



Communicator

Regional news, views and information

www.lcsc.org

Education Edition

February 2020



2020: New Start, New Site for Lakes Country Academy

by: Megan Neubauer, Special Education Assistant, LCA

Lakes Country Academy (LCA) is excited to be re-opening our Fergus Falls site at our brand-new location, 1814 First Ave North. We are incredibly thankful to the City of Fergus Falls and the Port Authority as this move would not have been possible without their partnership.

Lakes Country Academy was established in 2017 and currently serves students from 26 member districts in Region IV. We have sites located in Fergus Falls and Alexandria. The newly remodeled Fergus Falls site serves students in K-12. This space will also be able to accommodate the region's growing needs and potentially house up to 50 students.

LCA is a program within Lakes Country Service Cooperative. LCA provides highly effective social skills training and academic programs for students with special education needs. Generally, other school settings have not been successful for the students. LCA is a setting IV program and serves students with many disorders, including Autism Spectrum Disorder and Emotional Behavioral Disorders.

Students are given transformational support and skills in a highly individualized setting. Many students require 1:1 support in individual classrooms. We believe that every student should have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential as individuals to contribute to all aspects of their community.

School is now in session at Lakes Country Academy, and we would love for you to see our new site! We will be hosting an open house on February 10th starting at 4 pm. Stay tuned to our website www.lcsc.org and click on "Lakes Country Academy" in the green bar to receive the open house and LCA updates. Lakes Country Academy is growing and honored to serve our region. For more information, contact the Academy at (218)737-6552.

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From the Desk of the Executive Director, Jeremy Kovash



There is a Chinese proverb by Confucius that states, *“The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying small stones.”* Reflecting upon the past few years at Lakes Country, I believe this proverb has credence for us. While envisioning our future as a team and agency, its meaning becomes even more prevalent.

We are in the middle of a transformation at Lakes Country Service Cooperative. We’ve transformed from a healthy, steady organization to a more innovative, nimble, adaptive agency. Just a few years ago, Lakes Country had a staff of approximately 80 employees whose average tenure was greater than ten years. Today, our growth is strong and consistent, and we’ve got many more folks carrying stones. Heck, we need a bunch of new knapsacks as we now employ nearly 140 team members.

How and why does this transformation occur? First, we are fortunate to have Jon Karger, board chair, leading our visionary Board of Directors who always place the need of our members first. Secondly, we have an exceptional leadership team who know and listen to our members and their teams. They respond to member requests and inquiries with keen ears and diligent minds. Thirdly, we have amazing, dedicated staff who love to serve.

And finally, we are blessed with a diverse membership, members that trust us to work on their behalf. From our schools to cities to counties to governmental entities and non-profits... You’ve put your trust in us and we humbly accept and appreciate the opportunity to carry small stones together.

Our commitment to you is evident in some recent examples of our growth and innovation. The Cooperative Purchasing Connection team, under the daily leadership of Melissa Mattson, has grown the number of solicited contracts to over 90 options from national and regional vendors. Users of our innovative online marketplace for public agencies has grown by 35% just this year.

The Knowledge Bowl program under Susan Ward’s guiding hand has grown from 191 to 252 Junior and High School teams in the last five years. That is over 1300 students participating statewide!

In an innovative partnership with the City of Fergus Falls and Port Authority, we opened a beautiful new facility in Fergus Falls for our Lakes Country Academy this January. We now have two sites, one in Alexandria and one in Fergus Falls, providing our School members and their students the opportunity to learn from an incredible team, lead by Dessica Veum.

Our dedication to continually improving communications with our members will now be enhanced thanks to the recent addition of Communications Specialist, Ciera Campion. And, dutifully so, my new Executive Assistant, Nancy Valentine, the team and I are humbled to work on your behalf.

In this issue of the Communicator, you will find stories filled with stone-carrying efforts from Lakes Country and our members. We hope this collection of stories inspire you as we move forward collectively.

Together We Achieve...
Jeremy Kovash

The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying small stones
** Confucius*



Senior High Knowledge Bowl Kicks Off!

by: Susan Ward, Academic Programs Coordinator



The 2019-2020 Senior High Knowledge Bowl program kicked off at Concordia University December 19th and 20th. Approximately 750 students participated in the competition.

Every high school in Region 4 as well as the large Fargo high schools participated for a total of 153 teams. Teams are ranked according to their written test score and placed in one of three divisions according to school population.

It was a highly successful two day event with students happy to start the year's competition. Teams will continue the regular KB season throughout January and February. In March the teams will begin post season with sub-region and region competition. The top teams will advance to the State Knowledge Bowl meet at Cragun's Resort in April. The program continues to grow as students demonstrate their enthusiasm for competing academically with a team of classmates.

Western Lakes Regional Center of Excellence Update

by: Staci Allmaras, Regional Center of Excellence Director



Staci Allmaras, RCE Director

As a program of the Education Services department at Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC), the Western Lakes Regional Center of Excellence (RCE) works in partnership with the Minnesota Service Cooperatives and the Minnesota Department

of Education. Our mission is to support districts and schools in creating the capacity and conditions for change, facilitating school improvement efforts focused on equity and educational excellence. Our mission is guided by our vision for educational systems: ensuring adult behavior supports all students with the opportunity to learn and graduate career, college and life-ready.

The Western Lakes RCE team is comprised of six team members; all of which support districts and schools in developing the skills and strategies needed to recognize barriers within the system. The Western Lakes Team works with districts and schools on breaking down these barriers to fully support students and educators. We work together to conduct a needs assessment, build and strengthen leadership teams and develop school improvement plans.

A pillar within our service model is educational equity. One way we assist schools with educational equity efforts is by sharing the Equity Magnifier as a resource.

The Equity Magnifier strategically guides conversations by asking questions and uncovering systemic barriers that could be blind spots based on our individual experiences. Examples of these questions include:

- Who are the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, & other marginalized groups that are affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? What are the potential impacts on these groups?
- Does this policy, program, practice or decision ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences? Who does this policy, program, practice or decision benefit?

It's recognized that the model in which most educators experienced their own schooling, fostered learning environments in which we "do school" in a way that works for some students, while marginalizing others. The Western Lakes team works alongside school leaders in support of our educational systems, facilitating school improvement efforts focused on equity for underserved student groups. We believe that together we can break down barriers and ensure all students are provided with opportunities to learn. Together we can achieve educational equity and excellence; together we achieve.

For more information, email me at sallmaras@lcsc.org or call 218-255-1650 and I can get you in contact with the best support person from our team.

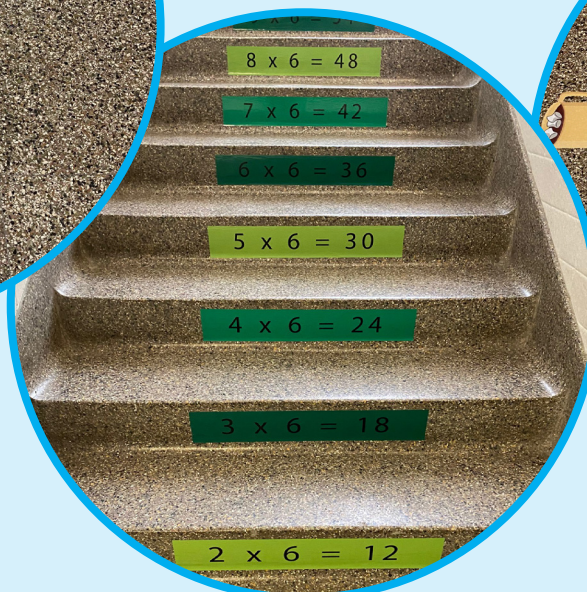
Breckenridge School Designs Sensory Pathway for Students

by: Corinna Erickson, K-6 Principal, Breckenridge Schools

Breckenridge's 1-2 Crew designed a sensory pathway, after seeing similar designs online, for their students to use throughout the school day. Students may use the hallway as they transition from one classroom to the next, to gym or music, during sensory breaks or when they take a trip to get a drink or use the restroom.

The 1st and 2nd grade teachers worked with Tag-Up Marketing in Fergus Falls to create the vinyl designs that were placed in the hallway and waxed over during the summer of 2019. Teachers and students were trained by occupational therapy students from NDSCS, as to how to best utilize the hallway during the first weeks of the school year.

It is fun to see students use the hallway as a way to release extra energy, take a needed break, or just for fun. In addition, over the holiday break multiplication facts were added to stairways throughout the school as a way for older students to participate, as well.



One Community, One Reads Program with Marcie Rendon

by: Therese Vogel



Marcie Rendon, Author

Ulen-Hitterdal School will be hosting a student residency program and Community Reads project with Minnesota author Marcie Rendon on February 12 and 13, 2020.

Marcie will be working with Ann Marie Stewart's high school English classes. Students in grades seven, eight and nine will have prepared for Rendon's visit by studying elements of plot and reading several stories which feature traditional Native American lore.

Seniors will be reading Rendon's novel, *Murder on the Red River*, and then have the opportunity to ask questions of the author during their literary analysis.

In conjunction with One Community, One Reads project, Rendon will discuss *Murder on the Red River*, her personal background and her other literary works, on Wednesday, February 12, 6:30 p.m., Ulen-Hitterdal School Library.

Marcie Rendon, enrolled member of the White Earth Nation, is a playwright, poet, and freelance writer. She has published four nonfiction children's books; two are *Pow Wow Summer* (MN Historical Press) and *Farmer's Market: Families Working Together* (CarolRhoda). Rendon's debut novel, *Murder on the Red River* (Cinco Puntos Press) was published in 2017.

She won the Pinckley Prize for Debut Crime Novel in 2018 for *Murder on the Red River*. In honoring Marcie, the Pinckley judges acknowledged "Rendon's sense of place and her creation of an unforgettable character who forges her own way in a challenging world." A sequel to this novel, *Girl Gone Missing*, was published in 2019.

The One Community, One Reads program is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Lake Region Arts Council, via a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.



FY21 Regional Arts Teacher-Leader Network Applications Now Available!

by: Betsy Anderson, Communications Director, Perpich

Teachers in the RAT-L network participate in ongoing professional development in both leadership and effective teaching. They apply their learning through implementing an annual leadership plan to advance arts education in their region of the state. A Regional Arts Teacher-Leader (RAT-L) is an experienced, effective educator who teaches dance, media arts, music, theater, or visual arts with a record of excellence and a desire to grow their leadership abilities and experience. Teachers of physical education, English language arts, and other subjects are welcome to apply if they provide instruction in one of the arts areas listed above.

Who should apply?

- K-12 educators that currently teach in a K-12 Minnesota elementary, middle, or high school,
- K-12 educators that have an undergraduate degree,
- K-12 educators that have a minimum of three years experience teaching in a K-12 elementary, middle, or high school as a licensed arts educator or a teacher of another subject who teaches dance, media arts, or theater as part of their teaching assignment,
- K-12 educators that hold a Tier 4 or five-year Minnesota teaching license,
- K-12 educators that have a demonstrated record of achievement in current and previous teaching positions,
- K-12 educators that have active support from administrative leaders,
- K-12 educators that are looking to grow their leadership capacity, advance arts education, and support educators in their region. **Note:** Applications require a resume and a letter of recommendation from a current administrator.



Applications for the Regional Arts Teacher-Leader Network are available now. ***Applications are due by 8:00 a.m. on Monday, March 30, 2020.***

The application and more details can be found here: <http://perpich.mn.gov/fy21-regional-arts-teacher-leader-network-application-now-available>

Information About the PDR Program

Professional Development and Resource Programs (PDR) serves arts educators across the state. PDR offers initiatives that address the rapidly changing needs of Minnesota teachers, schools, and districts. Staff of Arts Education Specialists and Professional Development leaders offer guidance and assistance in the arts to schools and educators to increase student achievement and engagement.

Perpich Center for Arts Education, in Golden Valley, Minnesota, is a Minnesota state agency that seeks to advance K-12 education throughout the state by teaching in and through the arts. It was created by the state legislature in 1985 at the urging of then Gov. Rudy Perpich. It was renamed in his honor after his death in 1995. Minnesota is one of only a handful of states in the nation with a dedicated state agency supporting arts education.

The center has helped to shape the Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts K-12, collaborated with the Board of Teaching to develop teaching licenses in the arts areas, and provided professional development for teachers around the state so they are able to teach the standards, assess student learning, and incorporate community resources into the schools. As a state agency, Perpich works collaboratively with state government, school districts, and arts organizations throughout Minnesota.

The work of Perpich Center for Arts Education increases student performance and leads to a better-educated and innovative workforce to support the continued arts and economic vitality of Minnesota.

CPC Announces Three New Contracts!

by: Mary Juliot, Marketing & Design Generalist, CPC

Cooperative Purchasing has three new contracts!

For all three, our LCSC members can contact Julia Dangerfield, Program Representative 218-282-5289 or 888-739-3289.

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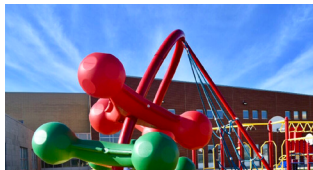
Founded in 2009, LED Supply Co. is a wholesale distributor of over 250 LED lighting manufacturers. LED Supply Co. is a manufacturer neutral lighting partner that serves end-users with proactive retrofits and new construction projects. CPC members will be supported by LED Supply Co.'s Midwest team. With over 10 years of Xcel Energy rebate experience, LED Supply Co. can often instantly deduct any utility rebates to minimize the necessary budget approvals. Their energy saving proposals are very impressive, they offer both on-site and off-site audits, and they stand to be excellent partners.



The Retrofit Companies Lighting and Design:

The Retrofit Companies (TRC) now carry two contracts with CPC! They are an environmental services vendor doing business as TRC Environmental and they are a lighting audits and solutions vendor doing business as TRC Lighting and Design. TRC is offering a CPC Members exclusive access to a website with information on lighting and energy resources, discounted pricing for design and solutions services, and turn-key solutions. They also come with strong recommendations from members who are already TRC customers.

SafetyFirst
PLAYGROUND MAINTENANCE



Partnering for Playground Safety:

The Cooperative Purchasing Connection has partnered with SafetyFirst Playground Maintenance to provide members with access to safer, more enjoyable playgrounds. SafetyFirst Playground Maintenance is a family owned and operated company founded in 2010 who's services include surfacing, playground relocation, maintenance/repairs, inclusion and problem specific solutions. SafetyFirst has maintained and resurfaced hundreds of playgrounds across the Midwest and members will receive the best pricing on installation, maintenance and products by accessing this contract through CPC. Eliminate the bid process and connect with SafetyFirst on your next playground maintenance project.

For more information, visit www.purchasingconnection.org or contact Marissa Bauer by emailing her at marissa.bauer@safetyfirstplayground.com or call/text 763-389-2076

xpress

**Save Time & Money
Using CPC**

Nonprofit Senior Services Manager at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Alicia Berhow, started her career at Tri-Valley as the Administrative Assistant. One of the first tasks on her to-do list was finding a provider for the company's office supplies and ordering the supplies. Alicia started her search for a service that was streamlined, easy to use, carried both every day and specialty items, and most importantly, a service that was a good fit for the Tri-Valley team.

After sifting through several options, Alicia found Express through Cooperative Purchasing Connection (CPC). Alicia states, "I love that the program is easy to use, and you can form it to meet the needs of your company. We have many sites within Minnesota, and it was very easy to get them set up within the program (Express). Ordering is quick, easy and very reliable."

Last year, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council completed a 120-day price comparison study and reported that they saved over \$1,000 a month on orders by utilizing Express and CPC. Tri-Valley's Administrative Office is moving to a new location this year and Alicia says that throughout the moving process they have worked with several CPC vendors who, "Secured discounts and were great to work with!"

CPC is proud of the service that was provided to Alicia and continues to strive for success stories such as hers. Read the full interview and register for Express at PurchasingConnection.org.

LCSC Business Partner News



Building Strong Connections through Referendums

This past November, over 70 Minnesota school districts asked voters to approve more school spending. Whether for facility improvements, new construction, or day-to-day operations, many districts were successful including over 84% of rural schools.

ICS helped 10 out of 12 districts pass their operating and/or building bond referendums on November 5th for over \$245 million in construction. Since November 2017, ICS has helped pass over \$1 billion in school construction across the state.

So, why do we work with school districts in helping pass referendums? Because “through our process, we impact the communities we live, work, and play in,” says Pat Overom, Principal of ICS. The bottom line: 21st Century education requires new tools, technologies, education approaches, additional space, and new equipment – all of which require more school spending. The face of education is being transformed across the state, and our team is proud to be a part of that.

A referendum needs to be about real needs for your district today and in the future. And that was our team’s focus in communicating November’s referendums to local voters – about each district’s needs, the plan to meet those needs, and how that benefits their students, staff, and community. From listening sessions to the communications plan, we worked together with districts to create customized campaigns that spoke to their voters.

At ICS, we help you plan, build, and operate your building well. Founded in 2006, ICS has provided innovative facility solutions to clients across the Midwest for 13 years. Throughout that time, we’ve experienced significant growth with mergers, staff, and services. We’re taking this opportunity to evolve our brand and position ICS to move up and into an exciting future.

Visit <https://www.ics-builds.com/> to learn more or reach out to Lori Christensen at 320-815-9544 or email her at lori.christensen@ics-builds.com to start your next facility project.

ICS helped the following districts pass their referendum in November 2019: ISD 518 (Worthington, MN); MACCRAY Public Schools (Clara City, MN); Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools (Sauk Rapids, MN); BBE Public Schools (Belgrade, MN); Watertown-Mayer Public Schools (Watertown, MN); Hutchinson Public Schools (Hutchinson, MN); Waubun-Ogema-White Earth Public Schools (Waubun, MN); Litchfield Public Schools (Litchfield, MN); Red Lake Falls Public Schools (Red Lake Falls, MN); and BOLD Public Schools (Olivia, MN).

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