

# SW/WC Service Cooperative



[www.swsc.org](http://www.swsc.org)



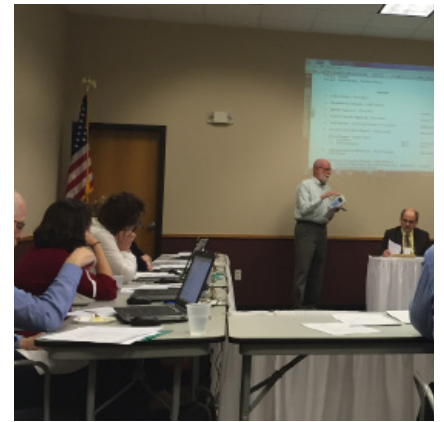
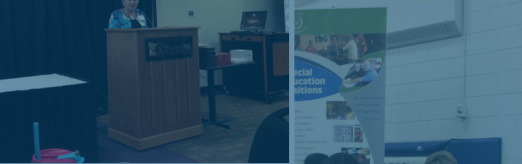
# Annual Report

To Our Partners 2014-2015





## Partnership.



## Innovation.



## Leadership.



## Service.



# From the Executive Director Cliff Carmody



Friends of SW/WC Service Cooperative:

The SW/WC Service Cooperative Board, administration, and staff focus on providing programs and services that meet the needs of our members!

This Annual Report to our Partners highlights the mission, vision, and core values of our agency. SW/WC SC is committed to our members and our region. As you review this report, I hope you will see how our programs and services are critical to the work of the members we serve.

Our shared services model of delivering programs and services is underscored by a number of new and existing initiatives from this past year. We are a membership driven organization...through the use of advisory committees, our Board and administration work collaboratively with our members to offer programs and services that support, enhance, and meet the needs of our members.

Our core values of service, integrity, and respect form the foundation for the work we do. At the center of these values is service; we believe service is a commitment to serve our members, potential members, co-workers, and others. We care about them, listen to them, and work to address their issues. Satisfying those we serve is a priority for everyone in the agency.

As we plan for 2015-16, we continue to recognize the needs of our members. We are grounded and committed to our service approach and will continue to find ways to be innovative in our practice of administering high quality programs and services.

Thank you for all that you do in supporting our work together! I look forward to working with you in the coming year; as we continue to find ways to meet your needs.

# From the Board Chair Maydra Maas



The SW/WC SC knows the future is ours to determine. The Board of Directors succinctly knows the actions we take and firmly believes the decisions we make today influence what happens tomorrow.

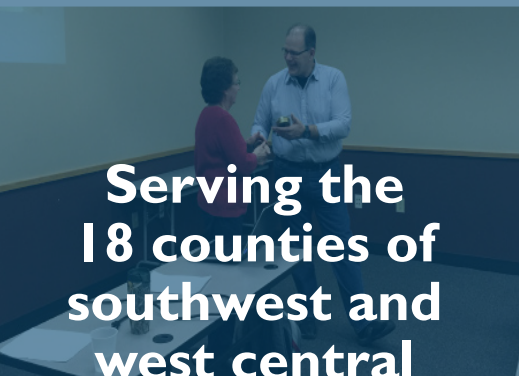
That's why SW/WC SC continues to value our partnerships with regional public and parochial schools and city/county/other governmental agencies. Our staff "own a stake" in our cooperative that helps achieve goals essential for our kids to survive and thrive.

Just yesterday, on our way to church services, our four-year-old granddaughter enthusiastically pointed with an "Anna" (Frozen) doll toward Westbrook-Walnut Grove Schools' Walnut Grove campus and said, "Look Grandma. There is my school. I go there to learn and it is so fun!"

On behalf of SW/WC SC, our Board of Directors, and our wonderfully gifted staff, I sincerely thank you for your school's/agency's cooperative support. Together, the plans we make and the people and policies we influence matter because they define our kids' future.



# SERVICE



**Serving the  
18 counties of  
southwest and  
west central  
Minnesota**



## Mission

We support and enhance the work of our members by providing programs and services that meet their needs.

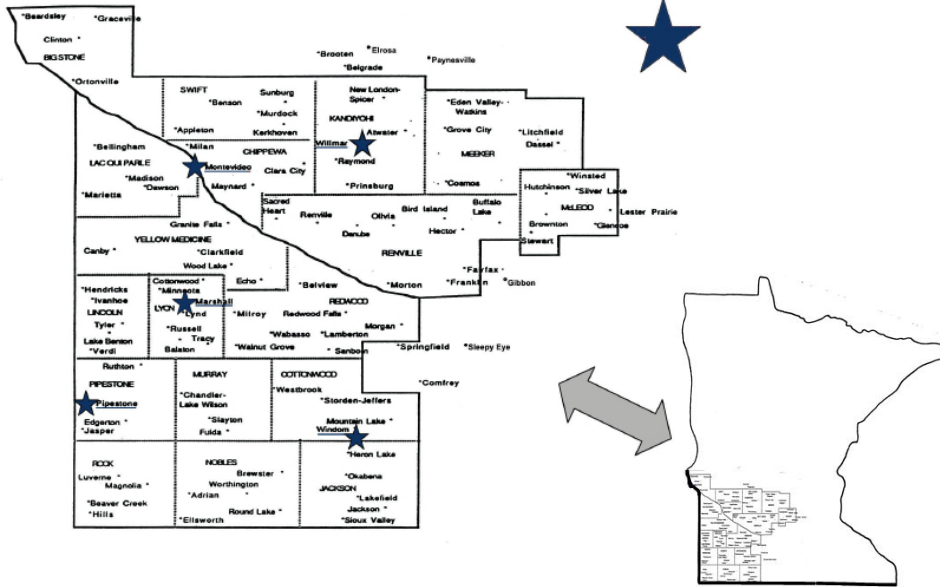
## Vision

By striving to be innovative, collaborative and responsive, we will be the premiere service agency for our members.

## Priorities

- Build strong relationships with our members to support and enhance the work we do together.
- Use data-driven strategies to understand our members' needs, to recognize future trends, and to inform our planning/decision-making process.
- Participate in local, state, and federal advocacy efforts to influence political decisions that impact our members.





# Office Locations

## Marshall

## Montevideo

## Pipestone

## Willmar

## Windom

- Engage our members through on-going, responsive, and timely marketing and communication efforts.
- Develop human resource policies that engage our staff, recognize staff talents, and invest in recruiting, retaining and developing our staff.
- Administer fiscal policies that create a sustainable agency--one that is able to support programs and services and provide investments in the development/implementation of new programs/services.

# School Locations

## Belview

## Benson

## Cosmos

## Pipestone

## Willmar

## Windom

## Board of Directors



Maydra Maas, Chairperson  
WWG Schools  
Kathi Thymian, Vice-Chair  
Ortonville Schools (not pictured)  
Donald Brugman, Clerk  
Windom Schools  
Kathryn Kelly, Treasurer  
Renville County

Jody Bauer, Tracy Area Schools  
Michael Zins, Fulda Schools  
Jan Fransen, Jackson County  
Carol Morgan, Luverne Schools  
Tom Walsh, KMS Schools  
Maggie Kluver, Montevideo Schools  
David Kilpatrick, New London/  
Spicer Schools (not pictured)  
Steve Schnieder, Worthington Schools

Members of the SW/WC Service  
Cooperative Board of Directors  
are elected from our membership.

*Board of Directors listed/pictured  
as of 6/30/15*

## Executive Leadership Team

Cliff Carmody, Executive Director  
Deecy Jesse, Executive Assistant  
Edna Gossen, Operations Manager  
Annette Miller, Director of Finance  
Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services  
Darin Jensen, Senior Director of Administrative Services  
Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services  
Dr. Mary Palmer, Senior Director of Special Education Services  
Lisa Gregoire, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services





## Superintendents' Executive Council

Chair: Jim Lentz, Pipestone Area

Vice Chair: Chris Sonju, Glencoe-Silver Lake

Past Chair: Jerry Kjergaard, Willmar

Dan Deitte, Minneota & Ivanhoe

John Dotson, BOLD

Chris Fenske, Lakeview

Ray Hassing, Round Lake-Brewster

Dr. Luther Heller, Montevideo

John Landgaard, Worthington

Scott Monson, Marshall

Michelle Mortensen, Renville County West

Ryan Nielsen, Lake Benton

Bruce Olson, Red Rock Central

Luther Onken, Fulda and Murray County Central

Laura Schuster, Canby

Bill Strom, Mountain Lake

Robert Windel, Mountain Lake Christian

Loy Woelber, Westbrook-Walnut Grove & Heron Lake-Okabena

Wayne Wormstadt, Windom

Sharon Kabes, Southwest Minnesota State University

Dr. Barbara McDonald, Minnesota West



The Superintendents' Executive Council provides advice and support to the  
SW/WC Service Cooperative Administration and Board of Directors.  
*Membership as of 6/30/15*

# Education and Administrative Resources

## Education

The Division of **Special Education Services** is led by Dr. Mary Palmer. It is comprised of direct student services, regional low incidence programs, outreach clinics, autism training project, transitions outcome project, and the alternative learning programs and settings.

The Division of **Teaching and Learning Services** is led by Lisa Gregoire. It includes school improvement, student enrichment activities, curriculum coordination, the MN West Carl Perkins Consortium, the math and science teacher partnership, Rtl, PBIS, and the Southwest Prairie Regional Center of Excellence.

The **Children's Author and Illustrator Program** brings an author and/or an illustrator to the region to spend time in member school districts. This year, Blake Hoena (pictured below) and Carrie Hartman visited 10 school districts in the region.



## Administrative

The Division of **Administrative Services** is led by Darin Jensen. It is comprised of the Regional Management Information Center (RMIC), Health and Safety, Cooperative Purchasing, Information Technology, Distance Education, Technology Integration, and E-Rate Coordination.

The Division of **Risk Management Services** is led by Doug Deragisch. It is comprised of the school insurance pool, the city/county/other governmental (CCOGA) agency pool, the health cost management program (HCMP), and the Employee Wellness Incentive Program. The School Pool has 51 member schools with a total of nearly 7,000 covered lives. The CCOGA Pool has 105 members covering nearly 7,500 lives. The SW/WC SC's renewal success rate is over 90% annually. Over the years, the Pools have been successful in serving our members with high quality insurance products as well as educational and support services.







# PARTNERSHIP

## Uniting with members to meet needs



### **Cooperative Purchasing Program**

Our Cooperative Purchasing Program (which is part of the Minnesota Service Cooperatives' Cooperative Purchasing Connection) is member-driven and focused on helping members get the best value in purchasing.

**Volume Counts!** The combined purchasing power of our members creates substantial discounts on products available from our partnered vendors.

**Convenient Ordering!** Purchase directly from the vendors and order only what you need, when you need it.

**Expertise on your side!** The CP team is dedicated to providing you with the best price, quality, and service available.

**Satisfies Bid Requirements!** Our formal bids and RFPs meet the competitive bidding laws so you can purchase off our contracts without needing to bid on your own! This saves you both time and money!

### **New Contracts Added During 2014-15**

- CEIA USA – Walk Through Metal Detectors
- Clarke Custodial Floor Care Equipment
- Continental Clay
- Youth Truth Student Survey
- My Student Survey
- Leasing Specialists, LLC
- Fargo 3D Printing

### **Youth Mental Health First Aid**

Paige Thompson, a licensed graduate school social worker based in the Pipestone Area School District, received training this year to teach others how to work with youth ages 12-18 who have mental health illnesses or substance abuse disorders. This program is called Youth Mental Health First Aid.

There are five learning objectives for the course:

- Recognize the potential risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including: depression, anxiety, psychosis, eating disorders, ADHD, disruptive behavioral disorders and substance use disorders.
- Use a five-step action plan to help a young person in crisis connect with appropriate professional help.
- Interpret the prevalence of various mental health disorders in youth within the U.S. and the need for reduced negative attitudes in their communities.
- Apply knowledge of the appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help resources available to help a young person with a mental health problem treat and manage the problem and achieve recovery.
- Assess the participant's own views and feelings about youth mental health problems and disorders.

While the training is aimed at working with 12-18 year old students, Paige finds many of the techniques useful in working with younger students. She can provide training to not only mental health providers or educators, but also anyone who works with youth, including church leaders, coaches, government employees, law enforcement and parents.





# INNOVATION

## Researching and initiating new programs and services



### Cosmos Learning Center

The Cosmos Learning Center (CLC) is a federal setting four special education school that serves students from districts within the SW/WC SC region and surrounding areas who have had difficulty participating in a mainstream setting. The main goal is to provide individualized instruction and interventions with hopes of every student returning to their resident district. The CLC offers two programs, a **Students with Unique Needs (SUN)** program that serves students with moderate to severe disabilities, and a **Students That Are Responsible, Respectful and Safe (STARRS)** serving students with mild to moderate disabilities. This past year, the SUN program served over 25 students, ages 6-21. The SUN program has 4 certified special education teachers and several paraprofessionals to meet the needs of each student. The STARRS program served over 10 students with 2 certified teachers and several paraprofessionals assisting with academic and behavioral needs. The CLC has a full-time school social worker, full-time speech-language pathologist, full-time adaptive physical education teacher, part-time behavior analyst, part-time occupational therapist and a part-time school psychologist. All of these critical staff members work collaboratively to ensure that every student reaches their highest potential.

### SMART Systems and ACA

SMART Systems has been working hard to create tools from within the software to provide districts with the tools needed for ACA reporting and requirements. Through May of 2015, 46 districts attended trainings for ACA utilizing the new module in SMART Systems. We are proud of our members' hard work in learning the module and for being so patient as we provided training on the new ACA Module. In all, three days of training were provided to our members at no cost.

The first day consisted of learning the process by setting up and defining the methodology used for ACA hours worked. This methodology, defined by the IRS, allows employers to convert hours worked as they apply to salaried employee contracts, unit pay, reasonable (coaching/advisory) pay and timecards.

The second day applied the setup to employees and defined the measurement/admin/stability periods for the district. We entered rows indicating whether an employee was eligible for health insurance or not, and then ran ACA measurement reports and proofed the data - taking a closer look at the applied hours worked.

Upon request of the districts, a third day of ACA training was held in our Training Lab and allowed district staff to continue the setup and proofing process with regional staff available to assist with completing ACA calendar year 2014 and moving employees into the 2015 reporting year.



Regional staff met individually with our largest school districts to give them the unique one-on-one attention required for them to be successful in the process.

Our goal was to have those districts with a July 1st health insurance renewal all set up and proofed by April 30, 2015. This allowed for time to rerun the measurement reports to make administrative decisions as needed. We applaud everyone for a job well done!

# OUR CORE VALUES

We have a highly skilled and talented group of professionals at the SW/WC Service Cooperative who embrace our core values in all they do. We have 272 regular employees who work throughout the 18 counties of southwest and west central Minnesota. Staff are located in our offices and school locations, and many are housed right in the school district where they work!

## Continuous Improvement is important to our staff!

Writing Grants: Congratulations to **Becky Kolander**, an SLP at the SW/WC SC who works at Windom Schools and at the Red Rock Ridge School. Becky was presented with a BIG check from CenturyLink for receiving a 2015 CenturyLink Teachers and Technology Grant.



Customer Service: Kudos to our **staff in the Pipestone office!** They read the book "Smile and Move" -- a book about customer service. These staff are smiling and committed to meeting the needs of our customers.



RRR Team Building: Team Building is very important at the **Red Rock Ridge School** in Windom. At each staff meeting, the staff take part in a team building activity. The January team building event was called 'Team Penning'. In reality, it is a horse event in which a team of 4 riders/horses work together in order to "pen" cattle. It is a timed event. At the RRR, each team of four people was required to wear a cowboy hat, ride a stick horse, and keep one hand on the reins. In the other hand, they had a nerf hockey stick. The goal was to move, as a team, as many balloons into a "pen" as possible within the one minute time period. The team with the most balloons wins. The two pictures are of the first and second place winners. Fun was had by all!



Staying current with technology and social media are also important to us. We maintain an active presence on Facebook and Twitter.  
[www.swsc.org/social](http://www.swsc.org/social)







# Service. Integrity. Respect.

## Ongoing Education is important to our staff!

Eight of our staff have PhDs and 93 have an MS or MA degree.

In December, we added another PhD to our staff. **Sara Ebsen**, School Psychologist, received her Doctorate in Psychology from Minnesota State University Mankato. Dr. Ebsen is in her third year as a school psychologist with the SW/WC SC and serves students at the Cosmos Learning Center and at Roosevelt Elementary School in Willmar.



**Paige Thompson** was selected to attend the Midwest School Social Work Council Meetings in Chicago, Illinois, as a representative of the Minnesota School Social Work Association. Her involvement as a board member, her work supporting and guiding school social workers in southwest Minnesota, and the outreach work she has done with South Dakota school social workers all led to her selection. She was also selected to attend the Annual Leadership Meeting for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in Washington, D.C. because she will be beginning a term as President of the NASW-South Dakota Chapter in July. She has been serving as president-elect for the last year and will serve as President for the next two years.

### **Employee retention is important to us!**

The average length of service for current staff:  
6.83 years.

The number of employees who have worked:  
over 20 years: 21  
15-19 years: 19  
10-14 years: 30



Our staff plan many conferences in the region, including This is IT2, the School Business Conference, the Summer Leadership Conference, the Paraprofessional Conference, the Annual Health Conference, and many other workshops and trainings. Conferences, workshops and in-service trainings are held throughout the year in locations across our 18 county region.



You offer great seminars for my students! They are still talking about it today!

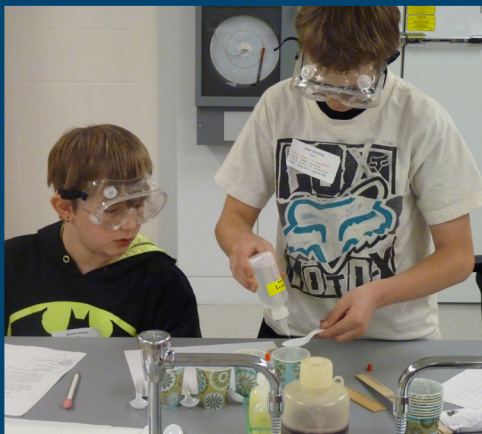
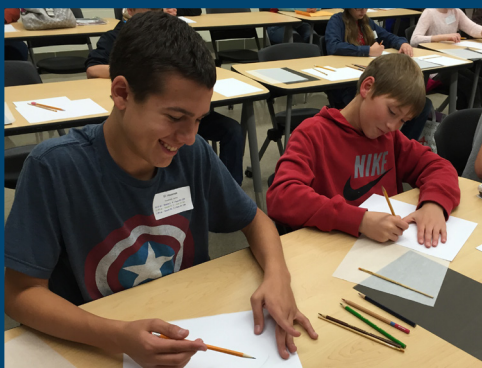
Today provided a variety of experiences for them - as well as something new to try.



It was fun - like every year!

It was another successful and educational event!  
Thank you so much!





The best 'This is IT2' conference yet!  
Looking forward to next year.

I had a great experience. This was the first baking competition I have ever been in, so this was all new to me - but I really enjoyed the experience!

The Culinary Skills Challenge was amazing and I would love to go back.

# LEADERSHIP

## Providing opportunities for all

Whether it be in the area of student conferences, school finance, insurance, or workshops for teachers, the SW/WC SC strives to provide opportunities for all to learn, grow and lead.

**Students as Leaders** — through our student enrichment programs, we offer students a variety of educational and leadership opportunities outside of the classroom. Here is what they had to say:

- It was something that tested our skills and we did well.
- It was a little nerve wracking because I could feel the pressure to try hard while being judged.
- It was a fun and excellent experience. I like how we can look at other students' work!

The **Creative Writing Contest** is a partnership between the SW/WC SC and the SMSU Creative Writing Department to encourage a love of language and writing for all students and as a way to recognize the talented young writers in this region. This year, there were 393 entries from 288 students, grades 3-12. The preliminary judging process was done by SMSU Creative Writing students and final judging was done by SMSU English Department faculty. The winners, their families and teachers attended an Awards Ceremony where the winners were revealed. Awards included a \$2,000 scholarship to SMSU to the top junior/senior place finisher in each writing category and gift certificates to the top place finisher for each grade level in each category. Scholarship winners are pictured above right.



**Teachers as Leaders** — through professional development, partnerships, and other collaborative ventures, we work to provide every kind of teacher the opportunity and ongoing support to be a great leader. One superintendent said, "I want to thank the SWSC for sponsoring the Spedacular. This has become a "must go to" for our teachers and paras. Thanks for the hard work to organize an event like this". Through School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), teachers are equipped to lead systems change in their buildings focused on teaching behavioral expectations to students. Pictured at right is Willmar's team at PBIS Graduation.



**Staff as Leaders** — through a variety of leadership opportunities, our staff can serve as mentors to new staff, serve on various committees, provide support, assistance and leadership to our member school districts, work as teachers in our alternative programs, and so much more. A new employee involved in our mentoring program said: I feel like I've gained a mentor for life. She will be a resource for years to come and I feel comfortable approaching her with questions.

**Leaders in the Region** — through active listening and experienced facilitation, our agency strives to provide leadership in the region through innovative and collaborative new ventures.

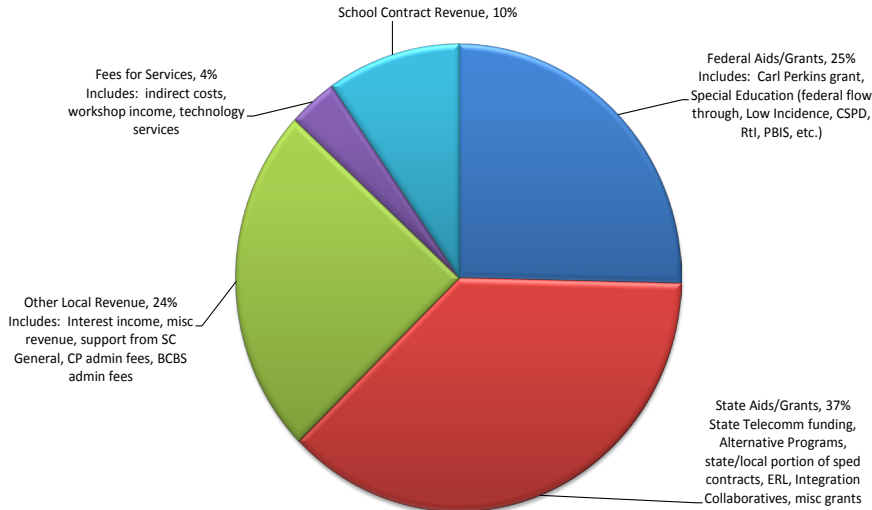


# Financial Integrity

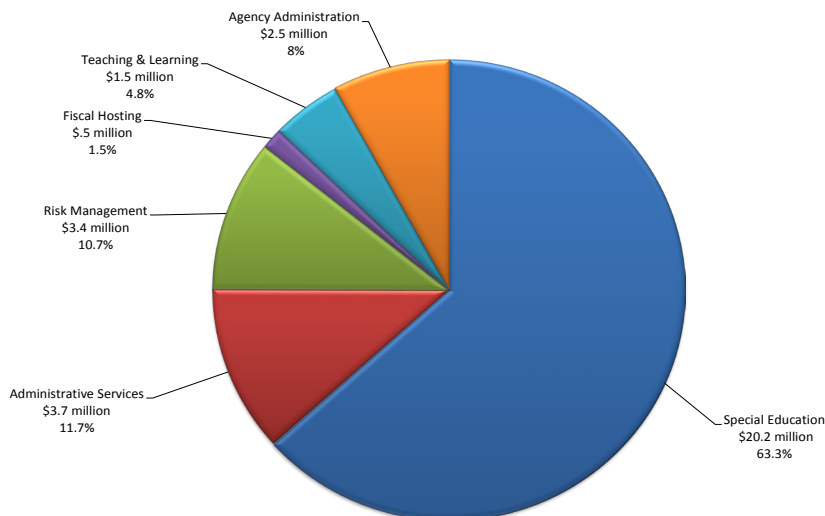
“Our core values of service, integrity and respect are the foundation for all we do, including our efforts to be great financial stewards of the resources we are given to serve our members”

~Cliff Carmody  
Executive Director

**Budgeted 2014-15 Annual Revenues - \$32.9 million  
(Excluding Insurance Premiums)**



**Budgeted 2014-15 Annual Expenditures - \$31.8 million  
(Excluding Insurance Premiums)**



# Members

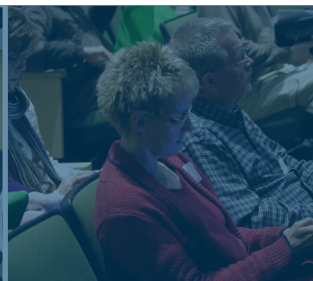
are our focus.

We have a unique understanding of the strengths and needs of our members and use these insights to positively impact and improve how our members do their work.



## Benefits of Membership

- Provides access to the various programs and services offered through our agency
- Allows members to operate more efficiently and cost effectively through creative program development and partnerships
- Creates access to programs and services not readily available to members without cooperation and coordination
- Helps members maximize dollars and realize cost savings by pooling money and resources





# Public, Private and Charter Schools

Adrian  
ACGC  
BBE  
Benson  
BOLD  
Buffalo Lake-Hector- Stewart  
Canby  
Cedar Mountain  
Central MN Christian, Prbg  
Clarkfield Area Charter  
Comfrey  
Dawson-Boyd  
E.C.H.O Charter  
Eden Valley-Watkins  
Edgerton  
Ellsworth  
Fulda

Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop  
Glencoe-Silver Lake  
Hendricks  
Heron Lake-Okabena  
Hills-Beaver Creek  
Holy Redeemer, Marshall  
Hutchinson  
Immanuel Lutheran, Lkfd  
Ivanhoe  
Jackson County Central  
KMS  
Lac qui Parle Valley  
Lake Benton  
Lakeview  
Lester Prairie  
Luverne  
Lynd  
MACCRAY

Marshall Area Christian  
Marshall  
Milroy  
Milroy Area Charter  
Minneota  
Montevideo  
Mountain Lake  
Mountain Lake Christian  
Murray County Central  
New Century Academy, Hutch  
New London-Spicer  
Ortonville  
Paynesville  
Pipestone Area  
Red Rock Central  
Redwood Area  
Renville County West

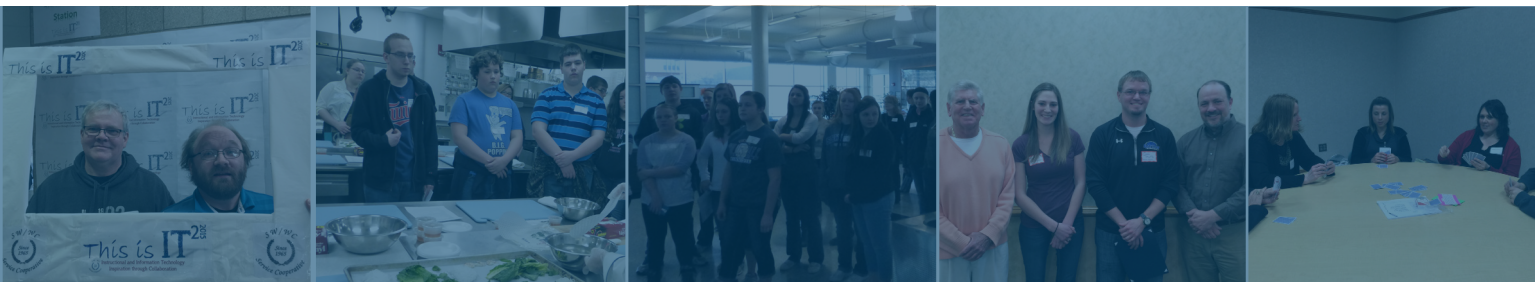
Round Lake - Brewster  
RTR  
St. Edward, Minneota  
St. James  
St. Rafael's, Springfield  
Samuel Lutheran, Mshl  
Sleepy Eye  
Springfield  
Tracy Area  
Wabasso  
Westbrook-Walnut Grove  
Willmar  
Windom  
Worthington  
Yellow Medicine East

## South Dakota Cooperative Purchasing Members

Over 70 schools and agencies located in South Dakota are members of our Cooperative Purchasing Program, taking advantage of the best pricing available from our vendors.

## Health Insurance Subscribers

In addition, the Division of Risk Management Services has over 150 schools, cities, counties and other governmental agencies who subscribe to health insurance services for their employees through a self-funded member-owned pool.



# Mission

We support and enhance the work of our members by providing programs and services that meet their needs.



The SW/WC Service Cooperative is a member of the Minnesota Service Cooperatives, an association of nine educational service agencies in Minnesota.

