Hutchinson Public Schools
Michael Van Keulen, Minnesota West College
Klint Willert, Marshall Public Schools
Wayne Wormstadt, Windom Public Schools



“The Service Cooperative is a member driven organization with a mission to serve schools and agencies by partnering. We believe available resources are expanded by joining together in programs from cooperative purchasing to curriculum, special education to student activities, instruction to information technology.”

~Sally Vogt

Canby Public Schools
SW/WC Service Cooperative
Board Chair

Board of Directors



Sally Vogt, Board Chair
Canby Public Schools



Michael Zins, Vice-Chair
Fulda Public Schools



Richard Vroman, Clerk
Milroy Public Schools



Maydra Maas, Treasurer
Westbrook/Walnut Grove
Public Schools



Don Brugman
Windom Public Schools



Jan Fransen
Jackson County



Carol Morgan
Luverne Public Schools
New member as of January 2010



Kathryn Kelly
Renville County SWCD



Loren Mathews
Glencoe/Silver Lake
Public Schools



Michael O'Brien
New London/Spicer
Public Schools



Lynn Suter
Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg
Public Schools



Kathi Thymian
Ortonville Public Schools



Daniel Zimansky
Tracy Public Schools

SW/WC Service Cooperative

1420 East College Drive

Marshall, MN 56258

507.537.2240

Fax 507.537.7663

Montevideo Office

306 North First Street

Montevideo, MN 56265

320.269.9243

Fax 320.269.7132

Willmar Office

611 Southwest 5th Street

Willmar, MN 56201

320.231.5184

Fax 320.231.5302



Pipestone Office

PO Box 69, 713 6th Street Southeast

Pipestone, MN 56164

507.825.5858

Fax 507.825.4035

Windom Office

North Highway 71, PO Box 265

Windom, MN 56101

507.831.2936

Fax 507.831.2938

www.swsc.org

This report is published for members, educators, legislators, and business/government partners who enable us to provide relevant, cost-efficient, and high quality services throughout the 18-county southwest and west central Minnesota region. You'll see throughout the pages of this document why we are proud of who we are and what we do to make a difference every day in schools and communities.