

THE CURRENT



St. Croix River Education District
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Director's Report

By Kim Gibbons, Executive Director

Welcome back to the start of another school year! This new school year has brought a flurry of activity around SCRED. In July, we welcomed 10 new staff members.

- Robert Benner, Early Childhood Resource Provider, Chisago County
- Adam Lekwa, Instructional Services Coordinator
- Holly Grams, Social Behavior Collaborative Planner
- Sara Hillgartner, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher
- Kaitlin O'Shea, School Psychologist, East Central/Hinckley-Finlayson
- Kelly Demers, School Psychologist, North Branch
- Lauren Jackley, School Psychologist, Chisago Lakes
- Tiffany Richards, School Psychologist, North Branch
- Bethany Almos, Social Worker, North Branch
- Brandie Christenson, School Nurse, North Branch

In August and September, over 40 trainings were held covering a range of topics, including the Unique Learner's Conference (160 participants), a Paraprofessional Conference (177 participants), and a Principal Academy (55 participants). Staff development offerings continue to be based on research-based practices with a focus on improving student outcomes.

The month of September was focused on writing a Race to the Top (RTT) grant application. RTT is a federal grant opportunity that allows districts to apply for funds to implement innovative practices. The theme for the grant was on "personalized learning" which proved to be an excellent match with the work our districts are doing around implementing a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework! We were eligible to apply for \$20 million dollars over a 4-year time period. Grant awards will be made in December, 2013. Over 200 districts from around the country applied, and between 10-15 grants will be awarded.

Director's Report – continued

If funded, the grant will provide resources enhancing the work we do with students and their families. Specific activities written into the grant include:

- Research-based training for all teachers in reading and math.
- Reading and math instructional coaches in every participating site.
- A coaching academy to support district coaches and build local capacity
- Continued funding for the Grade Level Team Facilitator Project
- Increased support around data utilization
- Development of computerized common formative assessments
- Parent Academies in each district with resources to provide electronic devices and internet service for families in need.
- Parent Academy facilitators to work with families.
- Technology resources for parent and teacher use to aid in communication and providing support to students.
- Data academies for teachers on how to intensify instruction for students with intensive needs.
- Increased mental health screening and support.
- Assistive Technology (Kurzweil) to enhance literacy development.
- Problem-Solving Training for districts on how to individualize interventions matched to student needs.
- Annual Principal Data Academies

While the grant is very competitive, we are hopeful that we will be “in the hunt.” I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to the SCRED Districts for your support of this grant and to the SCRED Instructional Services Team for all of their assistance to get this grant written! Regardless of whether we receive the grant, the process generated several valuable ideas to consider on a smaller scale for future implementation!

UNIQUE LEARNERS' UPDATE
By Nicole Jack, Unique Learners' Manager

The St. Croix River Education District has undergone many staff changes to kick off the 2013-2014 school year. One of these changes is the structure of how the Unique Learners' Managers support to districts is now configured as well as the addition of a new Unique Learners' Manager!

Jamie Nord, Director of Special Education, had been serving both the Chisago Lakes and Rush City School Districts. This year, Jamie will be serving only Chisago Lakes and Nicole Woodward, our new Unique Learners' Manager (more info on her later!), will be serving North Branch Area Public Schools as well as the Rush City School District. Nicole will be back at her new position on October 31, as she welcomed a new addition to her family at the end of July. Nicole Jack will continue serving Pine City, Hinckley-Finlayson and East Central Public Schools.

As mentioned, we are happy to welcome Nicole Woodward as a Unique Learners' Manager. Nicole previously served at the North Branch Area Middle School as their school psychologist. Nicole earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology from the College of St. Benedict and her Master's Degree at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Nicole said she will miss the people she worked with at North Branch, as they are an "amazing" staff. Nicole will also miss the students as they have such "uniquely wonderful personalities".

As she moves into her new position, she anticipates her biggest challenge will be finding balance between, "grasping all of the new aspects of her life as a Unique Learners' Manager and being a new mom at home". Nicole also says, "Regardless, I'm very much looking forward to the challenge and the role, specifically the ability I will have to support special education staff, and thus students, on a broader scale. I'm excited about getting to know and working with so many new people!"

Welcome, Nicole!

Instructional Services Team Update
By Adam Lekwa, Barb Scierka,
Julie Frawley, and Jennifer Lake

Greetings from the Instructional Services Team! We hope your school year had a great start. Our year started with some change, but also with excitement for a new year and new opportunities. As you may know, Kerry Bollman accepted a position with TIES in St. Paul after 11 incredible years with SCRED. We are thankful for the foundation her expertise and leadership built for our teams, and are proud of her continuing work to improve practices in an even wider range of educational systems! Adam Lekwa joined the team in July as the new Instructional Services Coordinator and Elementary Literacy Collaborative Planner. Adam came to SCRED from Hiawatha Valley Education District in southeastern Minnesota where he had been working for several years as a school psychologist. He received his training in school psychology at the University of Minnesota, which was highly focused on Response to Intervention (RtI) and evidence based practices in education. He is very excited to be a part of SCRED, and is eagerly learning the ropes.

We started the year with a round of trainings focused on instructional decision making at various levels. We met with **Grade Level Team Facilitators (GLTF)** in August; our goals were to help maintain the focus of the GLTF project and to help facilitators promote regular and highly effective use of data. We also engaged in thought-provoking discussions around matching instructional practices to specific phases of skill development, assistive technology for accommodation, and post-secondary assessment at the **Unique Learners Conference**.

The U.S. Department of Education announced the opening for applications for district **Race to The Top** grants in late August—final applications were due in early October. After a fast-paced, but very detailed discussion about activities we could potentially fund, we started work on a very demanding grant application. The project we proposed is intended to improve learning through: advanced professional development and coaching for teachers; additional resources to support effective data use; and expanding our students' learning environment beyond the traditional classroom through partnerships with parents and communities in each of our member districts. Whether we receive this grant or not, this process generated several valuable ideas and a great deal of motivation.

We are pleased to re-introduce SLD Networking days this year. All SLD case managers are expected to join these meetings (two per year). The secondary SLD teachers held their first networking day in September and elementary SLD teachers are scheduled to meet in November. Both groups will have one more networking day in February. *Please refer to the SCRED website (under the Professional Learning tab) for more information on dates and times.*

Secondary Literacy Update
By Jennifer Lake,
Reading Collaborative Planner

Change is a measure of time and, in the autumn,
time seems speeded up. What was is not and never
again will be; what is is change.

Edwin Teale

Do you identify with the sentiment of time seeming to speed up in the autumn? I certainly do! With so many beginning of school year tasks and activities, this time of year feels like a blur for those of us working in schools. Teachers who are working with literacy needs have already participated in many training activities and are busily implementing new things in their classrooms.

Several teachers spent two days in August participating in training for the Language! curricular program. This is the replacement core program for reading/language arts used with many students who have learning disabilities. This is the third year that SCRED schools have been using Language! and we are seeing good results with most of the students who participate in this program; some have seen MAP score gains three to five times what is expected for their grade level in one school year! Teachers who are new to using Language! this year will have coaching provided by expert coaches in November.

Teachers from several districts are continuing to expand their repertoire of Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Strategies. SIM strategies were created at the University of Kansas and are highly effective methods of teaching many skills. This year SCRED is offering training in the Paragraph Writing Strategy, Inferencing Strategy, and Paraphrasing and Summarizing Strategy. We are seeing improvement in students' reading and writing skills after learning these strategies in both intervention and special education classes.

Teachers and paraprofessionals from all SCRED districts have participated in trainings for Kurzweil 3000. Kurzweil is a software program that provides multi-sensory access to virtually any text, including print, electronic, and web-based material. Kurzweil 3000 supports the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), enabling multiple means for students of all abilities to engage with digital text. This is the second year for the use of Kurzweil in SCRED secondary schools. Last year teams of two teachers (one special education teacher and one regular education teacher) in each secondary school were trained in the use of Kurzweil. This year we are expanding to include more special education case managers and paraprofessionals in order to provide the use of the software to more students who could benefit from its use as an accommodation.

Secondary Literacy - continued

Students and teachers can access the program both at home and at school with the web license agreement purchased through SCRED, both via the Kurzweil software and the *firefly by Kurzweil* app, which is available for iPads and online. The software can be installed by downloading from a link on the SCRED website.

http://www.scred.k12.mn.us/instructional_services/kurzweil_3000

Teachers and paraprofessionals who are using Kurzweil are invited to participate in monthly Kurzweil Networking meetings. These are times to share ideas, problem-solve, practice using different features of Kurzweil, and offer input for ongoing planning. Registration for these events is located in the Professional Learning section of the SCRED website. Below is the schedule for these meetings.

Kurzweil Networking 2013-2014

Dates & Times:

October 23, 2013	4:00-5:30
November 7, 2013	3:30-5:00
December 11, 2013	4:00-5:30
January 6, 2014	3:30-5:00
February 5, 2014	4:00-5:30
March 5, 2014	3:30-5:00
April 23, 2014	4:00-5:30

Outcomes that we are looking for with the use of this program include increased engagement with content area text, improved content literacy, and higher achievement in classes in which Kurzweil is utilized. Kurzweil has many possibilities for helping students learn more independently and gives teachers new tools for designing learning activities that meet all students' needs. I am looking forward to seeing how much we can help students learn through the use of this program.

Secondary Math Update
By Julie Frawley,
Math Collaborative Planner

Secondary Math: Math Activities for the Year:
Short Time – Big Impact

A new year has begun, and with it comes the responsibility of meeting the needs of all learners. In the arena of math learning, number sense has been a concern for years at SCRED. An integral part of number sense is the composition and decomposition of numbers. Struggling students often lack composition and decomposition skills. In other words, they are unable to understand the number 10 can be broken apart and put together many different ways. For instance, 10 can be $4 + 6$ or $2 + 8$ and if you have two groups of 5 it turns into 10. For students that struggle with math, they often have limited skills breaking numbers apart and putting them back together, we call this decomposition and composition, respectively.

Another consideration for struggling students rests in the beliefs students and teachers have about intelligence (Dweck, 2007). A plethora of research shows teaching a growth mindset improves both grades and achievement test scores significantly (Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck, 2007; Good, Aronson & Inzlicht, 2003). People who possess a growth mindset understand talents and abilities can be developed through effort. People with a fixed mindset believe talents and abilities are a fixed trait. The famous (never discovered) concept that there is a ‘math gene’ out there that makes people good at math is an example of fixed mindset. Growth mindset people believe everyone can get smarter if they are willing to work at it. Having a growth mind-set is exceptionally helpful for students that struggle with negative stereo-types {ie. girls in mathematics, Black or Latino students, etc.}(Blackwell et al., 2007; Good et al., 2003; Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002). Wouldn’t it be stellar if something combined the composition and decomposition of numbers within a growth mindset structure?

Something does: Number Talks. “Number Talks can be best described as classroom conversations around purposefully crafted computation problems that are solved mentally” (Parrish, 2010, pg. xviii). The need for conversation and conceptual understanding around math has been our mantra at SCRED for the past three years. This mantra is not changing. Instead of saying it slower and louder we are taking steps to provide our districts with professional development that supports our mantra. The Bar Modeling intervention strategy professional development days support this mantra with an elementary focus. For the secondary focus there will be a day of professional development on November 6, 2013 in support of our mantra.

Secondary Math - continued

The secondary intervention day will center around two key ideas. A brief look into growth mindset will lead into an in-depth, hands-on experience with Number Talks. The teachers will begin the intervention day with an honest look at their beliefs about learning. Evidence in support of growth mindset and strategies to ‘grow’ a growth mindset will be presented. Then, significant time will be spent on the Number Talks class-wide intervention strategy. Number Talks is a class-wide intervention strategy implemented in 7 to 10 minutes daily (bell-ringer time) that can be used with all learners. It is a strategy that will open the door to conversation around numbers for struggling learners and push students who are well above target to think in new ways. After a thorough explanation of the strategy, teachers will spend time developing their own Number Talks to bring back to the classroom. Teachers will walk away from the secondary intervention day with things to think on and usable materials for the classroom.

*Spotlight on Interventions & Resources:
Reading Comprehension Interventions
By Barb Scierka,
Elementary Math Collaborative Planner*

Many teachers are seeking interventions that work on comprehension. The Minnesota Center for Reading Research has created interventions to assist teachers by providing intervention protocols and guidance in implementing comprehension strategies. Follow the link: <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/reading/PRESS/resources/interventions.html>

At this site you will find the Intervention Manual for PRESS - *Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites*. As you scroll down, you see interventions for various topics: Decision Making, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and then Comprehension. Under Comprehension you will see a document with the basic sequence of the intervention, intervention protocol, skills assessments and intervention fidelity checklists.

The PRESS Comprehension Intervention focuses on the 4 components of reciprocal teaching: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. These strategies are very robust in helping students comprehend texts. The intervention protocol gives guidance on selecting the appropriate text for the intervention and possible resources for finding texts.

This intervention is appropriate for students who can decode text and are somewhat fluent readers, but have trouble getting meaning from the text.

Outcomes Services Update

*By Kindle Perkins Kabat,
Outcomes Manager*



The SCRED Outcomes Services has had a busy and productive start to the 2013-2014 school year. Throughout the month of August, Outcomes was busy updating databases with current student information and getting ready for the Fall Benchmark testing window.

The Fall GOM testing window went smoothly; however, difficulties with NWEA servers caused a multitude of testing difficulties this fall for WEB-Based MAP for all districts across the nation.

SCRED Outcomes is participating on a Minnesota Assessment Group task force that will focus on working with NWEA to remediate these difficulties prior to the Spring MAP testing window. Likewise, a MAP Coordinator training will be held prior to the Spring 2014 Benchmark testing window.

Over the summer NWEA and TIES worked together to create an auto-load program, so that MAP data would be auto-loaded directly into TIES rather than waiting until the end of the testing window. Starting this fall, once a student completes a “valid MAP test” their scores should be available in iCue by 9am the next day and in Cognos within 48 hours.

As you are aware, in the spring of 2013 Minnesota began using the MCA-III assessment for reading, which was aligned with the 2010 Minnesota Common Core Academic Standards in English Language Arts (ELA). The new standards appear to be more challenging than previous state standards: while the 2012 state-wide MCA-II proficiency level was 76 percent, the 2013 state-wide MCA-III proficiency was only 58 percent. In order to better reflect the expectations established by the new ELA standards, the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and MAP Reading targets have been updated. We ran the target analysis on our SCRED data, and decided to wait until TIES completed a statewide analysis to decide which set of targets to use. We opted to use the analysis conducted by TIES, which includes the SCRED districts and all other TIES districts in the population sample as the TIES analysis produced lower targets than the SCRED analysis.

The purpose of the analysis was to establish target scores on each assessment that are predictive of success on the more rigorous MCA-III. As expected, the resulting higher target scores for both assessments are higher than in previous years. While these higher targets will be challenging to achieve, they accurately estimate the levels of proficiency students will need to demonstrate on the ORF and MAP assessments in order to have a good chance of passing the new MCA-III. **These targets were loaded into TIES starting on October 7, 2013, and will be applied for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years.**

During late October and early November, the Outcomes Services Manager and the Instructional Services Team will meet with administrative teams in each district to review the fall data and assist with instructional planning decisions.

Social Behavior Update
By Christine Matthew and Holly Grams,
Social Behavior Collaborative Planners

The Social Behavior Team Has a New Member

Holly Grams is the new Social Behavior Collaborative Planner serving Rush City, Pine City, Hinckley-Finlayson, and East Central school districts. She comes to SCRED after working as a school psychologist for a rural Wisconsin school district and looks forward to continuing to help districts in their efforts to implement social behavior supports for students. Welcome, Holly!

Updates to MN Law on the Use of Restrictive Procedures

Restrictive procedures is a term used to describe physical holding or seclusion of children with disabilities in Minnesota schools. Minnesota Statutes, sections 125A.0941 and 125A.0942, govern the use of restrictive procedures. On July 1, 2013, amendments to Minnesota Statutes, sections 125A.0941 and 125A.0942, went into effect. Significant changes include the creation of a restrictive procedures plan for schools that intend to use restrictive procedures on children with disabilities. Another change includes convening a school oversight committee to conduct a quarterly review of the use of restrictive procedures within the school. Over the next month, districts will receive more detailed information and guidance regarding the changes to the law.

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Training Aligns with the MN Law on Restrictive Procedures

Each year almost 300 educators including special education teachers, paraprofessionals, school psychologists, and administrators throughout SCRED districts, attend a training to become certified in the *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® training program. The training program has encouraged educators to implement positive behavior supports and taught alternatives to using restraint and seclusion. The SCRED social behavior collaborative planners are certified instructors of the *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® program and are eager to conduct informal or formal trainings to any and all school staff throughout the school year, in order to provide verbal de-escalation techniques and effective strategies for addressing classroom and school-wide behavior.

The following chart is designed to show a few ways in which Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® training program is aligned to meet the restraint and seclusion standards from Minnesota Law.

Social Behavior Update - continued

MN Law on Restraint and Seclusion	Correlation with CPI's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training
<p>Subd. 3. Physical holding or seclusion Physical holding or seclusion may be used only in an emergency. A school that uses physical holding or seclusion shall meet the following requirements:</p> <p>(1) the physical holding or seclusion must be the least intrusive intervention that effectively responds to the emergency;</p> <p>(2) physical holding or seclusion must end when the threat of harm ends and the staff determines that the child can safely return to the classroom or activity;</p> <p>(3) staff must directly observe the child while physical holding or seclusion is being used;</p>	<p>The <i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</i>® program philosophy is that physical restraints be used only when an individual is an imminent danger to self or others. Additionally, physical restraint should be used only when the danger presented by the acting-out behavior outweighs the risks of using physical restraint.</p> <p>The emphasis in <i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</i>® training is on the prevention of situations that may require the use of physical restraint. For situations in which physical restraint is required as a last resort, CPI teaches a spectrum of interventions with varying degrees of restrictiveness. The program teaches the importance of utilizing the least restrictive intervention possible.</p> <p>It is a guiding principle of <i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</i>® training that restraints should be terminated at the earliest possible moment when the individual is no longer an imminent danger to self or others.</p> <p><i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</i>® training stresses the importance of having an auxiliary staff member present during every restraint—someone who is not involved in performing the actual physical hold. This person should be assigned the responsibility of monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance. All Instructors receive vital information in their manuals regarding monitoring for signs of distress.</p>
<p>Subd. 5. Training for staff (a) To meet the requirements of subdivision 1, staff who use restrictive procedures shall complete training in the following skills and knowledge areas:</p> <p>(1) positive behavioral interventions;</p> <p>(2) communicative intent of behaviors;</p> <p>(3) relationship building;</p> <p>(4) alternatives to restrictive procedures, including techniques to identify events and environmental factors that may escalate behavior;</p> <p>(5) de-escalation methods;</p>	<p><i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</i>® training is often used in conjunction with school-wide implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Staff learns to model appropriate behaviors, allowing children to learn better methods to regulate their own behaviors. In addition, organizations may also choose to utilize a Participant Workbook available from CPI that integrates PBIS concepts. CPI teaches that behavior is a form of communication. <i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</i>® training allows staff to better understand the real meaning behind behaviors.</p>

Early Childhood Update
By Karen Wolner,
Early Childhood Collaborative Planner

Last Spring SCRED received a grant from the Chisago County Children’s Cabinet to fund a new position, Early Childhood Family Support Resource Provider. This position will help fill the gap for children ages birth to five who may need support with behavior, academic concerns and/or general development when no other resources are available in Chisago County. Rob Benner joined our early childhood team in August. He has a background in Applied Psychology and home visiting support. He is currently working on a Master’s Degree at St. Cloud State University in Child and Family Studies.

Early Childhood Special Education Teachers, Occupational Therapists, a Physical Therapist, and the Physical Medical Consulting Teacher were certified this past September on the Early Movement Indicator (EMI), which is a General Outcome that measures a child’s moving for locomotion. The outcome is for the child to move in a fluent and coordinated manner to play and participate in home, school, and community settings. The EMI was created by a team of researchers at Juniper Gardens Children’s Project at the University of Kansas. The EMI is one of several Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) which expands our resources to have a seamless measurement system from Birth – Grade 12!

For the past several years, we have worked to strengthen our math instruction. The foundational focus is from the research of Doug Clements and Julie Sarama using the construct of “learning trajectories” in mathematics education. We know children follow a natural developmental progression, and this is also true in learning math. When teachers understand these developmental progressions, they can sequence activities based on them and build mathematics learning environments that are developmentally appropriate. This past August, we examined “What to Teach, When to Teach, and How to Teach”.

“High quality teaching in mathematics is about challenge and joy, not imposition and pressure. Math instruction includes providing a lot of unit blocks, along with loads of time to use them. It invites children to experience mathematics as they play in, describe, and think about their world.” Clements (2001)

We 'R' Able Update
By Valorie Arrowsmith,
We 'R' Able Service Manager

Assessment and reflection have been the focus of We R Able projects during the past year. We R Able is an organization that offers programs in the areas of enrichment, arts and humanities, sports, recreation, health and safety, skills development, and special events. Its target audiences are adults with disabilities and the general public in four school districts: Rush City, Pine City, North Branch, and Chisago Lakes.

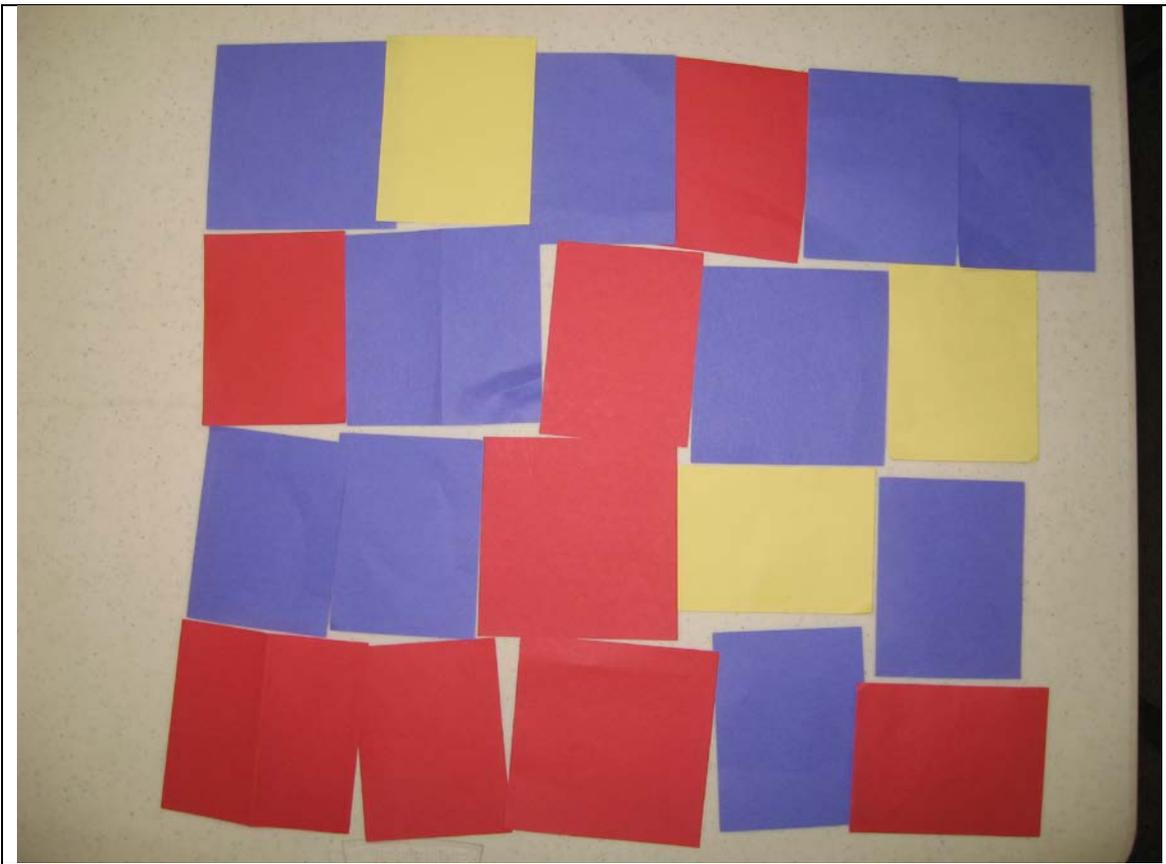
We R Able has been focusing some of its current efforts on finding ways to help its audiences explore expressive opportunities because some forms of communication and expression may be limited or challenging for participants. The arts offer avenues for multiple forms of expression, and grants to the total of \$18,495, through the East Central Regional Arts Council, have made many programs possible this year.

A seven-part concert series recently supported audiences in the reflective process. Reflection is part of learning, and through this audiences move a step closer to realizing what they had learned and experienced when attending an event. Concerts were held at the Pine City Senior Center, Rush City Community Center, Rushseba Town Hall, Chisago County Senior Center, and Point Pleasant Heights in Chisago City.

The goal was to measure audience engagement and response at music concerts and the objective was to provide concert guests with opportunities to reflect on what they learned by making a quilt. We accomplished this by doing a think-pair-share learning activity. We said, "Think about your experience and choose your color, then share your choice with a neighbor and tell why you chose it." In the meanwhile we went around and distributed red, blue, or yellow quilt squares to each person.

People had a chance to talk about their choice and listen to someone else's justification. They chose a red quilt square representing the highest level of engagement if they could say the following about themselves: I felt highly engage. I really connected with the music. I heard something recognizable, and I am able to name two things that I learned at the concert. Whereas they chose a blue quilt square if they could say: I appreciate what I experienced today, I am curious about this type of music as I didn't know very much about it, and I am able to name one thing that I learned at the concert. By selecting a yellow quilt square they were declaring that they were interested in learning more about this style of music and in hearing more of this type of music in the future.

We followed up with a whole group discussion to find out what kinds of reflections had been shared during the pair work, and then we took a photo of the quilt and invited guests to come and take a look at a visual representing the groups' experience that day.



Participants at the Joel Karlsson concert at Rushseba Town Hall made this quilt to reflect their group experience at the event. Red indicates highest level of engagement, blue is next, and yellow shows individuals who are at the beginning stages of arts experiences. Photo by V. A. Arrowsmith.

Another learning activity that incorporated several modalities were the Mime Workshops and Art Show Openings. Two have been held at the Rush City and Pine City Libraries in August and September, respectively, with upcoming shows at the Vitalize! Studios of Art in Chisago City in October, with a concluding show at the North Branch Library in November.

The artwork was created during the annual We R Able spring painting classes. Sixteen pieces were framed and installed at each venue. The art show openings began with a mime presentation by artist David Braddock, an area resident who has studied with Marcel Marceau. He then invited everyone to join him in a mime workshop, and finally he led the group in viewing the artwork, talking about what they saw thought, or felt and helped the group express those ideas through mime. In a follow-up discussion, viewers said they saw more in the paintings by doing the mime. Each exhibition invited guests to vote for their favorite piece and to respond in writing or with a smiley face on the viewer response cards.

We 'R' Able - continued



Mime artist David Braddock led a group of art show viewers at the Rush City Library in a creating mime to represent images from paintings. Photo by V. S. Arrowsmith



Guests at the Pine City art show opening expressed what they thought was happening in a painting using mime. Photo by V. S. Arrowsmith.

Data from Annual Report

We R Able offered 126 events, classes, workshops, concerts, and activities during FY 2012-2013. Our overall population increased over the previous year. As the northern two school districts, Pine City and Rush City, had previously shown low participation levels, we focused on providing more programs in these areas and saw those totals increase.

FY11-12 to FY 12-13	PC	RC	NB	CL	Other Cambridge and East Bethel, Mora, Braham
Percentage of increase in population served	+214%	+249%	+30%	+15%	+183%

Arts/humanities, 77 events: 4 art show openings, 27 concerts, and 11 movies. 32 classes, i.e.—bookmaking, dance from your chair, garlands, painting, and crafts

Recreation, 32 sessions: 12 classes, 19 league events, and 1 social event, i.e.—aquatics classes, disc golf, tips promenade, KUBB classes, snow tubing event, softball and bowling

Health/safety, 7 events: 3 presentations, and 4 social gatherings

Skills development, 7 opportunities: 4 cross-country ski classes, 3 food preparation classes

Special events, 2 celebrations + 1 enrichment event: the Bowling Banquet, the Santa Lucia Party, and a presentation

New Goals for 2013-2014 School Year

New goals for the school year focus on maximizing media opportunities, such as using additional Internet-based newsletters and our Facebook page to publicize events. We are also working on doing follow-up stories in the local media and in our own newsletter. We plan to expand our knowledge of foundations and granting agencies so we can find funding to offset program fees in order to keep costs low for participants. We are initiating a grant study circle in November, where peers will come to a few evening meetings to share grant information with each other. We would also like to work with each participating school district theater department and coordinate outings so more We R Able participants will attend and support local theater productions. We will continue to build audiences by collaborating with organizations in our service area.

Truancy Program Updates
Kristen Hussong, Chisago County
Cheryl Bjerke, Pine County

Every Day Matters! Attendance Program (EDMAP)
by Kristen Hussong, Coordinator

The EDMAP program is a program involving the following agencies: Chisago County public schools, Chisago County Attorney’s Office, Human Services, Court Services and St. Croix River Education District. The goal of the program is to reduce school absenteeism by working with individual students and their families to identify and eliminate the barriers to school attendance. Early intervention and engagement of families are key factors in the success of the EDMAP program.

Student meetings are held during school hours and are used to review attendance, grades and behaviors. These meetings allow a student an opportunity to address any concerns at school, home or in the community. Engagement of families is attempted through letters, phone calls and meetings. Once the barriers are identified, collaboration with the above agencies and other resource providers gives the opportunity for families to get additional community support.

If families don’t respond to early interventions by the school and EDMAP program, a formal referral is sent to Chisago County Attorney’s Office or Human Services for County intervention. The EDMAP program continues to work with the family and school after County services have been initiated.

At-risk students are identified with building staff on a regular basis. If you have attendance concerns about a student, please contact Kristen at khussong@scred.k12.mn.us or your building’s counselor/attendance liaison.

Contact Kristen Hussong – cell phone: 651-332-0750; Email: khussong@scred.k12.mn.us

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Project ATTEND
by Cheryl Bjerke, Coordinator

PROJECT ATTEND is a Truancy/Attendance diversion program involving the Attorney’s Office, Health & Human Services, Probation, SCRED, Sheriff’s Department and Pine County Schools. Project Attends’ goals are to reduce truancy rates and improve school attendance.

Contact Cheryl Bjerke -- cell phone: 320-267-876; Email: cbjerke@scred.k12.mn.us

(continued on next page)

Truancy Program Updates - continued

School Attendance Matters

Project Attend services are available to all schools and families living in Pine County. Any person or organization that has a concern regarding a student's attendance to school should call the Project Attend Coordinator, Cheryl Bjerke at 320-267-8767 and make a referral for services.

Tips for Schools

- 1. Recognize chronic absenteeism early. The school shall challenge multiple absences. Schools and Project Attend shall notify the student, parent, or guardian of that child's attendance problem prior to the child becoming a truant.*
- 2. Build working relationships with parents and students.*
- 3. Collaborate with all school resources and support to improve school attendance. Know your schools attendance policy and be efficient in reporting, recording and monitoring of students attendance.*
- 4. Schools should contact parents/guardians daily when a student is absent. Schools should have sound reasonable attendance policies along with reasonable consequences for students who miss school in excess or are truant from school.*

Tips for Parents

- 1. Value and support your child receiving an education and making academic progress. Send your child to school every day. Allowing your child to stay home for non-related medical reasons or approved vacation sends a message it is an option not to attend school. There are 365 days in a year; school is in session 174 of those days. Value the importance of regular attendance.*
- 2. Help your child to set and stick to a reasonable and regular curfew and bedtime. Supervision! Do you know where your child is at, whom they are with and what they are doing? Kids who do not get enough sleep engage in more inappropriate behaviors and struggle with academic achievement.*
- 3. Call for support:*
 - *If your child does not want to attend school or your child is unexcused absent to school.*
 - *If your child seems sad, depressed, withdrawn or experiencing anxieties.*
 - *If your child complains of not being able to stay focused.*
 - *If your child is failing classes.*
 - *If your child has ongoing medical concerns.*
 - *If you suspect alcohol and or drug use.*

SCRED Announcements: Meet the New SCRED Staff

Bethany Almos joined North Branch Area Schools in July as a School Support Specialist at Sunrise River Elementary School. She graduated from University of Wisconsin-Stout with a Bachelors degree in Psychology in 2003. She graduated from the University of St. Thomas and College of St. Catherine with a Masters degree in Social Work in 2007. She has a background in both domestic and international adoption and in school social work. Bethany lives in Sandstone, MN with her husband Andy and 4-year-old daughter Nyah. She loves traveling and spending time with family. She is excited to work with students and staff in the North Branch School district.

Rob Benner joined the early childhood team in August. He has a background in Applied Psychology, home visiting support, and is licensed in Parent Education. He is currently working on a Masters Degree at St. Cloud State University in Child and Family Studies. On a personal note, he lives in Isanti, MN with his wife Anna and his two year old son Nathan. He is very excited to be a part of SCRED and looks forward to working with the staff and the families in the districts he serves.

Brandie Christenson started working for SCRED in July as a school nurse at North Branch Area Public Schools. She works with students from kindergarten to 6th grade. She graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a Bachelors degree in Nursing in 2003. She has a background in acute care nursing; working with all ages. Brandie lives in Pine City, MN with her husband Sam, 6 year old daughter Kaylie and 3 year old son Kadyn. She loves the outdoors and spending time with family. She is honored to work with children and staff in the North Branch School district.

Kelly Demers is beginning her third year as a School Psychologist, and is currently working at North Branch Area Middle School. She began her career at St. Paul Public Schools where she gained experience at the early childhood, elementary, and secondary levels. Outside of work, she and her husband are enjoying settling into their new home in North Branch, as well as exploring the beautiful parks in the area. Kelly particularly enjoys gardening, kayaking, and spending time with friends and family. She is happy to be on board with the team at SCRED.

Holly Grams is the new Social Behavior Collaborative Planner with SCRED serving Rush City, Pine City, Hinckley-Finlayson, and East Central school districts. She earned her Masters and Education Specialists degrees through River Falls, WI and her undergraduate degree from St. Cloud State University. She is licensed and trained as a school psychologist and has been working as a school psychologist for the last 3 years in a rural Wisconsin school district. She is originally from Rush City, MN and is very excited to be back in her home community. Of her new role at SCRED, Holly says she “has the opportunity to work with so many wonderful administrators and staff and is excited about all of the things districts are doing to support their students’ needs”. She looks forward to continuing to help districts in their efforts to implement social behavior supports for students. Holly currently lives in Rush City with her husband and three-year-old son.

SCRED Announcements - continued

Sara Hillgartner is the new Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for SCRED. She graduated from the University of Minnesota in May 2013 with her Minnesota State License to teach children with hearing loss and a Master of Education degree in Educational Psychology. She earned her B.A. and Masters from the U of MN. She is working in the North Branch and Chisago Lakes Districts. Sara is from the quaint town of Cedarburg, Wisconsin and is a Packers fan. She currently lives in Minneapolis. One of the most valuable lessons Sara learned in school is that as a teacher, you never stop learning. There are *always* new tools to try and *always* ways to improve your teaching. She is excited to continue learning how to be the best possible Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing she can be.

Adam Lekwa is the new Instructional Services Coordinator. He comes to SCRED from Hiawatha Valley Education District in southeastern Minnesota where he had been working for several years as a school psychologist. He received his training in school psychology at the University of Minnesota, which was highly focused on Response to Intervention (RtI) and evidence based practices in education. He is very excited to be a part of SCRED, and is eagerly learning the ropes.

Lauren Jackley is the new school psychologist at Chisago Lakes High School, TRIO Wolf Creek, and Pathway to Change. Lauren's undergraduate training was done at UW-Stout and she is currently completing her EdS degree at UW-Milwaukee. Lauren is very excited about the experiences she has had so far being part of the implementation of an RtI framework at the progressive schools where she works. Lauren says, "Go Wildcats!"

Kaitlin O'Shea is the new school psychologist at East Central Schools and Hinckley-Finlayson High School. She recently moved from Eau Claire, WI to Forest Lake, MN to start her job at SCRED. She grew up in Minnesota and is happy to be back in the Land of 10,000 Lakes. In her spare time Kaitlin enjoys boating, fishing, and snowmobiling at her cabin on Big Sandy Lake with her husband and their cat, Josie.

Tiffany Richards is from a small town outside of the Fargo-Moorhead area where she completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Minnesota State University Moorhead. She did her internship in Kansas last year and is excited to start her first official year as a school psychologist at SCRED working in the North Branch Schools. Tiffany enjoys being outdoors and spending time with her friends, family, and nephews.

SCRED Announcements - continued



Chisago Lakes students participating in mentorship program



Stephanie Bellinger-Bushard and students recognized by the Lakes Area Police Commission

The Lakes Area Police Commission participates in a mentorship program offered to Chisago Lakes High School students. In June the commission members recognized Stephanie Bellinger-Bushard and two students for their work in the program during 2012. Joe Rose and Chris Duncan were mentored by Investigator Tim Tougas and Chief Kevin Stenson. The mentoring allows the student “a taste of law enforcement as a career”, said the Chief. Through involvement in the program, Lakes Area Police personnel also build relationships with youth in the community, he added. The Mentoring Program receives a grant through Chisago County Health and Human Services Collaborative for coordinating 22 local businesses and organizations with interested students from all three high schools in Chisago County.