

## ***Students Compete to Spell Their Way to Washington***

On Feb. 23, 43 spellers from south central Minnesota competed in the South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC) Regional Spelling Bee, a qualifier for the Scripps National Spelling Bee. These fifth through eighth grade students had previously won their local bees.

After 17 rounds, Elise Weier, an eighth grade student from Shakopee Junior High West, was named champion after correctly spelling “mercerize” as her championship word.

Weier was awarded a plaque, spelling supplement, mint coin set, one-year subscription to Encyclopedia Britannica Online, the Merriam-Webster dictionary used in the bee, and travel expenses and accommodations at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. for herself and a chaperone.

The top spellers also included second place Emily Spieker, Dakota Meadows Middle School, Mankato; third place Lexi Fosburgh, Mount Olive Lutheran School, Mankato and Emily Sullivan, Le Sueur-Henderson Middle School. Spieker went head to head with Weier for five rounds before misspelling “babka” to allow Weier to finish in first. Fosburgh and Sullivan both went out in round 11 of the competition and had a sudden death spell off to determine their placing.

Other participating schools included Bridges Community School, Mankato; Butterfield-Odin Schools; Cleveland Public Schools; Comfrey Public School; Eagle View Elementary School, New Prague; Fairmont Elementary; Fairmont Jr./Sr. High School; Falcon Ridge Elementary School, New Prague; Granada-Huntley-East Chain Schools; Holy Cross Catholic School, Webster; Immanuel Lutheran School, Mankato; Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton; Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial; Loyola Catholic Intermediate, Mankato; Maple River Middle School; Martin County West Junior High; Most Holy Redeemer Catholic School, Montgomery; Mountain Lake Public School; New Prague Middle School; New Ulm Area Catholic Schools; Nicollet Public School; NRHEG Secondary; Oak Crest Elementary, Belle Plaine; Pearson Sixth Grade Center, Shakopee; Raven Stream Elementary, New Prague; Shakopee Junior High East; Sleepy Eye Elementary School; Springfield Public Schools; St. Anne’s School, Le Sueur; St. Clair Elementary; St. John the Baptist Catholic School, Savage; St. John Vianney, Fairmont; St. Paul’s Lutheran, New Ulm; St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran; St. Wenceslaus School, New Prague; TEAM Academy, Waseca; Truman Elementary School; Waterville-Elysian-Morristown; and Windom Middle School.

The SCSC bee was made possible by generous sponsorships from South Central Service Cooperative, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, North Mankato Civic & Commerce Association, The Free Press, Belle Plaine Lions Club, Fairmont Rotary Club, NewUlm Kiwanis, Hexico Academic, iStar Financial, Merriam-Webster, Encyclopedia Britannica and Jay Sugarman.

In addition to improving students' spelling skills and increasing their vocabularies, spelling bee participation provides valuable experience in developing poise—a necessary skill for success in public speaking, performing arts and athletics.