Career Exploration in South Central Minnesota

Career Expo 2017

Career exploration takes place in many forms in our region. From interest inventories and job shadows to career days, students can learn about options for their future. One event, the Career Expo, exposes 10th grade students in our region to more than 100 career and job possibilities. The mission of the Career Expo is to provide students with the opportunity to interact with area business and industry experts; participate in hands-on experiences that demonstrate the skills, strengths, tools, tasks and traits used in specific careers; foster an awareness of the variety of career options in the region; and understand what each involves.

On March 15, nearly 1,400 sophomores from 16 schools attended this annual event at the Verizon Center in Mankato. Before students attend, districts provide a pre-lesson that provides them insight to the Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters, and Pathways through an interest inventory. Students were given the opportunity to visit three areas during their half-day exploratory experience:

**Interactive Exhibit Arena:** In this area, businesses showcase careers in a hands-on manner. This could be short demonstrations, games or activities. Students engage with businesses and post-secondary partners through BINGO cards. The arena is set up to reflect the Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters, and Pathways so students can better see and feel what those careers might entail.

**Career Game Show:** Students are immersed in a highly engaging and interactive game show where they learn labor market trends, as well as career and college information. Prizes are donated from local businesses and colleges.

**MyStory:** Students hear three separate career journeys from professionals through small round-table discussions. Here, they learn that “grit” and determination is needed to reach their goals, and that things happen more by “choice” than by “chance.” This session is designed to reflect the career clusters represented in our region.

**Schools attending the 2017 Career Expo included:**
- Central Freedom School
- Cleveland Public School
- Immanuel Lutheran School
- JWP High School
- Kato Public Charter School
- Lake Crystal Welcome Memorial Secondary
- Madelia High School
- Mankato East High School
- Mankato West High School
- Maple River High School
- MVED
- Nicollet High School
- St. Clair Secondary
- St. Peter Middle/High School
- Tri-City United High School
- United South Central High School

*Career continues on page 2*
Career continued from page 1

In a follow-up survey completed by chaperones, teachers, businesses and colleges, feedback indicated that 88.4% believe that the Career Expo is meeting its mission statement goals for the event.

The mission of the Career Expo is: "to provide students the opportunity to interact with area business and industry experts and participate in hands-on experiences that demonstrate the skills, strengths, tools, tasks, and traits used in specific careers to foster an awareness of the variety of career options in Greater Mankato and the region and understand what each involves."

“This event brings our region together, and allows us to help shape the future workforce by giving students information about the careers in the communities in which they live," said Kim Mueller, career and college readiness coordinator from Mankato Public Schools. "Individuals, businesses, and post-secondary partners have the chance to encourage youth to continue exploration in high school and beyond, while continuing to be cognizant of job outlook in our region."

This year marked the 11th annual Career Expo experience. Many changes have taken place since the first event. However, the mission has remained relatively unchanged. Plans are already underway for the 2018 Career Expo. Watch for a “Save the Date” memo!

Pilot Career Navigator Program a Success

Career exploration is defined as the process of learning about yourself and the world of work, identifying and exploring potentially satisfying occupations, and developing an effective strategy to realize your goals.

The South Central Perkins Consortium and South Central College have collaborated to develop a pilot program called the Career Navigator Program. The goal is to have every ninth-grade student in the consortium spend two days on the South Central College campus learning about career paths through presentations and hands-on experiences. In addition, students take part in pre and post activities at their schools. These activities have been developed through a collaborative effort of high school counselors and include skills assessment as well as development of an education plan through high school.

The career fields that students learn about are business, management and administration; agriculture, food and natural resources; arts, communications and information systems; engineering, manufacturing and technology; and health science technology.

During this pilot year of the program, there are more than 1,100 students participating representing 12 school districts. These students learn about traditional and non-tradition career opportunities. It is important that students understand that there is a new economy that requires a combination of academic and technical skills that will prepare student for their education after high school.

Over the upcoming months, South Central Service Cooperative and South Central College will review survey results and work with stakeholders to determine the direction for next year's Career Navigator Program.
Two Area School Board Members Receive ‘All-State’ Honors
By Kristine Goodrich kgoodrich@mankatofreepress.com
Published by the Free Press of Mankato on Jan. 7, 2017

Two of the seven newly named members of the All-State School Board hail from Blue Earth County.

Mankato School Board member Jodi Sapp and Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School Board member Kent Thiesse are 2017 recipients of the honor from the Minnesota School Boards Association.

An association committee selects honorees based on nominations highlighting candidates’ contributions to their school district and the broader community.

In her nomination, Supt. Sheri Allen said Sapp “is excellent at identifying and asking the hard questions so the focus is on how we improve as a school district, both fiscally and academically.”

Sapp has served on the board for 15 years and is a member of the district’s special education advisory council and employee contract negotiations team.

Board Chairwoman Ann Hendricks said her colleague brings robust discussion with a valued and data-driven perspective to the board.

“She considers information to get to the appropriate response for the district, thinking through the possible ramifications for all the children, from birth through adulthood,” Hendricks wrote in her nomination letter.

Sapp also was nominated for her leadership on the board of the South Central Service Cooperative, which provides staff development, technology and other services for area governments and extracurricular programs for youths.

She also was recognized for her service as a founding member of the Greater Mankato Diversity Council board of directors, which partners with the school district to provide an annual “promoting respect workshop” to every classroom.

Diversity Council Executive Director Bukata Hayes called Sapp the quintessential team player. “She goes out of her way to make certain that all in her presence feel relaxed, enfranchised and invested in,” he wrote.

The Mankato Area School Board now has three members who have been named to the all-state board. Hendricks received the honor in 2011 and Judi Brandon was honored in 2011. Three prior Mankato board members also have been honored.

Thiesse has served on the LCWM School Board for 27 years, including over a decade as its chairman.

Superintendent Tom Farrell wrote in his nomination letter that he appreciates Thiesse’s “unwavering support of public education and willingness to ask the tough questions and hold the administration accountable for ensuring that quality education is a priority.”

Farrell credited Thiesse for helping pass bond referendums in 2004 for a new secondary school and 2014 for facility improvements and for helping the district weather serious financial challenges in the late 1990s to early 2000s and regain a strong financial position.

Board member Erin Berle called Thiesse a role model to new board members.

“He clearly understands the role of school board members and articulates the responsibilities to other board members and to the public,” she wrote in her nomination.

Berle described Thiesse as courageous. “He has been faced with many difficult decisions,” she wrote. “He listens carefully and asks clarifying questions. In the end, he makes decisions that are fiscally responsible and promote student achievement.”

Thiesse’s nomination also includes accolades for his service in agriculture education in and beyond Lake Crystal-Wellcome-Memorial’s boundaries. He is a 4-H leader who founded the state 4-H Livestock Knowledge Bowl and helps plan multiple additional 4-H events. The vice president and lead agricultural lender at MinnStar Bank is also coordinator of the Farmfest educational forum.

Both local honorees also have served on the Minnesota School Boards Association board of directors. Sapp was on the board from 2010 through 2015. Thiesse served a decade as a board member, including two years as the board president.
COOPERATIVE NEWS (Continued)

2017 School Finance Award Recipients for 2016 Financial Reporting

The School Finance Award is awarded annually by the Minnesota Department of Education, Division of School Finance, to recognize schools for meeting statutory deadlines for submission of audited fiscal financial data and reporting criteria. The criteria also include the presence of select indicators of Fiscal Health and Accuracy in Financial Reporting. Out of 574 eligible reporting entities, 449 met the qualifying criteria for the FY2017 School Finance Award.

Region 9 South Central Service Cooperative and 23 of our members received awards:
- Albert Lea Area Schools
- Blue Earth Area Public Schools
- Central Public Schools
- Fairmont Area Schools
- GFW Schools
- Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School District
- Le Sueur-Henderson Public Schools
- Madelia Public Schools
- Mankato Area Public Schools
- Maple River Schools
- Martin County West Schools
- Minnesota New Country School
- NRHEG School District
- New Prague Area Schools
- New Ulm Public Schools
- Sibley East Public Schools
- Sleepy Eye Public Schools
- St. Clair Schools
- St Peter Public Schools
- Tri-City United Schools
- United South Central Public Schools
- Waseca Public Schools
- Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Independent School District

Congratulations to our members!

ADMIN SERVICES

Opportunity Knocking for Teachers of College in the Schools

The South Central Service Cooperative Advisory Services team has been actively involved in providing an opportunity for member school districts to train local high school staff to meet Higher Learning Commission standards to teach College in the Schools classes.

Through a Participation Agreement process, SCSC schools can access master’s degree credits in a variety of academic disciplines. The Participation Agreement is available through state legislation awarded to the Northwest Service Cooperative and the Lakes County Service Cooperative. Master’s level classes will be provided by Minnesota State University Moorhead and offered online for up to 18 master’s credits. Online classes will be offered in 15 academic discipline areas.

Master’s classes are available to SCSC schools on a “space available” basis. Thanks to this legislative initiative, there is no cost for tuition or books for the master’s level courses taken under this participation agreement.

To date, six SCSC school districts have signed and returned participation agreements. Within these six school districts, 40 staff members are potential participants in the program.

The SCSC Advisory Services team is pleased to make this opportunity available to member schools to meet their local needs. For more information contact Ed Waltman or Harold Remme.

Dr. Les Martisko, CEO and Cindy Ehlers, administrative operations director are still smiling and working together after nearly 40 years of service to South Central Service Cooperative.

The SCSC offices and conference center will be under construction through the summer. Please excuse the mess as we expand our conference center facility to better serve our members.
Creating a Positive School Culture the PBIS Way
By Erin Toninato

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a proactive approach to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture within a school. PBIS is a tiered system of support that includes supporting students at the following levels:

- **Tier 1** – School-wide and classroom supports for all students, staff and settings
- **Tier 2** – Specialized groups or system for students considered to be at risk
- **Tier 3** – Specialized and individualized for students considered to be at high risk

Historically, schools have been in the position of reacting to student’s negative behavior utilizing a variety of discipline measures. PBIS schools understand that it is much more effective to teach behavioral expectations and reward students for following them. This approach is much more positive than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

Schools who enter into PBIS training commit to two years of intense training with the regional facilitator and state PBIS training team. They utilize district-wide assessments and data tracking to determine the goals of the building and implement data driven strategies to create a positive culture. The PBIS teams are purposeful in their planning and implementation believing that a positive culture has great impact on student and staff success.

For the first two years, schools are in official cohort training, which brings the teams together to gain additional information, plan as a team and learn from other teams who are also in the initial implementation stage. In addition, there are three PBIS Coaches meetings held throughout the year. These trainings are an opportunity for the coaches to consider district data, work with other districts, share successes and learn from each other.

Recently, several schools completed their first two years of training and will move on to the sustainability phase of PBIS. The districts from Region 9 completing training were GFW High School, Truman Elementary School and Granada Huntley East Chain. Each team receives a PBIS graduation certificate signed by Governor Mark Dayton.

Next year more than 20 schools in the Southern PBIS Region (Mankato, Marshall and Rochester areas), will start Cohort 13 training. If you are not a PBIS school and would like more information about how to apply for Cohort 14 in the 2018-19 school-year, please contact Erin Toninato, Mankato Region 9 PBIS Facilitator, at etoninato@mnsccsc.org.
Member education leaders are working together to create modular blended professional development and credentialing options through a new project supported by South Central Service Cooperative and the South Central Regional Area Telecommunications System (SOCRATES) called “The Exchange.” The Exchange’s design utilizes key collaboration models and technology tools to help schools harness the collaborative power of our members to build capacity to positively impact curriculum, instruction and the overall learning environment. Research-based frameworks help organize and integrate content, capacity building and credentialing.

The Exchange features modules and coaching resources developed by members for members. Modules are designed to support member curriculum, instruction and technology initiatives. A typical module focuses on an important research-based curriculum and instruction strategy along with the technology needed to support it. Modules are differentiated to provide specific instruction and coaching for the teacher practitioner, for curriculum and technology leaders and coaches, and for administrators and leadership teams. Members can use these modules directly or use The Exchange to identify virtual and face-to-face instructors and coaches to help develop and implement new initiatives.

The Exchange manages member created resources under two frameworks:

- Members contribute resources under an Open Education Resource framework. These resources are available for all members to use and revise at no cost. Contributors agree to honor the resource design and distribution criteria set by The Exchange.

- Members contribute resources under an incentive based Quality of Assurance framework. Resources are evaluated, credentialed and made available for purchase. Administration including content hosting and finance is provided by SCSC under the direction of The Exchange Governance Board.

The Exchange credentialing service recognizes and communicates individuals’ skills, competencies and expertise in relationship to state and nationally recognized licensure, standards and member defined criteria. This service also reviews and certifies professional development modules and the related delivery and support options and resources including instructors and coaches.

One of the key benefits associated with this credentialing exchange service is to help schools cooperatively identify and share teachers of record so that they can provide Career and Technical Education and College in the Schools courses locally by matching teachers with the appropriate credentials with local teachers through a blended instructional model hosted by SOCRATESOnline.

First Exchange Workshops Scheduled
Member technology integration, curriculum and professional development leaders identified standards-based systems and grading as the first major focus of the professional development exchange. Blue Earth Area Schools and Fairmont Area Schools are working with SCSC to host a series of face to face summer professional development activities to support teachers and school leaders who are developing standards-based grading and reporting systems. The Exchange will be used to provide on-demand coaching and implementation support for this initiative.

Blue Earth Area Schools will host the first standards-based systems and grading professional development event on June 21 and Fairmont Area Schools will host the second event on Aug. 9. The June meeting will focus on developing standards based reporting models and identifying key elements that should be tracked and reported. The August meeting will focus on preparing for partial or full implementation during the upcoming school year. Registration for these events can be found at www.mnscsc.org, click “Events & Registration.”

Please contact Dave Paschke at dpaschke@mnscsc.org if you would like more information or would like to help develop The Exchange.
So many of us are intrigued and inspired by the work of John Hattie. As you may know, he has studied the studies! In other words, he has reviewed educational research to determine if the studies are scientifically designed and the results are valid and reliable. Hattie has analyzed virtually all the studies on 195 various topics that meet scientifically sound criteria and has mathematically looked at the effect of those strategies on student learning. Professional development has an effect size of somewhere between .45 and .62.

This means if all your students came into the classroom at the 50th percentile, a .52 effect size says the students would gain 20% by the end of the school year. It looks like professional development is well worth the time and money invested in it!

Summer is a great time to have the whole staff come together for training. It saves on the cost of substitute teachers and gives a common professional language to build collegiality and a common path for learning.

SCSC can customize professional development for your school or district needs. Some of the courses and content that SCSC school improvement specialists Sue Rosenow and Jane Schuck have offered to various teacher and/or administrator groups for professional learning and development include:

- Reading in the Content Area
- Power Reading Strategies for Comprehension Growth
- Vocabulary Development for Student Growth
- ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experiences and Strategies to Overcome their Negative Effects
- Poverty and Its Impact on the Classroom and Classroom Management
- Reciprocal Teaching and Learning
- Socratic Seminar and Philosophers Chair
- Sheltered Instruction for the English Language Learner
- Formative and Summative Assessment
- Preparing Your Students for Success on the ACT
- Independent Reading – Making It Work for Your Classroom
- Peer Coaching
- Instructional Rounds
- Teacher Evaluation
- Best Practices in Math for Standards Based Achievement
- Technology – Great Applications and Software for Student Achievement
- Goal Setting for Building and District Growth
- Motivation – Intrinsic and Extrinsic
- Growth Mindset in the Classroom
- Grit Strategies for the Classroom
- Teacher and Student Relationships

Training and development can be initiated for a variety of reasons for any school group! Here are some good reasons to have professional development at the building or district level:

- Increased job satisfaction and morale among staff
- Increased staff motivation
- Increased efficiencies in processes, resulting in student achievement gain
- Increased capacity to adopt new technologies and methods
- Increased innovation in strategies and best practices
- Reduced staff turnover
- Enhanced school image

Sue and Jane look forward to working with your school or district! Contact them at sue.rosenow@gmail.com, 507-380-4233 or jschuck@gac.edu, 507-340-3073.
**Ripples Make Waves 2017**

On March 22–23, the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC) co-hosted Ripples Make Waves: A Global Youth Summit. Partnering with Adventure Kids Learning and Cisco, CILC connected with 400 sites around the world and facilitated 25 presentations using the Cisco Webex video platform. Presenters were in three main categories: academics and entrepreneurs running water projects, CILC content provider experts, and students ages 6-22.

More than 20 countries besides the United States were involved including Myanmar, Burundi, Bali, Laos, Haiti and Singapore. CILC’s Tami Moehring and Jan Zanetis tweeted the proceedings throughout the entire 24-hour event and were rewarded by the hashtag, #MakeWaves17, trending on Twitter the morning of the March 23!

Highlights from the sessions included a live underwater chat with a diver on the Great Barrier Reef, students from Flint, Michigan discussing the water crisis in their city, student interns at the Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium in Sarasota, Florida discussing their work, and two sisters from Bali who have influenced nine countries to reduce their use of plastic bags. To view the recordings of some of the sessions, please visit the Adventure Kids Learning channel on YouTube at http://bit.ly/2q2UVvO.

---

**Upcoming Events**

For more information on these and other opportunities, visit www.mnscsc.org. Many additional on-site, off-site and online options are available upon request. Please note, many sessions are held outside of the SCSC Conference Center during our remodeling.

- **Teaching Children to Know Their Own Engine, New Ulm Middle School**
  May 2, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

- **Work-Based Learning Coordinators**
  May 3, 1–3p.m.

- **Inside the Child: Social and Emotional Development, St. Peter High School**
  May 4, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

- **DCD: Community of Practice, Mankato Special Education**
  May 11, 12–3:30 p.m.

- **Every Move Counts Day 2, Courtyard by Marriott Hotel & Event Center**
  May 15, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

- **PearsonAccess Next Focus Group: Longitudinal Reporting, Hilton Garden Inn**
  May 18, 3–4:30 p.m.

- **2017 Legislative Workshop, Minnesota School Board Association Offices, St. Peter**
  June 6, 9–11:30 a.m.

- **Leading Edge National Certification for Online & Blended Teaching**
  June 6, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

- **Hormel Foundation Gifted & Talented Symposium, Austin High School**
  June 11–15

- **Relicensure in a Day, Student Support Services Center**
  June 20, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

- **Standards Based Systems, Reporting and Grading, Blue Earth High School**
  June 21, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

- **Summer Reading Academy, Student Support Services Center**
  June 22, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

- **Infinite Campus 101, South Central College**
  Aug. 15, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

- **Infinite Campus Ad Hoc Basics, South Central College**
  Aug. 16, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

- **Infinite Campus – Campus Instruction, South Central College**
  Aug. 17, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.
Minnesota high school teams competed in the Academic Decathlon® State Competition at Oak Ridge Hotel & Conference Center in Chaska Feb. 26-27.

State championship honors went to St. Peter Blue with a score of 33,659. They will represent Minnesota at the United States Academic Decathlon National Competition in Madison, Wisconsin April 20–22.

Second place went to Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial (LCWM) with a score of 32,143.6 and third place went to Avalon School with a score of 31,199.9.

At the state event, students received scores for speech, interview and Super Quiz™ Relay. The essay test and seven other objective tests were completed online earlier in February.

The event concluded with an awards luncheon, featuring guest speaker John A. Mazis, Ph.D., professor of history at Hamline University. Mazis shared information on the 2016-2017 curricular theme, World War II. Six students performed in a judge-selected Speech Showcase. This year’s Speech Showcase presenters were Greg Martens from Avalon School; Jake Ebargary from LCWM; and Bennett Combs, Grace Kvidera, Charlie Redmond and Kayley Ronnkivist from St. Peter. Regional and state awards were presented for individual and team accomplishments and for the Super Quiz™ Relay team champion.

Participating high schools included Avalon School, Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Secondary School and St. Peter High School. Teams not selected to attend the national competition had the opportunity to participate in the online national competition. Students whose teams did not advance to the national competition also had the opportunity to compete as individuals at nationals.

Academic Decathlon®, the premiere national scholastic competition for high school students, was created to provide opportunities for students to experience the challenges of rigorous team and individual academic competition. Each student competes in 10 events: Art, Economics, Essay, Interview, Literature, Math, Music, Science, Social Science and Speech. Students also compete in the Super Quiz™ Relay, an oral quiz-show event that includes questions from six topic areas.

A unique aspect of Academic Decathlon® is that it is designed to include students from all academic ability and achievement levels. Each nine-member team consists of three “A” (Honors division), three “B” (Scholastic division), and three “C or below” (Varsity division) students. Each team member competes in all of the 10 events against other students in their individual divisions, and team scores are calculated using the top two individual scores from each division.
Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded for individual events and overall scores. The broad base of awards allows for major recognition of academic accomplishment. For a complete list of individual and team winners, please visit the South Central Service Cooperative website www.mnscsc.org/decathlon.

A new theme of study is established every year with topics that are relevant, current and challenging. This year’s theme was World War II. The theme for 2017-2018 is Africa!

Interested in learning more about how to start an Academic Decathlon* team in your school? Please contact Joyce Swenson (507) 389-5107.

St. Peter Team and Avalon Student Represent Minnesota at 2017 USAD Nationals

The St. Peter High School team and individual Benjamin Stever-Zeitlin from Avalon School attended the 2017 USAD Nationals in Madison, WI April 20–22 representing Minnesota. Three students earned four individual medals (three for essay: Benjamin Stever-Zeitlin, Bennett Combs and Winston Taylor; and one for math: Bennett Combs). The St. Peter team also took third place in their division for Super Quiz™ Relay. In addition, Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial will have a team of middle school students (grades 7-8) participating at the United States Academic Pentathlon® Nationals in Minnesota May 19-20.

Students receiving their medals for essay (l-r): Benjamin Stever-Zeitlin, Bennett Combs and Winston Taylor

St. Peter High School team after Super Quiz™ Relay (left) and after receiving their Division III third place award for Super Quiz™ Relay (right).
STUDENT PROGRAMS (Continued)

Young Writers & Artists from Across the Region Learn More About the Arts

The 2017 SCSC Young Writers & Artists Conference held March 8-9 at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato brought students, authors and artists together for a day of learning. More than 1,250 students and chaperones attended over the two days. With 55 small group sessions to choose from, students had the opportunity to explore many topics in writing and fine arts.

“There is something for everyone,” said program coordinator Mary Hillmann. “Students get a chance to try something new or visit with experts in a field they are interested in.”

Storyteller, author, blogger and speaker, Rachel Britz, was the opening keynote speaker. She explained how we all have a unique story to tell. She also presented to small groups throughout the day on writing historical fiction.

A book fair featuring presenter works was available each day. Authors were on hand during lunch and between sessions to autograph items.

2017 Senior High Knowledge Bowl State Competition

A big congratulations to Mankato West, Loyola Catholic School, New Ulm and Minnesota Valley Lutheran for having teams that qualified to attend the 2017 State Knowledge Bowl Competition at Cragun’s Resort in Brainerd on April 6-7. The five teams from the four schools are pros when it comes to using their intellect in this academic event. They had done consistently well throughout the season, which earned them honorable positions at state.

In the written round, all five teams started out the state competition in the top half of the competition! In Division A, MVL finished with fifth place medals and Loyola Catholic School finished in 17th place. In the Division AA, New Ulm Purple finished in seventh place missing medals by only two points. Mankato West finished in 16th place and New Ulm White in 19th place.

Knowledge bowl is a competitive team activity. Teams consist of five students and a computer operator. Schools generally have more than one team for each competition. The competition meets begin with a written round in which the five-member team tries to answer as many of the 60 written questions correctly as possible. After the written round, teams are ranked according to their written score and then compete against two other teams for the oral rounds. The three teams are asked a series of 45 questions that cover English, science, math, history, geography and other curriculum-based questions. The first team who thinks they have the answer taps their buzzer strip. That team then has 15 seconds or less to answer the question correctly. If they miss the question, the next team who buzzed in has 15 seconds. After the round finishes, teams are again ranked by point value and given their next opponents. A traditional meet consists of one written round and either four or five oral rounds.

Congratulations everyone!
Winter Chess Lessons and Tournament

South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC) and Mankato Community Education/Recreation (CER) partnered Dec. 27 to offer the Winter Chess Lessons and Tournament at Dakota Meadows Middle School to students from across south central Minnesota.

Twenty-four students in grades K-9 from multiple schools in Edina, Mankato, Mapleton, Minnesota Lake, Northfield and St. Peter competed in primary, elementary and secondary divisions based on grade levels. The tournament was a Swiss-style tournament in which students are not eliminated. SCSC and CER feel these tournaments foster a competitive spirit without discouraging young players from continuing to play chess.

All players received a participation certificate. Ribbons were also awarded to top students in their grade level and medals were awarded to primary, elementary and secondary division champions.

For information about area chess tournaments or starting a chess club in your school or community, please contact Mary Hillmann: mhillmann@mnscsc.org or Melanie Schmidt: mschmi3@isd77.k12.mn.us.

Congratulations to the students that participated! Students were awarded by grade level and also as division champions:

**Grade K:**
Lucian Nova, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
Preston Kelley, Homeschool

**Grade 1:**
Parker Kelley, Homeschool
Dylan Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato

**Grade 2:**
David Barke, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
Price MacPherson, Homeschool

**Primary Division:**
1st (tie) – Lucian Nova, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
1st (tie) – Parker Kelley, Homeschool
2nd – David Barke, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
3rd – Price MacPherson, Homeschool

**Grade 3:**
Rose MacPherson, Homeschool
Kaita Bolte, Maple River East Elementary, Minnesota Lake
Quinn Gower, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
Dominic Wood, Our Lady of Grace, Edina
Henry Wood, Loyola Catholic School, Mankato

**Grade 4:**
Luke Banks, North Intermediate, St. Peter
Trevor Camp, Bridges Community School, Mankato
Aiden Mock, Hoover Elementary, Mankato
Ashley Pipes, Hoover Elementary, Mankato

**Elementary Division:**
1st – Aiden Mock, Hoover Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Dominic Wood, Our Lady of Grace, Edina

2nd (tie) – Henry Wood, Loyola Catholic School, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Luke Banks, North Intermediate, St. Peter
3rd (tie) – Rose MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Quinn Gower, Franklin Elementary, Mankato

**Grade 5:**
Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato

**Grade 6:**
Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
Chase Wilking, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Elementary Division:**
1st – Aiden Mock, Hoover Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Dominic Wood, Our Lady of Grace, Edina

2nd (tie) – Henry Wood, Loyola Catholic School, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Luke Banks, North Intermediate, St. Peter
3rd (tie) – Rose MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Quinn Gower, Franklin Elementary, Mankato

**Grade 7:**
Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School

**Grade 8:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

**Secondary Division:**
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato

**Grade 9:**
Benny Combs, St. Peter High School

Secondary Division:
1st – Benny Combs, St. Peter High School
2nd (tie) – Drew Strande, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – Peter Hillmann, Northfield Middle School
2nd (tie) – Madi Windsell, St. Peter High School
3rd (tie) – Grace MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Eston Yates, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Isaac Coyour, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
STUDENT PROGRAMS (Continued)

Spring Chess Tournament

South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC) and Mankato Community Education/Recreation (CER) partnered April 1 to offer the Spring Chess Tournament at Dakota Meadows Middle School to students from across south central Minnesota.

Fifty-nine students in grades K-12 from multiple schools in Eagle Lake, Fairmont, Lakefield, Mankato, Northfield and Waseca competed in primary, elementary and middle and upper divisions based on grade levels. The tournament was a Swiss-style tournament in which students are not eliminated. SCSC and CER feel these tournaments foster a competitive spirit without discouraging young players from continuing to play chess.

All players enjoyed a pizza lunch and received ribbons awarded to top students in their grade level. Medals were awarded to primary, elementary and middle division champions.

For information about area chess tournaments or starting a chess club in your school or community, please contact Mary Hillmann: mhillmann@mnscc.org or Melanie Schmidt: mschmi3@isd77.k12.mn.us.

Congratulations to the students that participated! Students were awarded by grade level and also as division champions:

Grade K:
1st – Lucian Nova, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
2nd – Cameron Burke, Washington Elementary, Mankato
3rd (tie) – McKenna Ludacer, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
3rd (tie) – Sam Haggerty, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato
4th (tie) – Cadleigh Jobe, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
4th (tie) – Raya Harris, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont

Grade 1:
1st – Price MacPherson, Homeschool
2nd – Caleb Berg, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
3rd – Josiah Schultz, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont

Grade 2:
1st (tie) – Ella Haggerty, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato
2nd (tie) – David Barke, Franklin Elementary, Mankato
3rd – Nolan Peters, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield

Grade 3:
1st – Roman Voss, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield
2nd – Andrew Hard, Eagle Lake Elementary, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Henry Wood, Loyola Catholic Schools, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Rose MacPherson, Homeschool
3rd (tie) – Joseph Hackett, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
3rd (tie) – Jayden Johnson, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield
4th (tie) – Jayson Matasovsky, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield
4th (tie) – Everett Irwin, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
4th (tie) – Ty Tumbleson, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont

Grade 4:
1st – Thomas Liepold, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield
2nd – Sam Grogin, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
3rd (tie) – Jordan Scholten, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield
3rd (tie) – Sophia Post, Hoover Elementary, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Arlo Chapman, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Jen Haggerty, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato
5th – Oliver Tordsen, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
6th (tie) – Collin Meyeraan, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
6th (tie) – Cailwyn Jobe, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont

Elementary Division:
1st – Thomas Liepold, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield
2nd – Sam Grogin, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont
3rd (tie) – Jordan Scholten, Immanuel Lutheran, Lakefield
3rd (tie) – Sophia Post, Hoover Elementary, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Arlo Chapman, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato
3rd (tie) – Jen Haggerty, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato
5th – Jacob Taylor, St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont

Spring Chess continues on page 14
Competition Teaches “Smarts” Needed in Life

The Willow River High School Wildcats beat out their competitors to capture the Minnesota State LifeSmarts Championship by successfully fielding questions about real-life marketplace issues at Century College in White Bear Lake on Feb. 11.

LifeSmarts, a consumer education competition that challenges teens in grades 9-12 about personal finance, health and safety, technology, the environment, and consumer rights and responsibilities, is a program of the National Consumers League. In Minnesota, South Central Service Cooperative in North Mankato administers the Minnesota program.

Students from across the state first competed online for a chance to go to the in-person state event. The state champions from Willow River qualified for the national LifeSmarts competition that was held April 21–24 in Pittsburgh. The team from Minnesota made it to the sweet 16 bracket and finished 13th at Nationals with a total of 680 points. Visit http://lifesmarts.org/nationals-2017 for complete scores.

“LifeSmarts participants in Minnesota have gained many of the consumer ‘smarts’ they’ll need to make it in the real world,” said Karen Olson, state LifeSmarts coordinator. “We’re proud to have Willow River represent Minnesota at the 2017 National LifeSmarts Championship.”

Other top finishers in the state championship include second place team, LCWM Gold from Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Secondary School; third place team, LSH from Le Sueur Henderson High School; and fourth place team Panthers 1 from NRHEG Secondary in New Richland.

“LifeSmarts participants win by learning to avoid common consumer pitfalls, navigate the government and understand credit card jargon before they have to sign on the dotted line,” said Sally Greenberg, executive director of the National Consumers League.

LifeSmarts is a program of the National Consumers League. State coordinators implement the program locally. For more information, visit www.lifesmarts.org, email lifesmarts@nclnet.org, or call the National Consumers League’s communications department at 202-835-3323. The National Consumers League, founded in 1899, is America’s pioneer consumer organization. NCL’s mission is to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad. NCL is a private, nonprofit membership organization. For more information about NCL, visit www.nclnet.org or email media@nclnet.org.
Math Masters Students Excel

South Central Service Cooperative in conjunction with Math Masters of Minnesota hosted the 2017 Regional Math Masters Competition at Bethany Lutheran College March 11 for 117 sixth grade representing 23 teams and one individual from 12 area schools. April 21 had more than 250 fifth-grade students representing 50 teams from 14 area schools. Students competed individually and as teams on eight sets of mathematical problems.

Top sixth-grade finishers in the Fact Drill were Kyle Ahlschlager, Waseca; Colin Cai, St. Cloud; Simon Kruse, St. Clair; Brandon Meng, St. Clair; Erica Gullickson, St. Peter; Gabe Sonnek, St. Clair, Annika Nosbush, Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s; Griffin Krautkremer, Waseca; Hunter Stevens, St. James, Caleb Mathiowetz, St. Clair; and Kylee Hanks, JWP.

Sixth-grade Individual Test awards went to Colin Cai, St. Cloud; Erick Gullickson, St. Peter; Cece Huttemier, Waseca; Braden Bolduan, New Ulm; Austin Kilmer, LCWM; Kyle Ahlschlager, Waseca; Jylee Hanks, JWP; Sophie Matarrese, St. Peter; Ben Kennedy, St. Peter; and Elodie Devos, St. Peter.

First Place Team Award for sixth-grade students went to Waseca 4. Team members include Christian Rodriguez, Griffin Krautkremer, Kaleb Robek, Kyle Ahlschlager and Zander Honstad. Second place went to Waseca 1. Team members include Cece Huttemier, Aubree Hansen, Ella Bartelt, Grace Lapidas and Sophia Krause. Third place went to North Intermediate 2 from St. Peter. Team members include Jasmyn Black, Elodie Devos, Erica Gullickson and Maya Pettis.

Sixth-grade teams participated from JWP, LCWM, Loyola Catholic Schools, New Ulm, New Ulm Area Catholic Schools, St. Clair, St. James, St. Mary’s Sleepy Eye, St. Peter, Waseca and WEM.

Top fifth-grade finishers in the Fact Drill were Aaron Kamm, Eagle Lake (perfect score); Sam Moelter, St. Peter (perfect score); Landon Dimler, JWP; Isaac Niesen, Monroe; Ryan Vonmaluski, Monroe; Bart McAninch, Hoover; Tad Wrage, Washington; Ethan Stenzel, Eagle Lake; Tyseer Nabi, Waseca; Tabitha Valenzuela, Monroe; Katelin Flack, LCWM; and Maggie Graupman, LCWM.

Fifth-grade Individual Test awards went to Calvin O’Connor, Hoover; Tag Wrage, Washington; Sam Gersich, Hoover; Lilian Maquette, Washington; Maggie Graupman, LCWM; Zach Chelstrom, Monroe; Emmett Olson, Roosevelt; Ryan Vonmaluski, Monroe; Noah Thompson, Waseca; Collin Grinde, Le Sueur; Brian Traxler, Le Sueur; and Norah Schimming, Waseca.

First Place Team Award for fifth-grade students went to Hoover 1. Team members include Sam Gersich, Walter Michaels, Calvin O’Connor, Gage Schmidt and John Voracek. Second place went to Washington 2. Team members include Lilian Maquette, Eric Richards, Anna Rivers, Madden Vanderwerf and Tad Wrage. Third place went to Monroe 1. Team members include Zach Chelstrom, Isaac Niesen, Tyler Schmidt, Edison Shores and Ryan Vonmaluski.

Fifth-grade teams participated from Bridges Community School, Mankato; Eagle Lake Elementary, Mankato; Hilltop Elementary, Le-Sueur; Hoover Elementary, Mankato; Jackson County Central Schools; JWP; Kennedy Elementary, Mankato; LCWM; Loyola Catholic Schools, Mankato; Monroe Elementary, Mankato; New Ulm Area Catholic Schools; North Intermediate, St. Peter; Owatonna; Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato; Redwood Falls; St. Clair St. Mary’s, Sleepy Eye; St. James; Waseca; Washington Elementary, Mankato; and WEM.

Math Masters of Minnesota began as a fifth-grade math competition program in 1989 with teams from 44 schools taking part. In 1995, the competition was expanded to include sixth grade students. This year approximately 5,000 students registered to compete at more than 38 different sites in Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota.

Math Masters is designed to promote excellence in critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities as well as recognizing students for academic effort and achievement. Generous support is provided by many statewide sponsors including The Hormel Foundation, IBM and Sylvan Learning Centers and locally from South Central Service Cooperative, HyVee and McDonalds.
STUDENT PROGRAMS (Continued)

New “Math Mania” Tournament for Area Middle School Students a Success

An exciting atmosphere was created at the first Math Mania Tournament held March 31 at Dakota Meadows Middle School where students solved clever, engaging and challenging problems on a variety of mathematical topics.

New Ulm Middle School Team 3 was named champion and included students Isaac Blumhoefer, Aiden Eckstein, Max Gieseke, Isaiah Rainwater and Kedar Schmitz and was coached by Janelle Woodbury. The “Power of 5” team from Immanuel Lutheran School, Mankato placed second and included Jaden Anderson, Emily Buch, Grace Busch, Scott Schlingmann and Gabriel Strand and coached by Julie Busch. The third place award went to Sibley East Team 1 with students Jackson Burdorf, Audrey Parrott, Rachel Widmer, Ellie Harens and Matt Ziegler and coached by Dan Meier. Forty-five students in grades six through eight competed individually and on five-member teams.

Top placing individuals included first place Isaac Blumhoefer (perfect score), New Ulm; second place Max Gieseke, New Ulm; third place Scott Shilingmann, Immanuel Lutheran, Mankato; and tied for fourth place Lauren Kuebler, Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial; Isaiah Rainwater, New Ulm; Gabriel Strand, Immanuel Lutheran; Rachel Widmer, Sibley East; and Emma Winters, Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial.

The tournament was sponsored by South Central Service Cooperative and Mankato Community Education and Recreation. Thank you to MEI – Total Elevator Solutions and Hardees, Mankato for their generous support of the program.

For information about next year’s Math Mania Tournament, contact Mary Hillmann at mhillmann@mnscsc.org.

Students Compete to Spell Their Way to Washington

On Feb. 21, 41 spellers from south central Minnesota competed in the South Central Service Cooperative Regional Spelling Bee, a qualifier for the Scripps National Spelling Bee. The participating fifth through eighth grade students had previously won their local bees.

After 47 rounds, the longest bee in SCSC history, Briana Joseph, a seventh-grade student from Fairmont Jr./Sr. High School, was named champion after correctly spelling “carious” as her championship word.

Joseph was awarded a plaque, spelling supplement, mint coin set, a one-year subscription to Encyclopedia Britannica Online, a one-year subscription to Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online, and travel expenses and accommodations to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

Emily Spieker, an eighth grader from Dakota Meadows Middle School, gave a valiant effort with 27 head to head rounds with Joseph before misspelling “spinosity.”

The top spellers also included third place Jack Nesnidal from Shakopee West Junior High and fourth place Emily Sullivan from Le Sueur-Henderson Middle School. Sullivan exited the bee in round 14 on “azimuth” and Nesnidal erred in his spelling of “lieutenant.”

The SCSC bee was made possible by generous sponsorships from South

Spelling continues on page 17

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.

Spelling results:
1st – Briana Joseph, Fairmont Jr./Sr. High School
2nd – Emily Spieker, Dakota Meadows Middle School, Mankato
3rd – Jack Nesnidal, Shakopee Junior High West
4th – Emily Sullivan, Le Sueur Henderson Middle School
5th – Oliver Viscoli – Bridges Community Elementary, Mankato
6th – Sabrina Hanson, Mountain Lake Public School
7th (tie) – Owen Forsythe, Shakopee Junior High East
7th (tie) – Ajay Inampudi, Pearson Sixth Grade Center, Shakopee
8th (tie) – Meredith Mayer, Falcon Ridge Elementary School, New Prague
8th (tie) – Matthew Cherro, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown
8th (tie) – Aiden Moler, Truman Elementary School
8th (tie) – Zoe Peterson, Comfrey Public School
8th (tie) – Grace Moeller, Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial
9th (tie) – Tom Schmidberger, Raven Stream Elementary School, New Prague
9th (tie) – Isabelle Hoffmann, Martin County West Junior High
9th (tie) – Sarah Terry, St. Clair Public School
9th (tie) – Bailey Newman, New Prague Middle School
9th (tie) – Scott Schlingmann, Immanuel Lutheran School
9th (tie) – Sebastian Teague, TEAM Academy
9th (tie) – Tate Winkelmann, St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran
9th (tie) – Rhett Oelke, Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton
9th (tie) – Sarah Kortke, Springfield Public Schools
9th (tie) – Annika Wheeler, Fairmont Elementary School
9th (tie) – Duram Kelly, Loyola Catholic Intermediate, Mankato
9th (tie) – Lydia Schmitz, St. Wenceslaus School, New Prague
9th (tie) – Isaiah Lockwood, St. John Vianney School, Fairmont
9th (tie) – Jake Webb, New Ulm Area Catholic Schools
9th (tie) – Myles Nelson, Nicollet Public Schools
10th (tie) – Gavin Davis, Prairie Winds Middle School, Mankato
10th (tie) – Joey Vollmers, St. John the Baptist Catholic School, Savage
10th (tie) – Merissa Cartwright, Granada-Huntley-East Chain Schools
10th (tie) – Stephanie Lopez Gonzalez, Cleveland Public Schools
10th (tie) – Ryan Fauglid, Windom Middle School
10th (tie) – Abby Rutr, Most Holy Redeemer Catholic School, Montgomery
10th (tie) – Caleb Carlsky, St. Paul’s Lutheran School, New Ulm
10th (tie) – Hayden Champine, Eagle View Elementary School, New Prague
10th (tie) – Isabelle Sampson, St. Anne’s School, Le Sueur
10th (tie) – Jonah Willis, Maple River Middle School
10th (tie) – Toby Weiss, Sleepy Eye Public Schools
10th (tie) – Matthew Olson, Oak Crest Elementary, Belle Plaine
10th (tie) – Mayla Soulsak, NRHEG Secondary
Also qualifying but not able to participate, Alma Rodriguez, Butterfield-Odin Public School

2017 Scripts National Spelling Bee

Don’t forget to mark your calendars: The Bee will air live from the Gaylord National near Washington, D.C., on May 31 and June 1. Tune in to cheer on SCSC champion Briana Joseph and the other five spellers from Minnesota.
STUDENT PROGRAMS (Continued)

Sumdog Math Contest Nov. 4–10, 2016 Results

Eleven classes and 129 students participated in the South Central Minnesota Math Contest Feb. 3–9. Of the 43,633 questions, 37,286 were answered correctly! Congratulations to all those who took part. For a full list of results, visit www.sumdog.com.

Top Students
To 10 students based on the number of questions answered correctly in the contest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Class name</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Alyssa H</td>
<td>3rd Williams, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Ella B</td>
<td>4th Grade, Maple River West</td>
<td>894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Wesley K</td>
<td>4th Grade, Maple River West</td>
<td>894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Makaya J</td>
<td>4th Grade, Maple River West</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Shaylee B</td>
<td>4th Grade, Maple River West</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Lilly K</td>
<td>4th Grade, Maple River West</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Darin L</td>
<td>3rd Williams, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Alyvia N</td>
<td>3rd Williams, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Hayden S</td>
<td>Mrs. Skov’s 3rd Grade, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Lainey S</td>
<td>3rd Williams, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top Classes
Overall class scores are the average number of correct answers out of the students in that class. At least 10 students from the class must have played in order to get an average score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>4th Grade, Maple River West</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3rd Williams, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Mrs. Skov’s 3rd Grade, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Mrs. Krusemark’s Class, Roosevelt Elementary School</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Miller, Bridges Community School</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Daily Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Mrs. Krusemark’s Class, Roosevelt Elementary School</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>Mrs. Skov’s 3rd Grade, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>104.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Miller, Bridges Community School</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>4th Grade, Maple River West</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>3rd Williams, Alden-Conger</td>
<td>213.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities.

Nominate Your Students as Academic All-Stars!

It is time to nominate your students as Academic All-Stars. All Minnesota K-12 teachers, principals and academic challenge coordinators are invited to nominate students as "Academic All-Stars" to be eligible to attend the 2017 Gathering of Champions. This free annual celebration and recognition of student excellence is sponsored by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and its educational partners. The 2017 Gathering of Champions will be held at the Mall of America on Aug. 4.

Visit www.synergyexchange.org and click on Gathering of Champions under the Celebrate tab.

Who Should You Designate as an Academic All-Star?

We recommend you consider the top students from the following three categories:

• Students who are consistent top academic performers
• Students who have shown significant improvement in achievement or have overcome barriers to academic achievement
• Students who are local, regional or state champions in a Minnesota Academic League Council approved event. The names of approved programs are found in the Reach for the Stars catalogue.

How Do You Nominate Students?

• Nominate your students online today at www.synergyexchange.org by clicking on Gathering of Champions under the Celebrate tab. The nomination deadline is June 30.
• After you submit your nomination, you will see a link for an "Invitation & Congratulations Letter." Please print this invitation and letter and distribute it to the students you have named as Academic All-Stars. This is the student's only invitation to the Gathering of Champions and provides details about the event, including how to register for the show of their choice. Synergy will not be contacting the nominees. This letter is your opportunity to recognize your students. They must register themselves to attend the ceremony of their choice.

Academic All-Stars attending the event will receive:

• A certificate of achievement and congratulations on stage from dignitaries
• Commemorative items honoring their selection as an "Academic All-Star"
• Discount coupons for rides in Nickelodeon Universe® and purchases at participating Mall of America merchants

For More Information:
Please contact Synergy & Leadership Exchange at goc@synergyexchange.org or 507-389-5115.

Support Gathering of Champions – Become a Tee Sponsor

Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) is hosting a golf tournament to benefit the Gathering of Champions on July 12 at Breezy Point Resort.

Tee Sponsor Benefits include:

• Company name/logo displayed on a sign at a tee box
• Company name/logo displayed on the sponsor banner, on Synergy’s website, shared on social media and in Synergy’s newsletter
• Opportunity to provide promotional gifts for each player

For more information or to register as a sponsor visit www.synergyexchange.org, click “Events” or contact Cassi Wanous at cwanous@synergyexchange.org.

2017 Logo Contest

Congratulations to Andee Winters, a 5th grade student from Pine City Elementary, who submitted the winning design. Winters’ design will appear on promotional and event materials for the Gathering of Champions, which will be held Aug. 4 at the Mall of America. Thank you to everyone who submitted designs and voted for the 2017 Gathering of Champions Logo Contest.
Celebrating Excellence in Character and Ethical Leadership Development

Synergy & Leadership Exchange hosts the Character Recognition Awards each year to celebrate excellence in character and ethical leadership development by schools and community programs.

Three different awards are presented at the ceremony. The Minnesota Schools of Character designation honors schools and/or districts that excel in exemplifying the “11 Principles of Effective Character Education” and demonstrate outstanding initiatives yielding positive results in student behavior, school climate and academic performance. The Minnesota Promising Practices Award honors schools that have developed and implemented a unique and successful practice promoting character development. The practices are shared on the Synergy website where other schools can learn about them for implementation in their own schools. The Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award celebrates community programs that develop character strengths and ethical leadership skills in its participants. A blue-ribbon panel of experts is utilized to evaluate and make recommendations for each award category.

Synergy will celebrate one district, five schools and three community programs at the Character Recognition Awards on May 25. Congratulations to the 2017 honorees:

Honorable Mention, Minnesota District of Character:
Duluth Edison Charter Schools – Duluth
Duluth Edison Charter Schools serves more than 1,400 students in grades K-8 through two schools: Raleigh Academy, serving students in grades K-5 and North Star Academy, serving students in grades K-8. DECS is committed to academic and personal excellence for every student. At the heart of shaping their community is the statement: Be safe, kind and responsible.

Minnesota Promising Practices Awards:
Fosston High School – Fosston
Life Story Project. The Life Story Project provided 10th grade English students the opportunity to create an illustrated diary telling the life story of a nursing home and/or assisted living resident.

Lakes International Language Academy – Forest Lake
The Dot Dragon. In art classes, K–5 students read “The Dot,” by Peter H. Reynolds and learned about community. Working in mini-communities of five, students used the school’s core-value attributes to create a colorful, collaborative wall collage of a dragon, the school mascot.

North Star Academy – Duluth
Core Value Jamboree. The Core Value Jamboree is an intentional opportunity for students to apply an understanding of core values, bully prevention, and the school motto “be safe, kind and responsible” to real life situations.

Tri-City United Schools – Montgomery
Hangout and Read. High school students took a leadership role to improve reading skills of elementary students through the use of technology.

Wheaton Area Middle/High School – Wheaton
Wheaton Area Pay It Forward Homeroom Project. Through an anonymous donation, the school gave each homeroom funds with the challenge to grow the amount through projects and activities to benefit a local or global organization.

Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award:
Playworks Minnesota (Playworks) – St. Paul
Playworks seeks to improve the health and well-being of children by increasing opportunities for physical activity and safe, meaningful play. School-based staff are trained to leverage play in a manner that teaches social-emotional skills to students. Fourth and fifth grade students are trained through the Junior Coach Leadership Program to serve as positive role models at recess.

Summer Skills Training (Genesys Works, Twin Cities) – St. Paul
Through eight weeks of intensive technology and professional skills training, underserved Twin Cities high school rising seniors receive experiential learning in all aspects of professional development, from the concepts of code-switching and professional dress to activities such as dynamic presentation and speaking styles. The program aims to make students comfortable and confident in the workplace, bolstering efficacy and self-determination, while building ethical leadership skills.

Youth Energy Summit (YES!) (Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center) – Spicer
The Youth Energy Summit (YES!) program empowers youth in grades 7–12 to partner with their community to create

Awards continues on page 21
economic and environmental vitality through hands-on learning and team-based projects. YES! students develop leadership, problem-solving, project planning, communication and teamwork skills while engaging communities in meaningful ways that help them envision a future of working together to solve today's environmental challenges.

For more information about the Character Recognition Awards visit synergyexchange.org/Celebrate/CRA.aspx.

Could Your School be Named the Next School of Character?

Ever wonder what it takes to be named a Minnesota or National School of Character?

The Schools of Character program was developed by a team of education experts at Character.org to recognize exemplary schools and offer a path to school improvement by providing a proven framework, self-assessment, professional feedback and models of excellence.

Any school or district that meets a standard of excellence as measured by the “11 Principles of Effective Character Education” will be named a State and/or National School of Character. Synergy & Leadership Exchange sponsors the program and works in partnership with Character.org to offer recognition to schools and districts in Minnesota.

If you are new to the 11 Principles, a great first step is to download and review the free 11 Principles Guidebook at http://bit.ly/2aoH07R. Each of the principles outlines essential elements that should not be overlooked in program development and implementation. A self-assessment is available to help identify areas of strength and growth opportunities.

Although schools that have been named a School of Character implement the 11 Principles differently, some things, according to Character.org, are constant:

- Students and staff enjoy being at school
- Parents are grateful their children have a nurturing, safe school
- Implementation of character education yields academic improvement
- Every school focuses on the “11 Principles of Effective Character Education”

Interested in applying to be a 2018 School of Character? Here are some tips from Character.org:

- Build your team. Prior to completing your application online, assemble a team to collect and reflect on the information. This will help create an excellent application and give you a snapshot of where you are on your character journey and where you want to go.
- Plan your artifacts. Team members should share ideas on how each of the 11 Principles are being implemented in your school.
- Send your self-assessment requests early.
- Compile your data early and include multiple years. In the data portion, you must provide at least one year of data for test scores, behavioral statistics and school climate surveys.

For more information visit www.synergyexchange.org or contact Barb Bergseth at bbergseth@synergyexchange.org.
Synergy & Leadership Exchange has announced that educators and academic coaches from Breckenridge, New Prague, Rochester, St. James, Thief River Falls and Vadnais Heights have been named as recipients of the WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Awards in recognition of their exemplary accomplishments and contributions to student achievement.

Honorees are named in each of three categories and receive $15,000 each: Teacher Achievement Awards, recognizing exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement; Academic Challenge Coach Awards, recognizing classroom teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams who participate and compete in academic challenges approved by the Minnesota Academic Council; and Ethics in Education Awards, recognizing exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum.

The 2017 WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Award honorees:

**Teacher Achievement Award:**
Stacy Busta and Sarah Kratcha are co-teachers from Breckenridge Elementary in Breckenridge Public Schools. Busta has been teaching for 17 years and Kratcha has been teaching for nine years. Together the two co-teach in a fifth-grade classroom. The classroom, referred to as Studio 5, is a project based learning classroom where the two facilitate the learning for 40 students as a team. Inspired by their grant writing, the two viewed the movie, "Most Likely to Succeed," which led them to reflect on the fact that education had not changed in more than 100 years. What was good for students 100 years ago probably was not meeting the needs of students in the 21st century. In preparation for the 21st century skills necessary to succeed in the future workplace, they looked to set up a project based learning environment to engage students while allowing for deeper learning. On a daily basis, students in their classroom are engaged in projects involving science, social studies and language arts.

Kurt Reynolds has been teaching for 19 years and currently teaches high school English and college composition at Lincoln High School. In addition, he is also teaching an introductory education course at the University of North Dakota. Reynolds does not want to simply prepare students for college and a career. Instead, he wants to help develop remarkable, life-long learners who have cultivated skills that allow them to adapt to any changes the future may hold.

“He teaches students to find their niche, which is so important,” shared a student. “Many students graduate high school without a clue what to do next. Mr. Reynolds helped me, as well as countless others, feel ready for that next step. His teaching style is legendary, engaging and incredible.”

One of Reynolds missions in his classroom is to catch his students doing something right every day. He captures these moments and shares it with their parents and the community. He wants to show the parents how amazing their kids are.

**Academic Challenge Coach Award:**
Laura Nelson has been teaching and coaching for 15 years. She currently teaches high school history and geography and coaches Youth in Government Model Assembly, Model United Nations and World Food Prize.

“Laura is a passionate teacher who works to give her students not only an understanding of history and government, but to help them think for themselves and to guide them in developing strong character,” shared a colleague. “She is a resourceful, creative and solution-oriented person who is frequently able to come up with new and innovative approaches to student assignments. She is highly respected by colleagues, parents, students and community partners.”

The programs Nelson coaches allow students to excel and reach higher levels of competition, but for her the focus is on their learning and the affect they can make on their community and the world. That is why she chooses to commit herself to the programs she coaches.

WEM continues on page 21
Jodi Prchal has been teaching and coaching for 24 years. She currently teaches fourth grade and coaches Math Masters, Science Fair, Spelling Bee, and Junior Science and Humanities Symposium.

“Mrs. Prchal knows that teaching is more than addressing the child’s intellect, but includes the child as a whole. For a child to learn, they must be included in the process and feel like a part of the learning community,” a parent shared. “Under her tutelage, students become very excited about what they are doing. She inspires them to find their full potential without making them feel pushed.”

Prchal feels in a world of standardized testing, we need to make sure we are not losing sight of the importance of real-world, hands-on experimentation, exploration and inquiry. By promoting this type of environment, her students are passionate about learning and excited to come to school. She believes learning and having fun while learning is ultimately much more important than winning a medal.

Ethics in Education Award: Karla Beck has been in the education field for 17 years. Beck started her administrative assignment in the St. James Public Schools five years ago at Northside Elementary School. The site had been identified as a priority school and much work needed to be done to turn things around. The staff at Northside worked with Mrs. Beck in a collaborative fashion to increase scores and decrease achievement gaps. The building went from priority school status to continuous improvement to a celebration site all in three short years.

“Mrs. Beck is driven to succeed and provide quality results,” said a parent. “With all the challenges and changes she has encountered since working in administration, she never fails to rise to the challenge and bring everyone along with her. She is consistently recognized for her strong sense of urgency, initiative, and competitive drive to achieve goals, and her persuasive skills and aptitude for enthusiastically motivating others.”

A new initiative Beck was part of creating was a partnership with Mayo Health Systems and St. James High School to offer Health Career courses.

Will Ruffin II has been teaching for eight years and currently teaches fifth grade at Lincoln K–8 District-Wide School. In addition to teaching, Ruffin serves as the coordinator and leader for the All Pro Dads program which is designed to bring fathers into the school on a regular basis. He also helped launch the program at other schools throughout the district.

“Will is an artful teacher creating his learning canvas as a masterpiece in action for ALL students in his learning environment,” said Jim Sonju, school principal. “He has created a learning environment with flexibly, differentiation in which students can work at their own pace in subjects, while still having solid foundations and maintaining accountability for each student.”

Last year, Ruffin incorporated Genius Hour into the daily schedule. Genius Hour is education’s version of a Google initiative. Google allows their employees to dedicate 20% of their work time to research projects they are interested in pursuing. In class, Ruffin offers 30 minutes a day for the students to research topics they are passionate about, or simply want to learn more. Students are learning skills today’s employers seek: teamwork, creative problem solving, leadership, decision making, use of technology and reflection.

The WEM Outstanding Educator Awards program was created by the WEM Foundation, and is administered by Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) in partnership with The Minnesota Service Cooperatives. The WEM Foundation supports teachers and their important role in helping all children achieve academically. The awards program, now in its 19th year, has helped recognize education’s often “unsung heroes” and educators who meet the challenges and opportunities of teaching in a variety of settings.

Educators are first nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for consideration by Synergy and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees.

For more information on the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program and Synergy & Leadership Exchange, visit www.synergyexchange.org.
Calendar of Events

MAY
2 • Teaching Children to Know Their Own Engine: A Look at Your Environment
3 • Work-Based Learning Coordinators
4 • ASD Community of Practice Networking Meeting
4 • Inside the Child: Social and Emotional Development
10 • GiANT Leadership Meeting
11 • DCD Community of Practice Networking Meeting
15 • Every Move Counts: Day 2

JUNE
6 • 2017 Legislative Workshop
6 • Leading Edge National Certification for Online & Blended Teaching
13-14 • School Lunch Scramble
20 • Relicensure in a Day
21 • Standards Based Systems, Reporting and Grading
22 • Summer Reading Academy

JULY
28 • Summer Chess Tournament

AUGUST
4 • Gathering of Champions
14-15 • School Lunch Scramble Webinar
15 • Infinite Campus 101
16 • Infinite Campus Ad hoc Basics
17 • Infinite Campus - Campus Instruction