

THE CURRENT



St. Croix River Education District
425 South Dana Ave
P.O. Box 637
Rush City, MN 55069
320-358-3616
651-674-2436

VOLUME XXVIII
November 2014

Individual Highlights:

<i>UL Corner</i>	2-3
<i>Instructional Services</i>	4
<i>Outcomes</i>	5
<i>Social Behavior</i>	6-7
<i>Secondary Literacy</i>	8
<i>Secondary Math</i>	9
<i>Truancy</i>	10-13
<i>Early Childhood</i>	14
<i>We R Able</i>	15-16
<i>SCRED Announcements</i> ...	17

SCRED Website
www.scred.k12.mn.us

**Follow us on Facebook
and Twitter**
Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Croix-River-Education-District/159947326601?fref=ts>

Twitter:
[@infoScred](https://twitter.com/infoScred)

Director's Report

By Kim Gibbons, Ph.D., Executive Director

Welcome back to the start of another school year! This new school year has brought a flurry of activity around SCRED. Last Spring, the Superintendent Operating Committee authorized adding two new positions: a Unique Learners' Manager (ULM) and a Social behavior Collaborative Planner. Nicole Jack will provide ULM services to Chisago Lakes School District and the Vision program in Pine City. Nicole Woodward will continue supporting the North Branch Area Public Schools and the Rush City School Districts. Holly Grams is our newest addition, and she will provide services to Pine County Schools! The new social behavior team is comprised of Tiffany Goodchild (Chisago Lakes/Vision), Molly Bishop (North Branch/Rush City), and Liz Deen (Pine County). In addition, we welcomed 15 new staff members this past July.

- Jessica Laven, Vision Impaired Teacher/OHD Consultant
- Katie Letourneau, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Teacher
- Connie Sim, Elementary Low Incidence Collaborative Planner
- Jen DuFresne, Secondary Low Incidence Collaborative Planner
- Amber Stumne, School Nurse, North Branch
- Kristina 'Tina' Foss, Truancy Coordinator, Chisago County
- School psychologists: Chisago Lakes – Angela Christianson, Beth Sowden, Maddie Sutton, Tara Haase; East Central – Katie Goulet; Hinckley-Finlayson – Amy Carlon; North Branch – Jennifer Eldred, Gary Nissalke; Pine City/Vision – Christina Nielsen

In August and September, over 35 trainings were held covering a range of topics, including the Unique Learner's Conference (230 participants), a Paraprofessional Conference (275 participants), and a Principal Academy (45 participants). Staff development offerings continue to be based on research-based practices with a focus on improving student outcomes. We are excited to work with our member districts on our continued quest to improve educational outcomes for all of our students!

UNIQUE LEARNERS' UPDATE
By Jamie Nord, Director of Special Education,
Nicole Jack, Nicole Woodward, and Holly Grams
Unique Learners' Managers

Getting to Know Your New SCRED Staff!

As you might recall from our article last spring, SCRED is chock-full of new staff! We've already told you who they are, but we want to give you an opportunity to learn a little more about these great people!

Hi, my name is Katie Goulet. I am a first year school psychologist (intern) at East Central schools. I am currently in the School Psychology program at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse. I like funny movies and funny people. I am a napkin in the play *Beauty and the Beast*.

I'm Holly Grams the new Unique Learners' Manager for Pine City, Hinckley-Finlayson, and East Central School Districts. I was previously a School Psychologist in Wisconsin and came to the St. Croix River Education District in 2013 and worked as a Social Behavior Collaborative Planner.

My name is Molly Bishop. I am a new Social Behavior Collaborative Planner serving Rush City and North Branch Area Schools. I am a recent graduate of the Masters in Applied Behavior Analysis program at St. Cloud State University and am working towards becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Hi, my name is Christie Nielsen and I am a first year school psychologist at Pine City Elementary School and Vision. I did my undergraduate at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and attended graduate school at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Hi, my name is Amy Carlon. I'm a first year school psych (intern) at Hinckley-Finlayson schools. I am currently completing my graduate studies at the University of Northern Iowa, and I did my undergraduate at Luther College in Decorah, IA. I enjoy music - especially singing, playing the piano, and flute.

Hello, I'm Maddie Sutton the new school psychologist at Taylors Falls Elementary. This is my first job as a school psychologist. I attended grad school at the University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire. I grew up in Richfield, MN. I enjoy reading and spending time outdoors.

Hello! My name is Kaitlin O'Shea, and I am the new school psychologist at Chisago Lakes Primary School. Last year I worked as a school psychologist in East Central School District and Hinckley-Finlayson High School. I love cats!

My name is Jennifer DuFresne, the new Low Incidence Collaborative Planner - Secondary. Most recently I have worked for a small charter school as a case manager, program coordinator, and assistant administrator. In addition to loving SCRED, I enjoy running and reading.

My name is Liz Deen, the new Social Behavior Collaborative Planner for Pine City, Hinckley-Finlayson, and East Central Schools. I love learning, and look forward to working with many people this year.

My name is Beth Sowden and I am the School Psychologist at Chisago Lakes Middle School. This is my first year working as a school psychologist and is also my internship year. I am completing my training program this year at the University of Wisconsin- River Falls. Over the past few months, I have enjoyed working for SCRED at CLMS and am excited for what the rest of the year holds!

UNIQUE LEARNERS' UPDATE - continued

My name is Connie Sim. I am the new Elementary Low Incidence Collaborative Planner for all six member districts. I come to SCRED with over twenty years special education classroom experience that I hope to use to help our low incidence teachers meet student needs. My undergraduate work was at St. Cloud State University and graduate work at St. Mary's University.

Hi! My name is Tara Haase and I am the new School Psychologist at Lakeside Elementary. I am in my internship year at the University of Wisconsin- River Falls. I live in St. Paul with the husband and our 2 furry kids. I really enjoy being part of the SCRED and Chisago teams!

I'm Gary Nissalke and I have been working in the schools for 20 years as a School Psychologist. I currently work at North Branch Area High School.

Hi, my name is Amber Haluska. I am the new program director/school psychologist at Pathway to Change in Chisago Lakes. I worked at Chisago Lakes Middle School as the school psychologist the previous three years. I have been enjoying my new role this year, and I continue to appreciate the support from SCRED and Chisago Lakes. One fun fact about me is that I got married over the summer, and my husband and I went to Jamaica!

Hi! My name is Jennifer Eldred and I am the new school psychologist at Sunrise River Elementary School and North Branch Area Early Childhood. I am in my sixth year as a school psychologist. I previously worked in southern MN where I covered three school districts (5 buildings) so I am really enjoying being in only two buildings this year!

My name is Tiffany Goodchild and I am the Social Behavior Collaborative Planner for Chisago Lakes School District and Vision in Pine City School District. I was previously a school psychologist in Iowa for 3 years before moving to Minnesota and marrying my husband. After moving, I worked as a school psychologist at Taylors Falls Elementary for 2 years before changing to this role at SCRED. I am expecting my first child, a daughter, very soon!

Hello! I am Angela Christenson and I am the School Psychologist at Chisago Lakes High School and TRIO Wolf Creek this year. For the past two years I have been working as a School Psych for Heartland AEA in the greater Des Moines area, while finishing my internship and dissertation. Last December I *finally* graduated from MSU, Mankato as part of the first cohort of doctoral level school psychologist. I am loving being back in MN and enjoying life now that I am done with school! So far, it has been a joy to work with such great people at SCRED and Chisago Lakes - thank you!

Instructional Services Update
By Adam Lekwa,
Instructional Services Coordinator

Our year is off to a great start, and we hope yours is too! This year we are very happy to be able to offer a broader array of professional development opportunities than we were able to offer in the 13-14 school year because of lesser budget constraints. Based on input from teachers and administrators as well as close reviews of districts' achievement data, we have planned a variety of trainings in math and reading, as well as data-based decision making.

As always, August was a busy month for us folks who work in schools. Still, it was great to catch up with colleagues from each district, and to meet a variety of new staff in schools and SCRED alike. Grade Level Team Facilitators started strong with continued networking and training on getting the most from the data we collect, including accessing and interpreting reports and facilitating productive team meetings. We had a similar focus at this year's Unique Learners' Conference, where we met with special education teachers to revisit the topic of progress monitoring, and using these data to drive instruction.

If you haven't had a chance to do so yet, we encourage you to check out the 2014-15 catalog of offerings on the SCRED website. It's listed under the "Professional Learning" header; see the link below. In it you will find a listing of each of the trainings we have scheduled for this year, as well as a section with dates, times, a description of topics covered, and a link for registration. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns, or if you are looking for instructional resources for your students.

2014-15 School Year Trainings:

http://www.scred.k12.mn.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3022443/File/Profess%20Learning/School%20Year%20Trainings.pdf

Outcomes Services Update
By Kindle Perkins Kabat,
Outcomes Manager



The SCRED Outcomes Services has had a busy and productive start to the 2014-2015 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 and MAP testing window went smoothly – thank you GOM and MAP Coordinators for all of your hard work! A Spring MAP Coordinator training will be held prior to the Spring 2014 Benchmark testing window, along with Winter and Spring Measurement Committee meetings.

Just a quick reminder that MAP data is auto-loaded directly into TIES each day. Therefore, 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 are more challenging than previous state standards. In order to better reflect the expectations established by the new ELA standards, the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and MAP Reading targets were updated in Fall 2013. The purpose of the analysis was to establish target scores on each assessment that are predictive of success on the more rigorous MCA-III. TIES did an additional analysis this summer, using two years of MCA III Reading data (Spring 2013 and Spring 2014), to determine if reading targets needed to be updated. Based on this analysis, the MAP Reading and ORF targets will remain the same as last year. The target scores for both assessments are challenging to achieve, however, 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 Reading MCA-III assessment.

Throughout the month of October, 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.

This year Kindergarten and First Grade classes will be piloting the FAST aReading and aMath assessments. This pilot will begin in January 2014 during the Winter Benchmark testing window. More details on the training for this pilot study to come soon!

Have a great 2014-15 School Year!

Social Behavior Update
By Social Behavior Collaborative Planners
Molly Bishop, Liz Deen and Tiffany Goodchild

School-Wide Behavior Trainings

During the 2014-2015 school year, the social behavior collaborative planners are offering four targeted school-wide behavior trainings. The ***purpose*** of the training are to collectively work with school-wide behavior teams to gain a deeper understanding of research based Tier I positive behavior supports. The ***need*** for such training was identified during the 2013-2014 school year through discussions, surveys, and staff requests for additional guidance with TIERED Behavior Supports. The ***focus*** this year will be for school-wide behavior teams to collaboratively review and update TIER I behavioral processes that are currently in place at the building levels. The ***goal of the trainings*** is to systematically integrate the TIERED Behavior Supports within the organizational structure of each school to encourage fidelity with implementation and sustainability (Domitrovich et al., 2010; Nelson et al., 2009).

Research has long indicated a need for designing a consistent framework identifying intensified preventive interventions for students needing different levels of support to increase student engagement and learning. Martella, Nelson, Marchand-Martella, & O'Reilly found that 58% of instructional time is lost due to off task, disruptive or other problem behaviors (2012). Behavior, attention and engagement can be increased through implementing consistent instructional management procedures and motivators (Coleman & Vaughn, 2000). However, often behaviors (non-compliance or disruptive) are not addressed, leading to avoidance or escape behaviors by the teachers (Gunter, Jack, DePaepe, Reed, & Harrison, 1994). Students with emotional and behavior disorders are absent more frequently, have significantly lower GPA's than non-disabled peers, and drop out of school 58% of the time (Bradley, Doolittle, & Bartolotta, 2008) indicating the urgency of designing clear and explicit expectations and consequences within a school-wide behavior supports. Providing staff training and time to research, plan, and implement positive behavior interventions is critical to help all staff to sufficiently implement successful tiered programming for all students.

Mutli-Tiered System of Supports is a framework, where a continuum of interventions are organized within three tiers, where staff respond with increasingly more intensive supports at higher tiers (Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002). Positive Behavior Supports provides a framework for schools to provide effective and safe learning environments for all students. *“A positive facility or school culture means is one that is predictable (i.e., common language, common understanding of expectations, common experience), positive (i.e., regular recognition for positive behavior), safe (i.e., violent and disruptive behavior is not tolerated), and consistent (adults are “on the same page” with behavioral expectations). PBIS holds particular promise for students with or at-risk for E/BD as a unified structure to (a) prevent the development of E/BD and (b) address existing instances” (Benner, Kutash, Nelson, & Fisher, 2013, p. 19).*

Please join us for the School-Wide Behavior Trainings. Sign up here:

http://p2cdn4static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3022443/File/Profess%20Learning/School%20Year%20Trainings.pdf

School-Wide Behavior Trainings provide targeted instruction on certain topics for school teams. The following page lists the particular topics of interest for each training. Please join us for one or more sessions to discuss your school-wide behavior supports within each building.

Social Behavior Update - continued

October 3	December 3	February 27	April 22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of PBIS • Analysis of School-Wide data • Behavior Referral Process • Definition of Major and Minor Behaviors • Staff Buy-In 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Expectations across all settings • Explicit Instruction of expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Management Strategies • Behavior Management Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation/ Reinforcement Systems • Roll-out planning for 2015-2016

TIES Behavior Module

The TIES Student Information System Behavior Management module allows schools and districts to easily track a comprehensive set of data on student behavior in support of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Many schools are already using this system to report and track behavior referrals, and document the required state reportable incidents of behavior. As all SCRED schools continue to fully implement the TIES Behavior Module, there may be a need for additional staff training in doing online referrals, enhancing the reporting system, and learning more about the SWIS-like PBIS data analysis graphs.

Some features to using TIES Behavior Module are: staff can generate online, real-time referrals which queue in the office, incident history is tracked over multiple years, multiple participants per incidents are tracked, uniform reporting requirements are integrated within the system, incidents of major and minor behaviors are recorded and categorized, and state Disciplinary Incident Reporting System (DIRS) easily interfaces with the module. Some benefits to using TIES Behavior Module are: it improves communication through home letters, alerts, and tracking of referrals, provides longitudinal views of individual students, offers more detailed view of incidents and participants, provides, assists in maintaining accurate records of events, and eliminates the need to enter incidents into DIRS.

Please contact your social behavior collaborative planner should you want additional training to support full implementation of this system.

Secondary Literacy Update
By Jennifer Lake,
Reading Collaborative Planner

“Reading is important, because if you can read, you can learn anything about everything and everything about anything.” —Tomie dePaola

There have been increasing concerns about the ability of high school graduates to read and write well enough to succeed in college and careers, both in Minnesota and across the country. The National Assessment of Educational Progress trend results between 1971 and 2008 show that average reading scores among 9-year-old students were the highest they have ever been, while scores for 17-year-old students had dropped since 1992. In the spring of 2014, 56% of eighth grade students in the state of Minnesota met standards on the MCA-III reading assessment. 60% of tenth grade students in Minnesota met standards on the MCA-III reading assessment for that year.

There has been a great focus on early literacy for many years, with state and national programs highly focused on best practices in early reading instruction. Schools are expected to teach students to read by third grade, but what should be the focus of reading instruction beyond third grade? Students may have the foundational skills of reading, but they continue to need instruction to improve their reading skills. The Institute of Education Sciences has five recommendations for improving adolescent literacy:

1. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction
2. Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction
3. Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation
4. Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning
5. Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.

These recommendations can be implemented by teachers across content areas in secondary schools. Since most secondary students do not have reading instruction as part of a reading class, it is important that teachers in all content areas implement recommendations 1-4. Reading instruction in content area classes is vital to students learning how to read informational text across disciplines.

SCRED is offering several trainings this year that provide strategy ideas to help teachers follow the recommendations for improving adolescent literacy. The SIM Paragraph Writing Strategy training will take place November 20th and the SIM LINCS Vocabulary Strategy training will take place December 11th. In addition, I have designed two days specifically to meet the needs of social studies and science teachers to implement the College and Career Readiness Literacy standards. There are ten reading and ten writing standards that apply specifically to social studies, science and technical areas in grade 6-12. These trainings provide instruction in several vocabulary and reading strategies, with time included for teachers to plan lesson activities incorporating the strategies. The dates for the CCR Literacy Strategy trainings are October 8th and January 21st.

In addition to the recommendations directed toward teachers, there are recommendations for middle schools, high schools, and school districts. The Alliance for Excellent Education and the Carnegie Corporation sponsored a study that was conducted by Catherine Snow and Gina Biancarosa. Their recommendations include:

1. Develop a literacy leadership team.
2. Develop a school-wide organizational model that supports extended time for literacy instruction.
3. Analyze assessment data to determine specific learning needs of students.
4. Develop a school-wide plan to address the professional development needs of teachers.
5. Develop a broad understanding of literacy strategies that can be used in content areas.

Secondary students need our support in continuing to develop their literacy skills. It is often said that students move from learning to read to reading to learn. Students need guidance and instruction to help them read to learn effectively. Literacy needs of our students must be addressed at the student level, class level, and building level in order to support all learners effectively.

Secondary Math Update
By Julie Frawley,
Secondary Math Collaborative Planner

The State of Math

Mathematics education in the United States regularly takes a beating. National news often report we lag behind other countries in mathematics performance. Statewide performance on state testing is dismal. In December 2012, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan responded to the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS study) with disapproval. In response, Duncan emphasized that secondary mathematics achievement needs to be accelerated across the United States. Results from the 2012 Program for International Students Assessment support reason for concern as well. Statistically speaking, evidence points to the need for changes.

It is hypothesized that most U.S. students will never be able to compete globally in this ever-shrinking world. Also, many conclude the U.S. will not have viable candidates for jobs in the fields of technology, science and mathematics. The picture painted is grim. Unfortunately, more often than not, the blame is appointed to the teachers in the classroom.

It is here I feel I must take a stand to defend the hard-working, caring and well-intentioned math teachers. Over the past 20 years in the state of Minnesota I have watched math education shift due to pressures from OBE (outcome based education)... and BST (basic skills testing)... and Profiles of Learning... and MCA... and our current state of Explore, Plan and ACT with MCA. The classroom experience has been driven by outside forces trying to determine competence.

So many good things have happened due to the search for evidence of competence. Teachers are aware of and intentionally teaching to common standards at each grade level. Districts have looked both vertically and horizontally at curriculum alignment. Students have been given more clear expectations for daily learning. Conversations on best practices, how can we do this and what students need are heard in districts everywhere.

It isn't our teachers that are broken (well...many are broken-hearted due to the pressures). Our system is flawed. We have taken the fun and joy out of math as we attempt to file students through our educational system like a car assembly line. We have diminished the time students have to explore and create due to increased expectations and the need to hit every standard. We have removed testing as an informative look at performance of students and turned it into a judging tool for teachers. We have inadvertently encouraged procedural performance over conceptual understanding through our need for timely results on assessments. Our system is designed to produce a neat, efficient product quickly. Unfortunately, math doesn't understand time constraints.

Math is a language people use to explain the world around them. It is a way to interact and play with surroundings. Math is something our brains are wired to use from the start. The concepts of patterns, groups and number are innate to humans. Math simply is. No person goes through a day without applying mathematical principles. People need to estimate distance, speed and rate when driving so they don't run over cars in front of them. People need to use varying quantities as they cook. People need to add, subtract, multiply and divide when working with people for grouping, preparing materials and ordering resources. Math happens so naturally most people don't even realize it is being used.

Jo Boaler, a professor at Stanford University, proposes a shift in the teaching of mathematics to a more conversational approach. She believes in diagnostic feedback versus grades. She believes in time to think slowly and deeply versus an emphasis on speed. She believes groups should be heterogeneous and flexible, not by ability. She believes in starting math class with talks around numbers (Number Talks) instead of timed tests (how many facts in a minute). She calls for math to be taught with more learning time than answer time. Also, students need to understand the power of learning from mistakes instead of being afraid to make them. Everything Jo Boaler believes in follows best practice. She just may be onto something to help our broken, outdated assembly-line approach to teaching math (Boaler 2014).

Project ATTEND
By Cheryl Bjerke, Truancy
Coordinator

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

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.*
4. *Attend school conferences. Meet your child's teachers. Sign up for School View to keep up to date on your child's grades, work completion and attendance.*
5. *Effective 2014, students are required to receive academic instruction until the age of 17, with parental permission.*

CHERYL BJERKE
Cell phone: 320-267-8767
E-Mail: cjerke@scred.k12.mn.us

Every Day Matters! Attendance Program
By Kristina “Tina” Foss, Truancy
Coordinator

The Every Day Matters! Attendance Program (EDMAP) is the school attendance initiative sponsored by the Chisago County Children’s Collaborative, hosted by St. Croix River Educational District (SCRED). EDMAP involves collaboration between the Chisago Lakes, North Branch and Rush City School Districts; the Chisago County Attorney’s Office; the Chisago County District Court and SCRED. The program is created to take a positive, pro-active approach to addressing school absenteeism and encourages families to improve the student’s school attendance. The goal of EDMAP is to deliver an encouraging message to students and families/guardians that school attendance is important and should be a priority through providing a constant, consistent message.

EDMAP is a continuum-based progressively intrusive truancy prevention program starting with monitoring, moving to intervention and ending with court action. This progressive structure requires a partnership between the EDMAP Coordinator and designated school staff to work proactively to monitor attendance and absenteeism through early contacts with families/guardians to emphasize the benefits of school attendance.

The mission of EDMAP is to increase attendance, improve academic achievement, decrease the number of referrals for Juvenile Court intervention and provide supervision/services based upon the individual needs of the student and their families.

The program can be accessed through a contact with Chisago County School Districts, the Chisago County Attorney’s office, SCRED and/or the Chisago County District Court, The services provided through the EDMAP program can be further accessed by contacting Kristina “Tina” Foss, the EDMAP Truancy Coordinator at (651)332-0750 or kfoss@scred.k12.mn.us.

Tips for talking with parents about the importance of school attendance:

1. Express concern for the parent(s) and the student.
2. Enhance the importance of school with facts such as:
 - a. Missing one day of school each week adds up to 2 months missed over a year.
 - b. Each day absent in high school has an impact on skill development and social connection.
 - c. Poor attendance may be associated with future unemployment, criminal activity, substance abuse, and poorer health and life expectancy.
3. Explore possible factors/causes of school problems such as: bullying; disliking, or not feeling connected to, the school culture or environment; disliking school subjects, not liking the choice of subjects, or not feeling challenged by the work; not getting along with teachers or other students at school; and/or competing demands on time, such as extracurricular activities.
4. Look into possible personal factors such as: chronic illness; intellectual or cognitive disabilities; behavioral or developmental difficulties; mental health issues; history of abuse and/or neglect; poor self-concept or self-esteem; poor communication skills; poor social skills; and/or difficulty with listening, concentrating or sitting still.
5. Encourage parents to have high expectations of their children and to communicate those expectations.
6. Share methods that parents can communicate with the school staff and teachers more frequently
7. Assure parents that they do not have to “teach” their child. Instead, parents should focus on helping children learn to handle distractions, negotiate crises of confidence, plan ahead, ask for help from the teachers, and build a positive attitude about school as a whole.
8. Assist parents in becoming and remaining involved in school related activities.
9. Educate the parents on the state’s school attendance laws/statutes and the school’s attendance procedures on student absences.

Every Day Matters! Attendance Program ~ continued

Attendance Tips for Parents:

1. Let children know that good attendance is important.
 - a. Let child know that you think attending school daily is important. Show them you are interested in their school activities and tell them that you want them to do well in school.
 - b. Become involved in child's school life and school activities.
 - c. Take interest in child's school work. Check homework for accuracy and completeness.
 - d. Do not provide inappropriate excuses for child to miss school. Do not let them take time off from school for minor ailments-particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work.
 - e. Set good examples and enforce rules. Speak well of the school and support school staff.
2. Establish a routine.
 - a. Give yourself and children enough time to get ready.
 - b. Provide students their own alarm clock; set alarm clock 30 minutes earlier for students who need more time to get ready for school.
 - c. Plan ahead the night before: such as identifying and pre-preparing breakfast, have children choose clothes and shoes the night before, and pack their backpacks with completed homework. Parents can prepare for work the night before too.
 - d. Set a regular bedtime schedule. Age should be a factor.
 - e. Help child relax before bedtime with a story, instead of the stimulation of television or other technology.
 - f. Provide regular study times and a quiet, clean area for doing homework.
3. Show interest in student's activities.
 - a. Attend Parent Teacher Conferences and Parent Meetings.
 - b. Volunteer in the classroom, on field trips or during school events.
 - c. Make education a family priority.
4. Keep open lines of communication with your children, teachers, principal, and school attendance office.
 - a. Let the school know in advance if child is going to be absent or if you have concerns about your child's attendance or school performance.
 - b. Report all absences on the day the student will miss school by calling the attendance office.
 - c. Check child's attendance regularly.
 - d. Provide doctor's notes to the attendance clerk when medical verification is available for student's absence.
 - e. Plan vacations in accordance with the school calendar and to schedule doctor, dentist and other appointments outside of school hours.
 - f. If you notice child is avoiding a particular class or is having a difficult time in one subject area, discuss this with your child and his/her teacher.
 - g. Get to know children's friends and their families and make connections with other families that value school attendance.
 - h. Contact child's school for help if it is needed to support your child or family.
 - i. Make sure child knows you do not approve of him/her being late or absent.
 - j. Talk to you child about responsibility and the need to develop good work/school habits and positive attitude.
 - k. Help child understand the state laws and school attendance policies.
 - l. Do not let child persuade you into making an excuse for him/her. Don't give up. Reward good behavior and take it one day at a time.

Parenting Resources:

- My Precious Kids (website) www.mypreciouskids.com
- Parenting Forever- Court ordered parenting classes
 - 1-877-289-2960
- Parents Know (website) www.parentsknow.state.mn.us

Resources for Attendance Concerns:

- www.attendanceworks.org
- www.empoweringparents.com
- www.truancyprevention.org
- www.schoolengagement.org

Local Resources:

- Lakes Area Youth Service Bureau (651)464-3685
- Bridges and Pathway Services (651)982-4792
- Chisago County Human Services (651)213-5600 or 1-888-234-1246
- Family Based Therapy Associates (651)257-2733 or 1-800-822-2786
- Lakes Area Human Services (651)464-2194
- Counseling Associates (651)426-8191
- Therapeutic Services Agency (651)224-4114 or (320)629-7600
- Lutheran Social Services 1-888-577-2227
- Lakes & Pines Community Action (320)679-1800 or 1-800-832-6082
- Community Partnership with Youth & Families (651)674-4085
- First Call for Help 1-800-543-7709

Kristina “Tina” Foss, Truancy Coordinator

Phone: (651) 332-0750

Email: kfoss@scred.k12.mn.us

Early Childhood Update
By Karen Wolner,
Early Childhood Collaborative Planner

What's New in Early Childhood!

Several good things are happening in early childhood this Fall! Chisago Lakes was approved this year to be a Pyramid Model site (formerly known as TACSEI) from the MN Center of Excellence. This model is based on the design of School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS), but is the preschool version. Like SW-PBS, this model is a systemic effort that uses a data-based decision making model to ensure that a comprehensive model of promotion/prevention/intervention is implemented that promotes social competence and delivers effective interventions for challenging behavior.

On the TACSEI website, results of a randomized study examining outcomes associated with the Pyramid Model that were conducted in inclusive preschool classrooms reported the following results:

- Teachers in the experimental condition who received training and coaching demonstrated statistically significant differences in their implementation of Pyramid Model practices.
- Children enrolled in the experimental classrooms implementing the Pyramid Model demonstrated statistically significant differences in their social skills.
- Target children in the experimental classrooms had statistically significant reductions in problem behavior.

We hope more SCRED districts will join in and become sites next year!

Also new this year are additional duties assigned to Rob Benner, Early Childhood Family Support Resource Provider. Rob is now doing the in-home screenings in both Pine and Chisago Counties. In addition, Rob will be leading parent education classes for six weeks in each of the following districts: North Branch, Rush City and Chisago Lakes.

We R Able Update *By Valorie Arrowsmith*

Year in Review

During Fiscal Year 2013-2014 We R Able offered 101 events, classes, workshops, concerts, and activities. The organization saw an increase by 5 percent in the number of participants who live outside our service area of Pine City, Rush City, North Branch, and Chisago Lakes school districts.

The overall year-end population count showed an attendance increase of 47 percent in the area of academic offerings and a 6 percent increase in field trips and special event population. Particularly noteworthy are the numbers of people attending the Arts RX (prescription) Concert Series at the North Country Coffee Shop at the North Branch Mall. What began with a modest population of 6 to 7 people now regularly hosts 30 to 40.

In the area of arts and humanities 54 events included art show openings, concerts, movies, and classes. The category of recreation featured 20 sessions of softball and bowling in North Branch and at the Lent Town Hall in Stacy. Some classes focused on skills development through food preparation and of course eating what one cooks was a welcome incentive. There were some special events at which We R Able participants celebrated Doris Day's birthday, took a field trip to Askov to the Little Mermaid Café and the Pine County History Museum, and introduced two Nordic celebrations called Julgransplundring (taking down the Christmas tree), and Santa Lucia in mid December.

For audiences in North Branch and Rush City there were both health and safety, and academic presentations during the year, with the grant study circle introduced in the fall of 2013. At this gathering, participants representing several non-profits in the region meet to learn from each other about project development, project evaluation, promotion, and other program aspects necessary for constructing grant proposals.

Staff members Valorie Arrowsmith, Loreli Miller, and Dana Johnson had opportunities to network with other organizations that provide support to children, teens, and adults with disabilities. Two of them attended the ArtStage conferences in the Twin Cities, which focuses its attention on how to provide meaningful arts experiences for older adults.

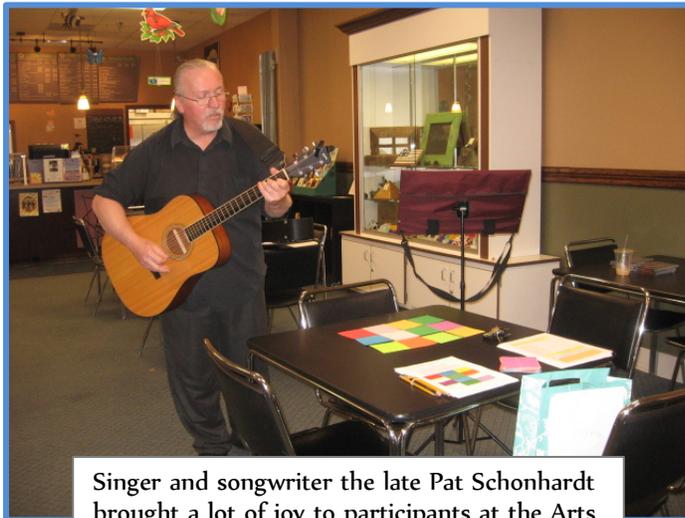
The program had a change of staff, with Alexandra Bernard taking over clerical duties from Dana Johnson, who shifted to a new position at the SCRED building. The adjustment has been seamless with both women in the same building. Dana was able to provide mentorship support to Alex as she learned about her new job.

Goals for the New Year

Volunteer development and a focus on publicity are two of the goals for the new year. We R Able is seeking ways to open up volunteer and internship opportunities to a wider audience, and to support that effort, staff have had conversations with internship personnel at the Anoka Ramsey Community College. There is also a plan to talk with National Honor Society organizations in our region to introduce a menu of volunteer services that would work for We R Able and be a match for NHS requirements.

We R Able Update - continued

Efforts in promotion will include writing more “after stories” for local media and for the We R Able Facebook page, as well as exploring more internet-based sites in which programs can be publicized. Funding programs through grants will continue to be a goal, however a collaborative approach is in the works through the regular grant study circle meetings. The intent is to see what partnerships may develop, thereby creating stronger grant proposals for programs in our region.



Singer and songwriter the late Pat Schonhardt brought a lot of joy to participants at the Arts RX Concerts at North Country Coffee Shop.

Mime artist David Braddock led a mime workshop, gave a performance, and helped viewers at four art shows communicate their thoughts and feelings about artwork through movement, acting, and mime.



Musician Art Bjorngjeld helped participants of all ages “plunder the Christmas Tree” at the Rush City Community Center in January.



The We R Able Support Group visited the Little Mermaid Café and the Pine County History Museum in the fall.

Member District News

Pine City Elementary



★ **Sharon Greene** is a CI/CT Sign Language Interpreter who was nominated by Almon Novak. Sharon Greene has worked with Almon Novak's 6 years old son who is DHH for the last 2 years. Almon noted that Sharon's overall care and compassion for her son has gone above and beyond what she would expect from an interpreter. Almon wrote, "My son relies on Sharon not only for his language access, but also as a friend and guiding hand during his school days." His homeroom teacher added, "Sharon does an exceptional job at teaching him sign and interpreting at the same time. She also has been very helpful in explaining to everyone what her role is and why she might need to be in a certain spot in the room or why a kid may need to move slightly so he has a clear sight of the speaker and herself." Sharon also supports full access communication in other ways by ensuring the school's sound system and the FM system are integrated. The Novak family appreciates having Sharon in their son's life.

★ District Recognition from the Minnesota Department of Education

Jamie Nord, Director of Special Education at SCRED along with the *Chisago Lakes, Rush City, and Hinckley-Finlayson School Districts* was commended by MDE for demonstrating compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Jamie received a letter from the Commissioner and a framed certificate.

SCRED News

★ Carol Houfer, SCRED Occupational Therapist at Chisago Lakes Schools has completed her Master's Program in Curriculum and Instruction from Concordia University – Portland. Carol stated she learned a lot through the coursework and has a renewed appreciation for differentiated instruction. Way to go, Carol!

~~~~~

♥ Holly Grams, Unique Learners' Manager and her family welcomed a baby boy on August 20th. Congratulations to the Grams! Sarah Rydberg, ABE/Project SEEK Coordinator and her family welcomed a baby girl on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to the Rybergs!