

# THE CURRENT



St. Croix River Education District  
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## VOLUME XXII MAY 2012

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## *It's Been a Busy Year!* *By Kim Gibbons, Executive Director*

The 2011-12 school year was one of change and transition for the SCRED organization! We started the year by moving out of the main Rush City office into temporary quarters in Trinity Lutheran Church in North Branch. A building project ensued and much of the year was spent making decisions involving the new facility. ICS consulting was hired to manage the project, and MLA architectural firm was hired to design the new building. A project budget was established, meetings were held to gather input from SCRED and district staff, and ultimately, a blueprint was developed! The new facility will be approximately 12,000 square feet and will house the entire SCRED organization. The building will include a state-of-the-art training center for staff development! Ground breaking will occur sometime in early June, and it is expected that the new building will be ready for occupancy by early November.



Exterior Design  
St. Croix River Education District Office Building

Option 2

While facility issues were a priority this year, SCRED also maintained a focus on instruction. Two curriculum areas were reviewed this school year: math and physical education/health. Special education adopted two new reading series, Reading Mastery Signature Edition (Elementary) and Language! (Secondary). Teachers were trained prior to the start of school, and coaching was provided throughout the school year. Add in problem solving team training, grade level team facilitator training, a state compliance review for special education, training for speech and language on Ipad apps, early numeracy training and SEEDS training for early childhood, SIM Concept Comparison Routine training, all of the SCRED networking meetings, and it has been a BUSY year!

*Instructional Services Update*  
***By Kerry Bollman, Instructional Services Collaborative Planner***

This year SCRED member districts have been participating in math professional development focusing on using multiple representations to deepen students' understanding of mathematical concepts. Tom Muchlinski, math consultant, worked with Barb Scierka and Julie Seldon to offer three days of training. In all 115 people attended. The days were filled with math activities to demonstrate how to use multiple representations in K-12 classroom math instruction to benefit all students. Participant feedback was quite positive with 81% of participants agreeing that they increased their understanding of mathematical representation. 85% of reporting participants said they learned something they could incorporate in their classrooms, and saw how doing this would help their students deepen their mathematical understanding.

In addition to study of teaching through multiple representations, participants also discussed the question of if or when students would best be served through an alternate or replacement core math curriculum in lieu of the standard general education curricular offering. The purpose of this work is to help schools conceptualize a full continuum of support to meet the needs of all students by developing guidelines to support teams in decision-making.

As this professional development cycle continues, our meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup> included a chance to further solidify knowledge of teaching practices using multiple representation through hands-on activities, and a culmination of the many discussions about how to best meet the math instructional needs of students.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, special education staff met to investigate methods and materials for use in alternate core or supplemental interventions. This specific work will be focused on developing effective programming for students with significant math needs.

This winter, we completed our math professional development sessions focused on teaching mathematics through multiple representations of concepts. To continue your learning on this topic, we suggest the book Accessible Mathematics: 10 Instructional Shifts that Raise Student Achievement by Steven Leinwand. This brief (113 pages) but helpful text is full of practical ideas for math teachers working to improve their instruction.

Reading Mastery and Language! coaching and networking opportunities have also been completed for this year. This job embedded professional development has assisted elementary special education teachers in transitioning to the new Signatures edition, and supported secondary special education teachers in learning a new curriculum for this year. Training will be offered in August for both programs again. Please watch for the summer course catalog to sign up. Coaching support will be offered again next year as well.

Another cohort successfully completed problem solving training this year, and buildings are settling into use of the new GenEd Forms documentation system for problem solving cases. We've made great progress with our paperwork this year! This spring our Instructional Coach Melissa Chinn will be working with problem solving teams to complete the RtI Needs Checklist. This annual opportunity to reflect on quality RtI practices and set goals for the following year is an important part of keeping an effective team going.

Best wishes for a productive and gratifying culmination to the school year!

## *Secondary Literacy*

### *By Jennifer Lake, Reading Collaborative Planner*

A variety of secondary literacy activities have been happening across the SCRED districts. As the new secondary literacy collaborative planner, I am enjoying getting to know the teachers and other district staff who make literacy such a high priority with our students.

After completing a collaborative review of Reading and Language Arts curricula for students receiving special education services in 2011-2012, member districts chose to adopt the Language! curricular materials published by Sopris West. This research-based program has shown excellent results and is being implemented in middle schools and high schools across SCRED, with one district piloting the program with an elementary class. SCRED provided two training days for Language! in August and continues supporting the implementation throughout the school year. Teachers who teach Language! courses were able to receive coaching from national trainer/instructional coaches in September, with a follow-up day of reflecting, collaborating, and planning in November. A second round of coaching occurred in the first week of February, and will be followed by a second collaboration and training day March 7. As I have visited classrooms and communicated with the coaches, I have been impressed with the high quality instruction and implementation of the program. Teachers will continue to be supported in implementing Language! with fidelity through a refresher training day in August and continued instructional coaching during the 2012-2013 school year.

We are continuing to provide training and support for the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM). On October 18, Dr. Marc Markell from St. Cloud University presented a session on the Sentence Writing Strategy, with teachers from three SCRED districts participating. A day of learning about the Concept Mastery Routine and the Concept Comparison Routine was provided by Dr. Barb Vallejo and Lolene Borsheim January 20. Teachers from four SCRED districts participated in the training. Feedback for these days was very positive, and teachers expressed interest in learning more of the SIM strategies. We will try to accommodate those requests as we plan staff development for next year.

Other secondary literacy activities have included supporting schools with Common Core English Language Arts alignment and implementation, reading strategy and intervention consultation, working on the creation of a template for District Literacy plans, and working with ADSIS teams and teachers to improve reading achievement for secondary students.

My goal is to do whatever I can to assist in developing effective literacy instruction for all students in our secondary schools. Please contact me with any needs of support in this area. I look forward to continued collaboration to boost student achievement!

*Quote of the day: "Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him." ~[Maya Angelou](#)*



*Outcomes Services Update*  
***By Kindle Perkins Kabat, Outcomes Manager***

The SCRED Outcomes Services had a successful Fall 2011 testing window, and is approaching the end of a successful Spring 2012 testing window. In the fall, all of the General Outcomes Measures (GOMs) and MAP data were loaded into TIES before the fall deadline, and we are looking forward to a repeat performance this spring. If each district gets their data to SCRED on-time and in the correct format, the anticipated dates that data will be available in TIES are listed below:

K-12 GOM Data – between May 29 and May 30

MAP Data – between May 30 and June 6 (depending on how quickly TIES is able to load the data)

The Outcomes Services Manager and the Instructional Services Team will be meeting with administrative teams in each district in mid-June to review the spring data.

Over the past few months we have been having discussions with each district regarding the testing window dates for next year, in particular the spring MAP testing window. Anticipated tests windows for next year are listed below. The 2012-13 Fall, November, and Winter testing windows are confirmed. The Spring testing window is tentative, pending final confirmation on Tuesday May 22, 2012.

Fall: K-12 GOM – Sept 10 - 21

2-8+ MAP – Sept 10 - 28

Nov: K-1 GOM (Early Literacy) – Nov 5 - 16

Winter: K-12 GOM – Jan 14 - 25

*(optional MAP testing) – Jan 14 - Feb 1 \*\*will not be uploaded to NWEA nor loaded in TIES*

Spring: K-12 GOM – April 29 - May 10

***2-8+ MAP – March 13 - April 10***

***\*\*Note: the spring MAP window will be earlier than the GOM window***

This summer Outcome Services will be working on target analysis for MAP Math to MCA III, Kindergarten TENs, and the new Math Concepts and Applications.

*From the Unique Learners' Corner –  
Polishing Our Practice*  
**By Sarah Brown, Unique Learners' Manager**

We started the year at the Unique Learners' Conference with an opportunity to share in Ellen Waters' journey. As I reflected upon her presentation, the influence of the services she received was salient. In what she described as a traumatic time for her and her family, the school district was able to partially ease the burden by meeting her special education needs.

Now that we are several months into the school year, I find myself again reflecting on Ms. Waters' experiences as I participate in the state self-review process. In addition to monitoring due process requirements associated with IDEA, the review process is designed to help us reflect and grow. This may be the point in the article where a soft groan is inserted because, when we think about due process, we are often focused on the paperwork and timeline requirements we face during our day-to-day work. This year, I propose we make a conscious decision to keep our eyes on the big picture of the self-review process. Before IDEA (and all the requirements it brings), concerns about parental involvement in decisions, regular review of student progress, services provided in the Least Restrictive Environment, and a focus on transitioning to life after high school were not a guarantee for students with disabilities. With all the compliance requirements that come with it, IDEA's true intent is about doing what is right for students with disabilities.

Now, when I think about the variety of high-impact services we provide to students in our districts I am amazed at how far we have come. We individualize programs for students with significant needs every day and I have no doubt that IDEA has served as an impetus for that progress. As we spend time in the coming months improving our due process compliance, let us take time to think about the real reason for all this work: the students we serve.

*From the Unique Learners' Corner –  
Highlighting Two August Staff Development Opportunities  
By Jamie Nord, Director of Special Education*

This year's annual Unique Learners' Conference will be held on August 21, 2012 and will focus on "digging deeper into compliance." Staff development centered on themes identified through the spring 2012 state self-review process will be covered during the large-group morning session. In addition, training on systematic observation techniques to address eligibility criteria will be provided in the afternoon department meetings, along with other department-specific updates.

We are excited to once again offer a SCRED Paraprofessional Conference! The conference will be held on August 29, 2012. The morning large-group session will focus on the role of the paraprofessional; paraprofessional competencies; data privacy, confidentiality & ethics; promoting student self-advocacy and independent behavior; and verbal de-escalation strategies. A variety of breakout sessions will be offered during the afternoon. Paraprofessionals should select one to two sessions to attend based on their specific assignments and staff development needs. Topics include: Lifts, Transfers & How to Position Students, STAR Training, Condensed Boys Town Training, Strategies for Increasing Communication, Minnesota Reading Corps Early Childhood Interventions, and Fluency Practice Protocol Training.

Registration for these August staff development opportunities and many others will be available in early May on the SCRED website: [www.scred.k12.mn.us](http://www.scred.k12.mn.us). In addition, we will be releasing a SCRED Course Catalog that will provide detailed information regarding the trainings, including a description, date, time, location, outcome, and target audience. Please be sure to register for trainings prior to leaving for your well-deserved summer vacation! We look forward to seeing you all in August.

Here is a little encouragement to help get you through the rest of the school year. Thank you for all the seeds you have planted in the lives of your students!

**If I Could Teach You, Teacher**

If I could teach you, teacher,  
I'd teach you how much more  
you have accomplished  
than you think you have.  
I'd show you the seeds  
you planted years ago  
that are now coming into bloom.  
I'd reveal to you the young minds  
that have expanded under your care,  
the hearts that are serving others  
because they had you as a role model.  
If I could teach you, teacher,  
I'd show you the positive effect  
you have had on me and my life.  
Your homework is  
to know your value to the world,  
to acknowledge it, to believe it.  
Thank you, teacher.

*By Joanna Fuchs*

*Social Behavior – Prevention is The Key*  
***By Robyn Smith, Social Behavior Collaborative Planner***

CPI is an international training organization committed to best practices and safe behavior management methods that focus on prevention. Through a variety of specialized offerings and innovative resources, CPI educates and empowers professionals to create safe and respectful work environments. This enables professionals to enrich not only their own lives, but also the lives of the individuals they serve.

The St. Croix River Education District has 2 certified instructors in CPI – Christine Matthews and Robyn Smith. Additionally, Christine has the certification to train staff who primarily work with students on the Autism Spectrum and Robyn has the certification to train staff using the Life Space Crisis Intervention Model.

The cornerstone of CPI is the *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention* program, which is considered the worldwide standard for crisis prevention and intervention training. With a core philosophy of providing for the *Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security* of everyone involved in a crisis situation, the program's proven strategies give human service providers and educators the skills to safely and effectively respond to anxious, hostile, or violent behavior while balancing the responsibilities of care.

This is an 8-hour class that certifies staff in verbal de-escalation techniques and non-violent physical intervention techniques.

CPI certification is valid for 18 months before a refresher class is required. Currently, there are 4 options for staff to obtain recertification through SCRED – Key Point Refresher, Autism Spectrum Disorders: Applications on Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Enhancing Verbal Skills: Applications on Life Space Crisis Intervention and Bullying Behaviors: Applying CPI's *Crisis Development Model*.

**Key Point Refresher (Regular Refresher)**

This refresher reviews the key concepts of the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Program. These concepts include Crisis Development, Verbal Escalation Continuum and Nonviolent Physical Crisis Intervention. This is the recommended refresher for staff working with students who have a higher likely of using the Children's Control or Team Control Position with students who may be endangering themselves, others or physical property.

**Enhancing Verbal Skills: Applications on Life Space Crisis Intervention**

This Refresher focuses on verbal intervention skills and introduces Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) strategies for reaching and reclaiming individuals in conflict. The content includes nonverbal communication, verbal interaction, de-escalation strategies, debriefing practices, assessment of diagnostic cues, and relationship building. This refresher will also review nonviolent physical crisis intervention techniques. This is recommended for staff that occasionally would need to intervene physically with students who may be endangering themselves or others.

**Autism Spectrum Disorders: Applications on Nonviolent Crisis Intervention**

If your school supports students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), you know that times of chaos and crisis can be especially challenging. While there are no simple solutions that work for all, there are staff support strategies that can be used to minimize fear and anxiety for the student with ASD. Staff working with ASD or cognitively lower functioning students may want to consider taking this refresher and learn more specific strategies to deal with nonverbal acting out behavior. Physical crisis intervention techniques will also be reviewed during this class.

## *Prevention is The Key – cont.*

### **Bullying Behaviors: Applying CPI's *Crisis Development Model***

There are many forms of bullying, different types of targets, and a variety of facts and myths surrounding bullying behaviors. Creating an emotionally and physically safe educational setting requires a coordinated and collaborative effort among staff, family, the school, and the community.

Bullying Behaviors: Applying CPI's *Crisis Development Model* is a refresher option that helps facilitate discussions around this issue and begin to develop solutions. The program provides a perspective about bullying that is framed within the context of the CPI *Crisis Development Model* and helps participants develop action plans that focus on the bully, the target, bystanders, staff members, family, and the community.

During the course, participants will:

- Review, strengthen, and extend core content, concepts, and understanding of *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention* training.
- Develop an understanding of critical concepts specific to CPI's *Crisis Development Model* and the issue of bullying.
- Examine how bullying can impact the behaviors of all involved.
- Explore the topic of bullying through the lens of *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention* training.
- Discuss inclusive, proactive interventions and action plans regarding bullying that are grounded in CPI's *Crisis Development Model*.
- Demonstrate competence in CPI's *Personal Safety Techniques* and *Nonviolent Physical Crisis Intervention* (if taught in the initial *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention* training).
- Advocate for a culture that promotes the *Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security* of all stakeholders.

This is a new class offered by CPI and this fall will be the first time it will be offered to the SCRED districts.

All CPI classes will be offered during August. The days, times and places are still to be determined. The SCRED website will post this information before the end of the school year. Please check the SCRED website for the registration process. If you have specific questions, please call Christine Matthews 612-708-2086 or Robyn Smith 651-303-4384.

### **SCRED MISSION STATEMENT**

*Through the actions of its administrators and governing body, and through collaboration with other service agencies, SCRED will strive for equity of opportunity for all learners by facilitating cooperation, collaboration, communication and collective excellence among its member districts.*



*Social Behavior Updates*  
***By Christine Matthews, Social Behavior Collaborative Planner***

AIMSweb Behavior Module

This year, 20 EBD teachers piloted the new AIMSweb Behavior Module. The trial was a success and the feedback from teachers was very positive. The module includes screening students using a Behavioral and Emotional Screening System and the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Performance Screening Guide. Once students are screened, teachers can create individual action plans based on the student's target behaviors, choose from a variety of positive interventions, and then monitor the student's progress. The behavior module creates progress monitoring graphs just like in AIMSweb academics.

Next year we will launch the module for all of our Special Education teachers. We look forward to a great year of progress monitoring and positive behavioral interventions!

*Updates to SCRED Website*  
***By Sally Welsh***

Watch for an updated look coming to the SCRED webpage in the 2012-13 school year. Until then two new links have been added to the Technology Section.

New Link:

***Request an Ipad or Iphone APP through SCRED's volume bulk purchase form***

<https://docs.google.com/a/scred.k12.mn.us/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dDUxQXVTVm9ERWV1cW9aX1BOZ2tPblE6MA>

## *Low Incidence Update*

### *By Ann McCormick and Marlene Zak*

The Low Incidence Collaborative Planners have had a busy year, with targeted project goals to improve services for students, families and related technical support to staff. Directing the Work of Paraprofessionals, Social Communication Curricula and Interventions, Assistive Technology, and Speech/Language Services Intervention Model were SCRED target projects that included several activities for staff. SCRED Low Incidence Staff participate as representatives to Region and State Network Groups. The Low Incidence Collaborative Planner – Secondary also coordinates Secondary Transition.

#### ***Directing the Work of Paraprofessionals Project:***

- DCD and EBD Teachers had the opportunity to participate in a training led by Barbara Stahl designed to enhance their capacity to provide direction to the paraprofessionals working within their programs. This was in response to a need identified in the spring of 2011. Trainings included four sessions during which staff learned sets of strategies to address researched based teacher competencies needed to direct the work of paraprofessionals. Staff learned strategies, applied techniques to their school setting, and then reported on the effectiveness. The training goal was to improve special education staff skills to direct the work of paraprofessionals. Staff reported high satisfaction that they improved awareness of the indicators of teacher competencies to direct paraprofessionals. Staff reported a strong desire to set new goal outcomes to improve their proficiency to provide specific training to paraprofessionals. Staff participating in the project suggested offering a Paraprofessional Conference in August, 2012.

#### ***Social Communication Curricula and Interventions Project:***

- Jill Kuzma, a licensed speech-language pathologist, presented to a group on the construct of social thinking. Based on the work of Michelle Garcia Winner, students need to be able to engage in social thought as a precursor to social communication. The one-day training was held at North Branch Area High School Auditorium in November. The Low Incidence Collaborative Planners and Social Behavior Collaborative Planners put together a kit of curricula materials to share with teachers. The kit includes curricula materials and other strategy resource material on the topic of social thinking and communication. Teachers are studying the curricula to determine which materials best meet the instructional needs of their students.

#### ***Assistive Technology Project:***

- The 14 educational speech-language pathologists (ESLPs) across the SCRED districts each received an iPad 2 in the fall, courtesy of SCRED. On a Saturday in October, Eric Sailors, one of the developers of the well-known app Proloquo2Go, gave a presentation to about 25 attendees. Mr. Sailors emphasized the need to make app selections consistent with the speech-language research base. This app allows staff to create individualized communication arrays for students who are extremely difficult to understand or are considered non-verbal. In response to requests from the districts, SCRED has developed a process (Thanks, Cherie and Sally!) to take advantage of the Apple Volume Purchase Plan; this results in a 50% savings on the cost of apps, if at least 20 are purchased. Proloquo2Go was the first app to be purchased using this new process; training in its use will be ongoing. At their ongoing network meetings, the ESLPs will also be learning how to evaluate/compare apps and make selections based on the features needed by individual students.
- The SCRED Assistive Technology Team (Jamie Nord, Jennifer Lake, Cindy Bruning, Sheila Hughes, Marleen Zak and Ann McCormick) has been working to ensure that the long-standing requirement of AT Consideration is being included and documented as part of the IEP/IFSP process. Goals for next year include increasing staff skills for conducting a formal AT evaluation and for collecting data to guide the selection of features/strategies, based on student needs.

#### ***Speech/Language Services Intervention Model Project:***

- The SCRED Educational Speech-Language Pathologists (ESLPs) continue to work towards a realignment of their roles and responsibilities by using the 3:1 Model of Service Delivery, which provides flexibility for their involvement in classrooms and with RtI-related activities.

## *Low Incidence Update – cont.*

- With the support of Dr. Janet Tilstra, PhD, the ESLPs continue to learn more about how to assess students' narrative language skills. Narrative skills are important because they relate to both academic success and social communication. A number of the ESLPs participated in a project with Dr. Tilstra to evaluate the reliability/validity of re-tell stories and recently presented a poster session detailing the results at the spring convention of the Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The broader goal of this research is to determine whether some aspect of narrative language can be used as a General Outcome Measure (GOM) and progress monitoring tool. In the absence of a GOM for language, a Speech-Language Screening Checklist has been created and distributed to Problem-Solving Teams for use in the referral process.

### ***Regional and State Low Incidence Projects:***

DCD projects at the regional level included administrator/special education coordinator training for Directing the Work of Paraprofessionals and staff development conferences for Severely Multiply Impaired. A series of webinar meetings and face to face meetings in Sartell was led by Barbara Stahl with Special Education Coordinators or Directors attending. The group identified the challenges faced and worked together to develop solutions and further training content to take back to their special education cooperatives. Training will occur for building level staff during the 2012-13 school year as developed by individual cooperatives. SCRED will continue with the paraprofessional training to teachers during DCD Network meetings in 2012-13.

The region Severe Multiply Impaired Conference was held November 15 at St. Cloud. SCRED Low Incidence providers shared information gathered from this conference during consultations with individual student teams. Jeanne Johnson and Marleen Zak shared Individual Health Plan information given at the SMI conference with SCRED School Nurses on March 28. Charting the C's is the annual cross categorical conference for special education. It was held April 22 to 24 in Alexandria. Severe Multiply Impaired services were a part of this conference. The main speaker was Karen Erickson, Ph.D. from the Center for Literacy and Disabilities Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Dr. Erickson developed many of the strategies for literacy instruction for children with severe disabilities used by SCRED Low Incidence Staff. The conference breakouts had intervention themes to support multiple and flexible means of presentation to help students acquire information and knowledge, means for expression to help students demonstrate what they have learned, and means for engagement to give students and teachers tools for collaboration, planning, and corrective feedback and guidance.

The Regions 5 and 7 Occupational and Physical Therapists completed a project to design a brochure that explains OT and PT related services. Staff was given the brochures during their district department meetings. The Regions 5 & 7 AT network group meets monthly to discuss AT informational and training needs. The group produces the ATFYI newsletter, which is distributed to all staff.

### ***Secondary Transition Projects:***

Understanding the compliance requirements was the focus of staff development for Secondary Transition at SCRED. CIMP results confirm that SCRED staff gained more understanding of the requirements. Templates for evaluation tools for Transition have been added to SpEd Forms.

Work Skills Day events for students sponsored by interagency committees and SCRED were held in February for Chisago County and May for Pine County. Many community volunteers help make these events meaningful and memorable for the students. Aaron Cross was the guest speaker at the Chisago County event and Tom Gahler spoke at the Pine County event. Aaron gave the message to set your dreams high and find the way to achieve them by adjusting to what life circumstances might happen. His examples and video showed the goals he set before a spinal cord injury and how he met them or exceeded in meeting sports challenges after his injury. Tom Gahler spoke about the relationship between decisions one makes and outcomes in life. He encouraged students to make their own decisions for the life they want. His topics included examples from famous professional athletes. Work Skills Day activities challenge students to perform to high expectation and prepare for employment.

## *Spotlight on Interventions* *By Melissa Chinn*

It's been exciting to watch all of the SCRED schools during the first half of the year, as they've continued to strengthen and expand their service delivery options across all tiers! Now that we're looking ahead to next year, I wanted to share a few new resources that may prove helpful with your planning (or a great summer read!).

- We've been very fortunate to have Barb Scierka and Julie Seldon, SCRED's Math Collaborative Planners bring us several high-quality trainings throughout this year. Most recently, a Math Curricula and Interventions Exploration Day was held, during which teachers were given the opportunity to review a wide variety of math curricula and intervention programs. Many of these materials will remain available for review through the SCRED library. In addition, Barb and Julie have also compiled a list of almost 40 different math programs, including information on the targeted age or grade level, skills addressed, publisher, and contact information. Look for this very helpful resource on the SCRED website soon.
- A recent purchase by several staff for both the SCRED library and their own personal collections is *Visible Learning; A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-analyses Relating to Achievement* by John Hattie. Research on the effectiveness of a wide variety of different strategies within the context of student, home, school, teacher, and curriculum is reviewed, summarized, and gauged.
- Another newly published John Hattie book, *Visible Learning for Teachers; Maximizing Impact on Learning* was also purchased for the SCRED library. This book includes the results of additional meta-analyses and takes the next step in explaining how to bring the principles of *Visible Learning* into the classroom.
- Other new books include *Classroom Instruction that Works; Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, by Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, & Stone (2012), several Marzano publications, as well as a variety of books addressing differentiated instruction.

## *GED Testing – “The Times Are A-Changin’”*

### *By Sally Welsh*

As part of an effort to get as many students to complete the GED as possible before the change in 2014, SCRED partnered with Cambridge ABE in applying for and receiving a grant to get the word out about the changes coming. Look for more GED graduate stories appearing in local publications.

Kelli Eitel was one of our first GED graduates to prepare for and complete her preparation for the GED exam through SCRED’s distance learning program. Read her story:



GED Look At Me Now!  
Kelly Eitel, Distance Learning GED Graduate  
GED Graduate May 2009

*“I tried eleven times to finish my GED, but always quit. Socializing seemed more important. When I started a family I was too busy working and taking care of the kids. Attending classes would have been too hard for me. I couldn’t add one more thing to my schedule!*

*Then I found out I could prepare for the GED online from home. This way I could work on it whenever I wanted to – when the kids were asleep or in the middle of the night. Plus, I got immediate feedback from the teacher on the other end. She really encouraged me. Now I’m studying to be a paralegal and I showed my kids how important it is to finish school*

*My advice for someone who is thinking about getting their GED diploma online? Anybody who can check FaceBook can do it. Give it a try!”*

Minnesota residents who lack a high school diploma and want to pass the General Educational Development examination in order to earn an equivalency certificate should act now.

On Jan. 2, 2014, the decade-old GED exam will change in ways that will significantly affect those currently preparing for the pencil-and-paper test, which is mostly multiple choice but also includes an extended essay designed to gauge writing skills.

The new exam will be delivered electronically and require students to demonstrate both basic computer skills and keyboard fluency.

The 2014 test will present many new challenges for both teachers and students. Taking the entire GED test on a computer will be a big adjustment for many adults because most have had little, if any, experience taking timed tests on a computer.

Increased cost will also be a factor when the new examination is implemented. Currently, students pay \$60 to take the GED examination in our area. The cost of the test will double and may triple.

## *GED Testing – cont.*

In addition to multiple-choice questions, the 2014 GED test will also require examinees to fill in blanks, drag and drop and compose both short answers and extended written responses.

Written narratives that must be typed within a time limit will be incorporated into various subject areas. Those grading the exams will evaluate these narratives for grammar, usage, capitalization and punctuation as well as content.

The test questions themselves will likely be harder, since the new exam will be "aligned" with the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's new "common core" academic standards for public schools.

"In order to make this equate to high school, we have to reach higher standards, just like school districts have to reach higher standards," Stephens said.

As part of an effort to get as many students to complete the GED as possible before the change in 2014, SCRED partnered with Cambridge ABE in applying for and receiving a grant to get the word out about the changes coming.

## **SCRED ANNOUNCEMENTS**



*Congratulations to **Jamie Nord, Special Education Director** and her husband Alan! They are the proud parents of Adelyn Joy, born on April 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:25 am weighing 7lbs, 4 oz. Congrats to big Brother Everett, too!*

***Sue Saumer, former Clerical Support for Project and ABE, had been with SCRED since 1997. She hadn't planned to retire early but due to health reasons, her last day with SCRED was on March 1<sup>st</sup>. We thank her for her dedication and hard work throughout the years and we wish her all the best in years to come!***



***CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU!**  
**Pat Just, Receptionist** and 'Jill of all trades' is retiring after 15 years with SCRED.  
She will be greatly missed.  
We wish her all the best!*

Article by Todd Beckmann, Contributing Writer/News Editor

## **Track and field day for special ed kids**

*RUSH CITY—It was a chance for special education physical education students to experience what their peers get to do each year. The "it" was the 2nd annual mid-May DAPE (Developmental Adapted Physical Education) Challenge which drew close to 100 kids from North Branch, Chisago Lakes, Taylors Falls, Pine City, East Central and Rush City to the track at Rush City Schools. From the T-ball hit and the human hurdle to the soccer kick challenge, frisbee toss and long jump, the kids had a chance to compete in nine events during their own track and field day.*

*"The DAPE teachers within the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) district decided most schools have a track meet in May but their kids kind of get lost," SCRED DAPE instructor Darla Beckmann explained. "Even if they did attend, they weren't very active participants." The challenge changes all of that. "We wanted to design an activity where they could participate in everything," she continued. The event was a great success.*

*"It gives the kids a chance to have their own track and field day and it gives them an opportunity to meet students from other communities," Mark Henrich, Rush City K-12 physical education and DAPE teacher, and host school of Wednesday's event, explained. "It's a chance to have some fun outdoors and to compete in a fun atmosphere."*

*"It gives the special education students the same opportunities every other student gets," Stephanie Meyers, a special education teacher at North Branch, agreed. "It gives our kids an opportunity to compete and do some fun sports."*

*The adults in attendance at the challenge were a great asset.*

*"The teachers and the staff who are assisting the students really have a lot of enthusiasm, as do the high school students who are volunteering at each station," Beckmann pointed out.*

*"The staff who did it last year are excited to be back again and the new people are excited about today's event," Wayne Hansmann, a physical education and special education/DAPE teacher at Pine City, noted. "These kids get a chance to do what their peers do but it's low key — they're working hard and they're doing their best."*

*But in the end, it's about the kids having a good time.*

*"They're all laughing and have smiles on their faces," Hansmann pointed out.*

*Joe Thimm, the principal at Taylors Falls Elementary was on hand to witness that fun.*

*"It gives them a chance to have a little competition and feel what it is like to be involved in an event like this," he said of the challenge. "It's fun competition — it's what they can do against themselves, not against other kids."*

*He said his kids, who didn't participate in last year's inaugural event, were pretty excited.*

*"It's a team event so I got team shirts for everybody," Thimm explained. "The kids' shirts even have numbers on the back."*

*While most of the events were on or near the track to avoid the issue of wet grass, the human hurdle was an event designed for the interior of the track. The event, designed as a team event, was to begin with one student hurdling or moving around a student lying on the ground. The student who did the hurdling would then make a second "hurdle," a third student would then hurdle the two students on the ground, create a third "hurdle" and so on.*

*"We saved that event for last because the grass was wet when we started, but then our students got hungry," Beckmann said with a laugh.*

*Once lunch was over, however, a few of the schools chose to attempt the event.*

*Wednesday was a beautiful day for the challenge.*

*"We couldn't have asked for better weather," she noted. "Plus, I think things always go better the second time around.*

*Plans are already in the making for next year's challenge.*

*"We had thought that it would be nice to move the DAPE Challenge each year from site to site," Beckmann concluded. "We'd like Pine City to consider hosting next year."*

*Deb Edwards, a special education teacher in Pine City, agreed.*

*"I'll be talking with my athletic director about hosting the event next May," she said.*

**\*\*\*See next page for DAPE CHALLENGE PHOTOS\*\*\***

“They’re all laughing and have smiles on their faces...”



## DAPE CHALLENGE 2012



“...they’re working hard and they’re doing their best.”



But in the end, it’s about the kids having a good time!



## *Meet SCRED's Clerical Support Staff*



*L to R back row: Julie Belisle, Emily Griffith, Joan Rustad, Stephanie DeAdder, Dana Johnson, Pat Just. Front row: Joyce Johnson, Sandy Benson, Diane Nelson and Carol Grund*

**Joyce Johnson** ~ Since beginning with SCRED in August 1994, Joyce has worked continuously in the position of **Executive Secretary/Accounting Technician** maintaining the fiscal records. “I have the greatest respect for the leadership and employees of the St. Croix River Education District and the valuable services they provide to school staff and students.” Both lifelong residents of rural Rush City, she and her husband Arnold have three adult sons and 6 wonderful grandchildren. When not working at SCRED, Joyce enjoys home, family, travel and quilting.

**Joan Rustad, Early Childhood Clerical Support:** Joan has been working at SCRED for 16 years and has seen much growth and change in very positive ways through the years. “I have great respect for the staff and Early Childhood programs and know how beneficial they have been to the families they have reached.” She has lived in the area all her life, has two adult sons, and two charming and entertaining grandchildren. Joan enjoys running, horseback riding, and spending time outdoors in all seasons.

**Sandy Benson, Academic Clerical Support/Data Assistant:** Sandy has been working at SCRED for 16 years. “I enjoy my work and have learned a lot from the talented staff at SCRED.” She has two adult daughters and a cat.

**Pat Just, Receptionist/Lending Library contact:** Pat has been the Receptionist and ‘Jill of all Trades’ since starting work at SCRED in August 1997, 15 years ago. “I have enjoyed all the contacts, my co-workers, greeting the clients, making and taking phone calls, helping with various requests for assistance and working with personnel at all the schools.” She’s married to Mike and between them they have 4 children, 3 step-children, 15 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren, so their home is usually full of activity; and she loves it! Several hobbies that keep Pat sane are: camping, gardening, baking, sewing, reading but most of all, spending time with the grandbabies.

**Carol Grund. Evaluation Coordinator/Clerical Support:** Carol has worked at SCRED for 5 years. “My husband and I have one very active 12 year-old son and a grouchy dog named Oscar.”

## *Clerical Staff – cont.*

**Julie Belisle, Accounting Technician:** “I came to SCRED in May of 2012, and it was definitely a good career move for me. Previously, I worked at the North Branch Public Schools, 11 years at the District Office (District Office Clerk) and 4 years in the Transportation Department (Transportation Clerk).” Her family consumes her life outside of work and she wouldn’t have it any other way. Her daughter, Lindsey, just turned 13 on April 1st and that’s no joke! Her son, Joseph, is 8 and is a Christmas baby. Between tennis, basketball, hockey, soccer and track, these two keep Julie on her toes. Her husband, Arlo (she won’t tell you his age) will be celebrating their 19th anniversary this year. They have been residents of North Branch for 17 years and enjoy living in this community.

**Stephanie De Adder, Clerical Support for the Unique Learners and Instructional Services Staff** started with SCRED in June 2011. “Previously, I have worked in other office environments and never have I felt so welcomed and appreciated.” She and her husband Craig have been married for 21 years and have two children. Their son is in college and their daughter is in high school. Between the two of them, they keep busy running from one sporting event to another. She wouldn’t have it any other way! (keeps her out of trouble) And let’s not forget about their fluffy dog, Ozzy!

**Diane Nelson, Executive Secretary/Office Manager** started with SCRED in September 2011, a former Chisago Lakes employee for 19 years. She worked with Kim Gibbons when Kim was the Special Ed Director in Chisago Lakes... “I am enjoying working with Kim again and all the other wonderful SCRED staff. I am busy learning all the varied aspects of the position. It is exciting, challenging and interesting all at the same time -- never a dull moment!” She has been married to Jon for 33 years, has 3 adult children, 2 dogs and is waiting patiently (!) for grandchildren...when not at work, Diane enjoys entertaining, decorating, gardening, traveling and spending time with family and friends.

**Dana Johnson, Clerical Support for We ‘R’ Able and Low Incidence Staff** started with SCRED in February 2012. She was the Media Clerk for North Branch Area High School for 12 years before joining the SCRED staff. Her favorite quote is “*Your work* is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is *GREAT work*; and the only way to do great work is to *love what you do*. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking, and *don’t settle*. As with all matters of the heart, *you’ll know when you find it.*” ~ Steve Jobs “Working at SCRED has provided me an opportunity to do GREAT work, and witness all the great work being done throughout our districts.” She loves to scrapbook and spend time with her family and friends. She lives in the Almelund area and has been married for 25 years. Dana has 3 grown children, 2 dogs and a handful of beef cattle.

**Emily Griffith, Clerical Support for Project Seek and the Adult Basic Education program** was hired on in March 2012 to take over for Sue Saumer and is doing her best to fill those shoes. “I have been welcomed with open arms and am very happy to be working with such wonderful people. I am really grateful for all the help and support I have been receiving from everyone.” She has a degree in the paralegal profession and really enjoyed the research and writing aspect of the position but didn’t exactly find her niche there in the long run. She is engaged and has a two year old daughter. Between work and family, Emily enjoys hunting, cooking, gardening, reading, and creative writing.