

THE CURRENT



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Individual Highlights

<i>UL Corner</i>	2-5
<i>Social Behavior</i>	6-7
<i>Instructional Services</i>	8
<i>Early Childhood</i>	9
<i>Low Incidence</i>	10-11
<i>Technology Corner</i>	12
<i>SCRED Announcements</i>	13

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Director's Report

By Kim Gibbons, Ph.D., Executive Director

For the past twenty years, the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) and their member districts have been pioneers in the implementation of a Response to Intervention (RtI) or Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) framework. RtI or MTSS has quickly emerged as a methodology for improving outcomes for all students through high-quality instruction tailored to student needs within a data-based decision-making model. What does this framework look like within SCRED districts? Screening data are collected three times per year for all students. These data are used to identify students who are below, at, and above grade level expectations. Data are also used to evaluate the impact of core, supplemental, and intensive interventions. Students who are in need of additional support receive interventions matched to their needs with frequent progress monitoring to evaluate the interventions. Finally, collaborative teams are formed in each building to discuss student data, talk about instruction and curriculum, and make decisions about intervention groups.

RtI/MTSS is not just a “SCRED Initiative.” In fact, a recent national survey of K-12 administrators indicated that 61% of respondents are either in full implementation or in the process of district-wide implementation of an RtI/MTSS framework, up from 24% in 2007 (Spectrum K-12 Solutions, 2010). Alexa Posny, Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services said, “RtI and EIS (early intervening services) are absolutely the future of education—not the future of special education, but of education” (Project Forum, 2007).

Implementing RtI/MTSS requires a broadening in focus. Implementing this framework requires not only attending to research about effective instruction and measurement, but also to the change process. For too long education has underestimated what it will take for the adults in a school setting to change their practices and behaviors to best accelerate student learning. The ultimate benefit of RtI/MTSS is to improve student outcomes. Success in this area will be measured in how much student achievement scores improve.

When SCRED districts began implementation of the RtI/MTSS framework, we saw immediate gains in achievement for all students that persisted over a span of many years. For the past few years, we have seen some plateaus and even some decreases in student achievement. This has been frustrating because all of our teachers and support staff have been working so hard to use data to inform their instruction and work collaboratively with their peers! For SCRED districts, the problem is not how to initiate RtI/MTSS; rather, it is how to implement changes in process and performance in a manner that endures.

This Spring, a team of folks from SCRED will be visiting with each building team to have a structured discussion around all aspects of RtI/MTS implementation. We are hoping to collect good information on all of the things that are working well along with any barriers to implementation. This information will be used to inform SCRED staff development as well as district-specific action plans. It is our hope that by going back and reviewing implementation across the five areas of assessment, data-based decision-making, multi-tiered systems of supports, infrastructure, and fidelity/evaluation that we will be able to firm up our implementation efforts and see subsequent increases in student outcomes!

UNIQUE LEARNERS' UPDATE:
Exciting Updates on State Monitoring Year 4
By Jamie Nord, Director of Special Education,
Nicole Jack, Nicole Woodward, and Holly Grams,
Unique Learners' Managers

The Unique Learners' Managers are excited to share the following updates regarding Year 4 of the state monitoring cycle. We would like to congratulate the special education teachers, school psychologists, SCRED staff, and district administrators for their achievements to date and look forward to celebrating 100% compliance across all remaining areas in the near future. Keep up the great work!

Quick Recap: Year 4 State Monitoring Tasks

During Year 4 of the state monitoring process, the SCRED member districts are working to complete the following tasks:

1. Correct the remaining individual file citations from the 2013-14 school year
2. Meet the requirements of the Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) for the 2014-15 school year.
 - a. Timeline CAPs: 100% compliance on identified timeline citation for three consecutive months (October 1 - January 1)
 - b. Other Citation Area CAPs: 100% compliance on identified citation demonstrated through monthly random file reviews (starting in November)

Individual File Citations

Unique Learners' Managers will be working with individual case managers to clean up the remaining file citations from the 2013-14 school year. These corrections were submitted to MDE by March 1, 2015.

Corrective Action Plans

The following table outlines the progress the SCRED member districts have made on meeting the requirements of their CAPs. All remaining corrective action must be completed by June 30, 2015.

(table begins on following page)

CAP	District	Letter of Assurance Accepted (Yes or No)	Next Steps
Total Special Education System (TSES)	All SCRED Districts	Yes	
Extended School Year Eligibility Determination	Chisago Lakes	Yes	
	North Branch	Yes	
	Rush City	No	UL Mgr meeting with SpEd Team regarding new actions and strategies and will submit additional files for review after training occurs.
	Pine City	No	UL Mgr meeting with SpEd Team regarding new actions and strategies and will submit additional files for review after training occurs.
	Hinckley-Finlayson	No	UL Mgr meeting with SpEd Team regarding new actions and strategies and will submit additional files for review after training occurs.
	East Central	No	UL Mgr meeting with SpEd Team regarding new actions and strategies and will submit additional files for review after training occurs.
	IEP Team Member Attendance	Chisago Lakes	Yes
North Branch		Yes	
Rush City		Yes	
Pine City		Yes	
Hinckley-Finlayson		Yes	
East Central		Yes	
Wolf Creek		Yes	
Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy Service Delivery Model	Chisago Lakes	Yes	
	North Branch	Yes	
	Rush City	Yes	
	Pine City	Yes	
	Hinckley-Finlayson	Yes	
	East Central	Yes	
	Wolf Creek	No	Wolf Creek UL Mgr to submit letter when student files are available to review.

UNIQUE LEARNERS' UPDATE - continued

Parental Consent	Chisago Lakes	Yes	
Alternate Instruction	Chisago Lakes	No	Chisago Lakes administrators will show video at building level staff meetings and UL Mgr will submit letter.
Free and Appropriate Public Education for Nonpublic Students	Chisago Lakes	No	Chisago Lakes UL Mgr will submit letter when student files are available to review.
	North Branch	Yes	
	Pine City	Yes	
Equitability and Conduciveness	North Branch	Yes	
	Hinckley-Finlayson	Yes	
Room used for Seclusion	North Branch	Yes	
	Pine City	Yes	
Notice of Evaluation	North Branch	Yes	
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Eligibility	North Branch	Yes	
Timelines: Part C Transition	North Branch	No	Additional training with UL Mgr was held on 1/12/15. New 3-month window has been set; then UL Mgr will resubmit letter to MDE.
Timelines: Individual Family Service Plan Periodic Review	North Branch	Yes	
Least Restrictive Environment, Special Education and Related Services	North Branch	Yes	
	Pine City	Yes	
Transfer of Rights	East Central	Yes	
Timelines: Frequency of Reevaluation	Wolf Creek	No	Wolf Creek will monitor reevaluation timelines for new 3-month window; then UL Mgr will submit letter to MDE.
Present Levels of Performance: Short/Long-Term Goals and Objectives	Wolf Creek	Yes	

This year's annual Unique Learners' Conference will be held on August 24, 2015 at North Branch Area High School. We are excited to announce that Dr. Laura Riffel, the "Behavior Doctor", will be delivering the keynote on student engagement strategies and will also be offering disability specific breakout sessions (Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Emotional Behavior Disorder, Autism, and Learning Disabilities). In addition to attending one of Dr. Riffel's disability specific breakout sessions, participants will engage in networking with their respective collaborative planner and have the opportunity to select one additional student engagement strategies breakout session hosted by SCRED staff.

ABOUT DR. LAURA RIFFEL



With more than 30 years of experience, Dr. Riffel has trained thousands of teachers, parents, counselors, psychologists, administrators, and bus drivers how to make data based decisions as a way to change behavior. Her trainings are filled with humor and make data collection easy to understand and use in any setting.

Dr. Riffel served as the webmaster for the National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs (www.pbis.org) from 1999-2012. She travels the world presenting on Functional Behavior Assessment and Writing Effective Behavioral Plans as a private consultant. She also presents on Positive Interventions and Effective Strategies for classroom teachers, autism, oppositional defiant disorder, ADHD, and learning disabilities.

Similarly, this year's annual Paraprofessional Conference, to be held at North Branch Area High School on August 26, 2015, will focus on student engagement strategies for our students with disabilities. Following the large-group morning session, participants will participate in a variety of breakout sessions. Paraprofessionals may select three sessions to attend based on their specific assignments and professional learning needs.

On August 25, 2015, secondary special education teachers will participate in a day dedicated to secondary transition professional learning. Teachers will have targeted training on Transition IEPs and Evaluation Summary Reports (ESRs), as well as self-advocacy strategies. All participants will take either the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Possible Selves or Self Advocacy Strategy course. The training will be conducted in targeted and structured breakout sessions, with an emphasis on transition as it relates to categorical disability areas.

Registration for these August staff development opportunities and many others is available on the SCRED website: www.scred.k12.mn.us. In addition, we have posted the SCRED August Course Catalog on the website to provide detailed information regarding the offerings that includes 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.

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

School-Wide Behavior Trainings

This school year, the social behavior collaborative planners have offered two out of the four evidence based practice school-wide behavior trainings. One training was held on February 27, 2015; the topics were classroom management strategies and behavior management strategies at the TIER I level. The final training will be held on April 22, 2015; the topics will be motivation/reinforcement systems and planning for roll-out of school-wide behavior in the 2015-2016 school year. The ***purpose of the trainings*** is to collectively work with school-wide behavior teams to gain a deeper understanding of research based Tier I positive behavior supports. 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). 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

E/BD Federal Setting III

Last Fall, many SCRED schools designed Federal Setting III EBD classrooms to provide a continuum of behavior supports to address intense student behaviors. Students who spend 61%-100% of the day outside the general education classroom, but within the public school campus are considered Federal Setting III. However, students who attend public or private day or residential facilities are not included. This setting may include students who are in self-contained special classrooms with part-time instruction in a general education, students attending multiple special education classes for 61-100% of the day, or students in self-contained special classrooms with full-time special education instruction.

The goal of Federal Setting III self-contained classrooms is to provide intensive targeted behavior supports based on student's function and teach, practice, and reinforce necessary social skills so a student can display the appropriate skills to return to a less restrictive environment. Additionally, before considering a more restrictive placement, (such as Federal Setting IV, which is in a separate public facility outside the general education public school campus) students are provided the supports within Federal Setting III programs in the public school campus with higher level services and supports. All students in Federal Setting III should have a current Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Support Plan, which identifies the hypothesized function and function based interventions. All replacement behaviors should be consistently taught, practiced, and reinforced through praise, as well as sufficient data collected and graphed to analyze the effectiveness of interventions and determine necessary changes. Typical sufficient behavior data to have meaningful conversations about overt behaviors include behavior type, frequency, intensity, and duration of target behaviors. Students may move through the continuum of supports increasing within Federal Setting III from 61% to 100% self-contained as needed exhausting all school resources in less restrictive special education and mainstream settings.

Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)

The *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*[®] program is considered the worldwide standard for crisis prevention and intervention teaching educators the skills to safely and effectively respond to anxious, hostile, or violent behavior while balancing the responsibilities of care. CPI certification is offered at SCRED, with the initial training of an 8 hour course, offered in the summer, fall, and spring. The initial course is required before attending the refresher course which is 3 hours in length; offered summer, fall and spring. Re-certification is required every 12 months.

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. Eighteen out of twenty schools are fully engaged in the new TIES Behavior Module, with many schools frequently and consistently accessing the PBIS reports. The PBIS reports are accessed through Cognos, which allows for analyzing behavior data from this year and past years based on event type, response types, location, hypothesized function, antecedent, and time of incidence. Below are some sample questions to consider based on the TIES PBIS reports on your school’s behavior referrals.

Category Analyzed	Possible Questions to Consider
Event Type	What behavior event is most common? Are there any trends? What behaviors should be our schools or student’s target behavior? What would be some replacement behaviors that we would need to explicitly teach, practice and reinforce?
Response Type	Is there a common response to behavior? Does that response appear to be working/not working? What data support my ideas? What are some other research based responses to problem behaviors?
Location	Is there data to support a problem location? What structures, rules, procedures could support more positive behavior in this area? What is currently done at that location; are the expectation clear and consistent?
Hypothesized Function	What did the student gain or avoid when doing the behavior? Are we unintentionally giving the student what he/she wants by the way we responded? <u>What other function based interventions could we use?</u> (Example: Student is removed due to behavior; hypothesized function is avoid task demand. Student wants to be removed and not have to complete the task; student wants to be removed and not have to go back to class).
Antecedent	What happened right before the behavior event? Is there a pattern? What could change in the environment? Are there common triggers for multiple students?
Time of Incident	Is there a pattern of incidents at a certain time? What is happening during that time? Are the rules and expectations consistent? Is there adequate supervision (teaching, practicing, reinforcement of behaviors)?

*Instructional Services Team Update
By Barb Scierka, Elementary Math, Julie
Frawley, Secondary Math and
Jennifer Lake, Secondary Reading
Collaborative Planners*

Number Talks

East Central, Pine City, and Jacobson Elementary Schools have been exploring Number Talks. Number Talks are 5-10 minute activities in which students are given a problem/pattern to respond to and then share their strategies for solving the problem. Number Talks are meant to be done daily to build number sense, computational skills, persistence, and strategic thinking. Barb Scierka has been modeling the technique in classrooms giving teachers an opportunity to see what Number Talks look like. *Number Talks: Helping Children Build Mental Math and Computation Strategies Grade K-5* by Sherry Parrish is a great resource. This book includes a DVD with classroom examples and daily sets of problems to use. If you are interested in adding this technique to your teaching skills, please let your principal know to contact Barb Scierka.

Transitions

Adam Lekwa, former Instructional Services Coordinator, accepted a research position at Rutgers University in New Jersey. We wish Adam the best and know he will do great things and enjoy working in a research setting.

We would like to introduce Wendy Stuttgen (pronounced “stitchen”) who joined the Instructional Services Team in February. Wendy will be taking the role of Instructional Services Coordinator and Elementary Reading Collaborative Planner, replacing Adam Lekwa. Wendy’s previous positions include school psychologist, Special Education Director, the RTI coordinator for Independence and Elk Mound School District in Wisconsin and Associate Professor at UW Stout for the School Psychology Graduate Program. Wendy graduated from UW Eau Claire and UW Stout. Wendy was excited about the opportunity to come and work at SCRED due to SCRED’s reputation as a national leader in evidence based practices and Response to Intervention. The idea of working with a dedicated group of professionals that share the same philosophies and vision for increasing the outcomes of all students was very attractive as well.

College and Career Readiness Literacy Training

Secondary social studies, science, and technical area teachers are working on incorporating the College and Career Readiness Literacy Standards within their content areas. To assist with this shift in instruction, Jennifer Lake held two training days designed to increase knowledge of literacy strategies that will help students meet these standards. Thirty-three teachers participated in these training days and worked on creating lessons that will improve their students’ literacy skills while deepening their understanding of content knowledge.

Early Childhood Update
By Karen Wolner,
Early Childhood Collaborative Planner

An important outcome in early childhood related to cognitive, communication, and social/emotional development is proficiency in problem solving. Children's early skills at solving problems and achieving goals set the stage for their later intellectual and social competence. Moreover, children's early problem solving skills affects the way they navigate and explore their environment, their mastery skill development, their reasoning ability, and helps them adapt to challenging circumstances. Consequently, a major focus of early education and early care is the development of young children's cognitive development including problem solving (National Research Council, 2001).

Early Childhood Special Education Teachers were certified this past Fall on the Early Problem Solving Indicator (EPSI). The EPSI is a General Outcome that measures a child's ability to solve problems that require reasoning about objects, concepts, situations, and people. The EPSI is one means of checking a child's growth toward the important general outcome of solving problems that requires reasoning, concepts, adapting to challenging situations, and interactions with people. The EPSI was created by a team of researchers at Juniper Gardens Children's Project at the University of Kansas. The EPSI is one of several Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) which expands our resources for a seamless measurement system from Birth – Grade 12!

Low Incidence Update
By Jennifer DuFresne and Connie Sim,
Low Incidence Collaborative Planners

What is “Low Incidence”?

Low Incidence refers to the categorical disabilities with a “lower incidence” across demographics. Historically these categories have included students with categorical disabilities in the areas of: ASD, DCD, PI, TBI, OHD, VI, DHH, Deaf/Blind. Due to the often complex nature of the student needs typically associated with these categories, the “Low Incidence” team includes many related services personnel and itinerant teaching staff. A comprehensive list of these service providers is listed below for your reference.

Staff	Title	District(s) Served
Connie Sim	Low Incidence Collaborative Planner, Elementary	All Districts
Jennifer DuFresne	Low Incidence Collaborative Planner, Secondary and Transition	All Districts
Darla Beckmann	Developmental Adaptive Physical Education Teacher	Chisago Lakes
Jackie Hanson	Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing	Northern Districts
Carol Houfer	Occupational Therapist	Chisago Lakes
Sheila Hughes	Occupational Therapist	Pine City, Hinckley, East Central
Blake Iserman	Audiologist	All Districts
Jeanne Johnson	Itinerant Teacher of the Physically Impaired and Other Health Disabilities	All Districts
Jessica Laven	Itinerant Teacher Other Health Disabilities and Teacher of the Visually Impaired	All Districts
Katie Letourneau	Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing	Southern Districts
Katie Potter	Occupational Therapist	North Branch & Rush City
Sue Witthuhn	Physical Therapist	All Districts

2014-15 Highlights

The 2014-15 school year brought about the addition of two new staff to the roles of Low Incidence Collaborative Planner; Connie Sim (Elementary) and Jennifer DuFresne (Secondary & Transition). Connie and Jen continue to work diligently to foster collaboration and consistent communication between all of the Low Incidence staff, other collaborative planners at SCRED, and school personnel within individual districts. Some highlights of the current school year include:

- Meeting staff, students, and parents, and working toward building positive relationships
- Motor Team collaboration with teachers on engagement strategies and sharing at Regional level
- Occupational Therapist sharing at poster session at Charting the C’s Conference in Alexandria, Minnesota - April 2015
- Increased collaboration between service areas to send consistent messages and program for student needs
- Work Skills Day in both Pine and Chisago County

Low Incidence Update - continued

Throughout the year, many things were identified as strengths across districts in the area of Low Incidence. Feedback from teachers and related service providers on professional development has been very positive. There are plans to continue providing professional learning in the same manner. In addition, staff who are working with students are committed to student success. Core meetings and collaboration have been very helpful in meeting the needs of students with complicated or challenging profiles. By implementing and targeting the use of the problem-solving process, meaningful progress monitoring, quality related services based on student needs, and networking meetings for professional learning, students with Low Incidence disabilities are receiving high quality educational services across all member districts.

Along with strengths come opportunities for growth and development. In the area of Low Incidence, the following areas have been identified as such:

- Increasing Transition Programming and Technical Skill
- Supporting Students with ASD and Behavioral Issues
- Continuing to build capacity of staff within districts to meet student needs
- Increasing the ability of district staff to document interventions for low incidence students

We are looking forward to additional focused planning and collaboration around these areas in the weeks and months to come.

Coming Attractions in 2015-16

Benjamin Franklin said, “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!” The Low Incidence team is not planning to fail and has many professional growth and learning opportunities in the works for next year! Many of the current supports and services for staff will remain, including the following:

- Paperwork Parties
- DCD Networking Days
- Continued use of Collaborative funds to assist staff in meeting student needs
- Assistive Technology available for check-out through Destiny Library
- Fall “Transition Day”

In addition, the annual DAPE Challenge will take place in the spring, and a variety of breakout sessions for the Unique Learners’ Conference and Paraprofessional Conference are being developed.

Along with the “status quo”, there are some exciting new opportunities for next year. One of these, based on the increased demand for quality Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) strategies, we will be offering “Programming Parties” where classroom teachers and Speech/Language Pathologists can come together for focused collaboration and support in this area. The second is the acquisition of a new resource for all staff in the area of Professional Development utilizing Assistive Technology; Infinitec. Infinitec is a web resource offering “on-demand professional development, curriculum supports and professional learning opportunities”. It hosts a multitude of opportunities for professional learning, and the possibilities for utilization are endless! We are looking very forward to learning and sharing more about this fantastic resource.

It has been an exciting year in the area of Low Incidence! We have learned a lot and are looking forward to continuing existing work and new endeavors in the future.

Announcements

CONGRATULATIONS!

- Valorie Arrowsmith, We'R'Able Coordinator and ESL Instructor was voted in as the Mid-Central Regional Officer by the MinneTesol (MN Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) executive board in February. Val will coordinate events that will meet the needs of the local ESL Teacher Community such as coffee hours, parent nights or meetings with legislators. We are proud of Val's commitment to bringing quality experiences to English language learners and their families across our member districts!
- Molly Bishop, SCRED Social Behavior Collaborative Planner succeeded in passing a very difficult test to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst this spring. Truly an impressive accomplishment!

WELCOME NEW STAFF!

- Wendy Stuttgen joined SCRED at the end of February as the new Instructional Services Coordinator. See the Instructional Services Team's update for more about Wendy.
- Brenda Collins began work as the SCRED Receptionist in March due to Amber Andrews moving to the SPED Data Coordinator position. Brenda comes to us from the healthcare field with a lot of diverse experience. She is the friendly and helpful person on the phone and behind the desk.

KID NEWS!

- "This year I attended the Deaf and Hard of Hearing winter camp with 5 students and one parent from our district. The camp was funded by regional grant money and supported by the St. Croix River Education District. The theme this year was art, but as you can see from the photo below, we also had a chance to visit the nature center. The kids had a blast painting, decorating hearing aids, decorating t-shirts, and making things with beads. We also had the change to listen to a hard of hearing saxophone player and much more!" *By Jackie Hanson, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher*



- Summer Scholarship for Students: The Office of Higher Education is offering a **\$1000 summer scholarship** for youth grades 3-11 to attend programs on an approved list in Minnesota. The fund amount is \$500,000 and will be distributed first come, first served basis to kids who qualify for free and reduced lunch and who have a C average in grades 7-11. The goal is to get kids into good summer programs. Find out more here: <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=1958>
- A great partnership has formed! Students from Kathy Robatcek's program at North Branch Area Public Schools have been volunteering at SCRED doing shredding, light cleaning, watering plants and delivering lunches for SCRED meetings. They are doing a fantastic job! We look forward to their weekly visits. Thank you from all of us at SCRED!