



2026-27 Annual Plan

Northwest Service Cooperative (NWSC) Members:

I am pleased to present the Northwest Service Cooperative Annual Plan for 2026-27.

Authorized by statute in 1976, there are nine service cooperatives in the state of Minnesota. The primary mission of the service cooperatives is to bring programs and services to the members they could not afford themselves. The NWSC serves members in a twelve county region in northwest Minnesota. Those counties include: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau.

Our plan is driven by the needs of our members. It is our duty to work with our members to find ways for all involved to serve the public more effectively. All member groups should feel encouraged and empowered at any time to share information about any gaps NWSC can potentially help fill. We are always interested in what our members are thinking.

On behalf of the NWSC Board of Directors and staff, I would like to thank you for taking the time to review our Annual Plan for 2026-27. We look forward to your continued partnership.

Jason Carlson, Executive Director

***Innovating solutions
for the unique needs
of our Northwest
Minnesota members.***

Advisory Committee

MASA Board Member of this Region

Jeffrey Lund, Marshall County Central School

Ex-Officio Governing Board Members

Chris Mills, Thief River Falls Schools

Brian Clarke, Fertile-Beltrami School

Kittson, Marshall, Lake of the Woods & Roseau Counties

Dr. Shawn Yates, Warroad School

Tom Jerome, Roseau School

Pennington, Polk, Red Lake & Clearwater Counties

Brian Clarke, Fertile/Beltrami School

Eric Heise, Bagley School

Norman, Mahnomen, Hubbard & Beltrami Counties

Lance Bagstad, Park Rapids School

Dr. Jeremy Olson, Bemidji School

Mentorship and Professional Development

Dr. Chris Mills, Thief River Falls School

Board Members

Missy Netland, Mahnomen County

Catherine Johnson, Inter-County Comm. Council

Pete Kvien, Roseau School Board

James DeVries, Mahnomen School Board

Ryan Walseth, Thief River Falls School Board

Andy Knott, Red Lake Falls School Board

Sally Roller, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo School Board

Shawn Rominski, Stephen-Argyle School Board

Ann Long Voelkner, Bemidji School Board

Brian Clarke, Fertile-Beltrami Supt.

Chris Mills, Thief River Falls Supt.

Northwest Service Cooperative | Programs & Services

Health Insurance & Employee Wellness

Across Minnesota, hundreds of public organizations and thousands of members participate in the Minnesota Healthcare Consortium. Working alongside service cooperatives across the state, the NWSC leverages the strength of this partnership to negotiate competitive stop-loss coverage, secure administrative savings, and help stabilize healthcare costs for our members.

At NWSC, we are committed to empowering members to achieve lifelong health and well-being through innovative benefits, personalized support, and proactive wellness initiatives.

Our experienced insurance team provides comprehensive plan management and expert guidance every step of the way. Members have access to the expertise of Chris Wavra, Insurance Director; Dan Weir, Insurance Consultant; Sadie Miller; and benefits attorney and consultant Mark Kinney, who provides legal and compliance support.

The NWSC Wellness Program is designed to support the physical, mental, and social well-being of members and their families. Programs such as Omada and MOBE help participants reduce risk factors associated with type 2 diabetes and other chronic conditions.

In addition, members have access to a variety of no-cost wellness resources, including My Health Rewards, Ovia, and Calm Health, providing support for healthy living, family wellness, and emotional well-being.

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Jason Carlson	jcarlson@nwservice.org	218.681.0900 x2

Environmental Health and Safety

The Northwest Service Cooperative contracts with 18 school districts in the region to provide health and safety services. This includes OSHA compliance issues that range from training, management plans and inspections. We also provide asbestos testing and project management, indoor air quality testing, and drug and alcohol testing for district bus drivers.

The Northwest Service Cooperative has also been authorized by the Minnesota Department of Education to host a Health, Safety, and Management Assistance (HSEM) Program for regional school districts. The program is designed to provide on-site regional health, safety, and environmental management assistance to school districts. These services assist districts in identifying, prioritizing and scheduling health and safety capital projects and in the development and betterment of written programs.

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Member Services

A number of trainings and special events are organized for our members. Examples include HITA training, Administrative Forums, and Statewide Wellness Conferences to name a few. Other professional development or training are scheduled based on member's needs. Our relationships with other statewide organizations such as Association of Minnesota Counties and League of Minnesota Cities continue to grow. Programs such as Long-Term Care, Long Term Disability, Life Insurance, Medical Savings Accounts and Student Loan Financial planning continue to be offered. Along with a new vision program, VSP. Facilities, planning, consulting, engineering and management services continue to be offered with our partner ICS Consulting LLC.

Chris Wavra

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Cooperative Purchasing

New adventures have been in store for the Northwest Service Cooperative Purchasing Program. Our on-line procurement system (Express) has been up and running since 2014. Express is designed to give an experience where the most common purchases can be made in one location. As we continue to build and add additional suppliers to the Express, this online marketplace will bring opportunities such as comparing vendors, completing a category wide search of products to find the best price(s) and option(s), and one single password instead of an account with each of our suppliers and multiple passwords to remember. We have almost 14,000 members using this service.

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Student Academic Programs

Young Authors Conference

The Young Authors Conference is designed to encourage and inspire young writers in grades 5-8, promoting student enthusiasm and competence in written communication. Through interaction with established authors, poets, playwrights, storytellers, illustrators and journalists, students discover and explore their writing talents and potential. Upcoming YAC will be on March 10th, 2027.

Spelling Bee

The Spelling Bee is a series of competitions for students in grades 5-8 beginning at the local level, advancing to the Regional, and then to the State competition with an opportunity to win a trip to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington DC. The Spelling Bee builds poise and confidence, strong study skills and increased vocabulary along with improved spelling. The Regional SB will be on February 3rd, 2027.

Creativity Festival

The Creativity Festival is a one-day event for students in grades 5-8 to celebrate the arts, creativity, science, problem solving and invention. Linking the creative process to the real world, students are recognized and encouraged for their creativity and problem solving as they interact with a variety of visual and performing artists, inventors and scientists, exposing them to the creativity process, critical thinking, and invention. Upcoming Creativity Festival will be on November 25th, 2026.



Math Masters

Math Masters is a math competition program that challenges students to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Students compete in eight rounds of competition, with their academic effort and achievement recognized with plaques, medals, and ribbons presented as the competition concludes.

Knowledge Bowl

Knowledge Bowl is a series of interdisciplinary academic competitions promoting teamwork, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, oral communications, and listening. Teams of five students compete in written and oral rounds by answering questions related to all areas of learning typical of secondary educational programs, testing students' recall, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.

Sr. High Knowledge Bowl competitions for students in grades 9-12 are scheduled in January – March and culminate in sub-regional and regional competitions, with top teams advancing to a state competition in April. This year, we had 83 Senior High teams registered.

Jr. High Knowledge Bowl competitions for students in grades 6-9 are scheduled after school in February-March, with an all-day regional competition at the close of the season. For the Junior High season we had 34 teams registered.

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Education Services

Northwest Service Cooperative's Education Services Team provides innovative, responsive support that helps school leaders and educators strengthen instructional practice, build staff capacity, and improve student outcomes.

Education Services delivers customized professional learning, coaching, consultation, and instructional support aligned to district priorities. Services include literacy leadership and team support, foundational teacher coaching, curriculum and standards alignment, data-informed decision making, paraprofessional development, and educator learning designed to meet local needs.

As interest in artificial intelligence continues to expand, Education Services provides professional learning and consultation focused on responsible implementation, instructional applications, workflow efficiency, and policy development. This work includes development of a Regional AI Leadership Collaborative to support school leaders through shared learning, resource development, and regional collaboration.

Education Services also helps districts use data to inform planning and decision making. Services include data exploration, action planning, and consultation utilizing local assessment data, SLEDs, ECLDS, and other data sources to support continuous improvement efforts.

Building on districts' initial literacy implementation efforts, Education Services supports schools in strengthening instructional systems, developing staff capacity, and sustaining long-term literacy growth. Coaching, consultation, and professional learning help districts move beyond implementation toward continuous improvement and lasting instructional impact.

Regional collaboration remains an important component of Education Services. Through facilitated learning communities, networking opportunities, and role-aligned professional learning experiences, educators strengthen professional connections, share effective practices, and build collective capacity across northwest Minnesota.

Through collaboration with COMPASS, Minnesota Service Cooperatives, the Minnesota Department of Education, Northern Lights Library Network, Minitex, and other regional and statewide partners, Education Services expands access to expertise, resources, and innovative solutions that support member districts.

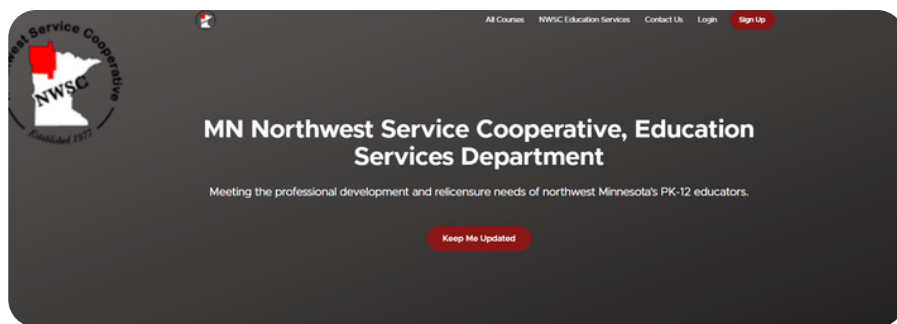
Together, these services reflect NWSC's commitment to providing responsive, coordinated support that helps educators, leaders, and districts address emerging challenges and achieve their goals.

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Click the photo below to access our professional development courses!



School Nutrition Program

The Northwest Service Cooperative has two contracted nutritionists who work with several school districts in the region. They work with districts on review of food service operations, menu planning, nutritional analysis, managing USDA meal programs, budgeting and purchasing, training, grant writing, and much more.

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Finance and Business Manager

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Adult Basic Education Consortium

Adult Basic Education is a state and federally funded program that helps adult learners (ages 17 and older, but no longer enrolled in high school) to acquire the academic and employability skills they need to advance to the next stage in their education or employment. Services include GED and MN Adult High School diploma preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, preparation for the U.S. Citizenship exam, digital literacy assessment and instruction, online/distance learning instruction, and assistance in developing core academic skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening and math. With 29 member school districts, the Northwest Service Cooperative Adult Basic Education consortium is geographically one of the largest adult literacy consortia in the state of Minnesota.

Classrooms are located in 9 communities throughout the region, including Bemidji, Clearbrook, Crookston, East Grand Forks, Park Rapids, Roseau, Thief River Falls, and Warroad. Classrooms are hosted at different facilities, including schools, Alternative Learning Centers, community centers, and community and technical college campuses. The consortium employs ten full and part time teachers, one administrator, and two specialists. The consortium also offers ServSafe preparation and exam proctoring at locations throughout the consortium, as well as online, evening GED Prep classes.

Northwest Service Cooperative is the fiscal agent for a federal grant that supports transitions related programs within the greater northwest Minnesota region. To this avail, the Adult Basic Education program has teamed up with adult education programs from Moorhead, Detroit Lakes and Alexandria to offer Regional Online Career Collaborative courses that help adult learners prepare for success in college and the work force. These courses are offered to ABE enrolled learners only.

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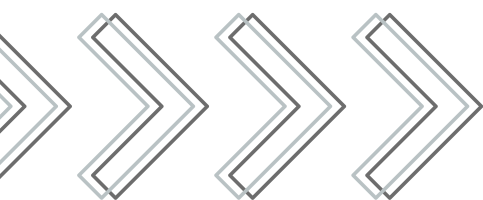
218.681.0900 x9

COMPASS

Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success (COMPASS) is a statewide education system created through a collaboration between MDE and the Minnesota Service Cooperatives. COMPASS provides regional, coordinated, continuous improvement support to all districts and Tribal and charter schools in Minnesota.

The purpose of COMPASS is to ensure all Districts, Charter, and Tribally Controlled Schools have regional access to a support system designed to ensure rigorous and equitable outcomes for each student without exception.

COMPASS enacts educational equity by driving systemic change through the MnMTSS framework for continuous improvement.



COMPASS Areas of Support

COMPASS offers support for districts using the Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MnMTSS) framework to support continuous improvement in the following areas:

- American Indian Education
- Attendance
- Continuous Improvement for Identified Schools
- Culturally Responsive Instructional Leadership
- Data and Assessment Literacy
- Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education
- Literacy
- Math
- Multilingual Learners
- School Climate and Culture
- Special Education (in partnership with the Special Education Division)
- Tier 1 Instruction
-

NWSC has a COMPASS team with specialists in each of the areas above. This team works with regional districts, charter or Tribally Controlled Schools to plan for engagement in COMPASS Pathways based on local needs and priorities.

A COMPASS Pathway is a clearly defined content-area professional learning (PL) opportunity that supports MnMTSS implementation and is consistently delivered and accessible across all regions. COMPASS Pathways also embed, and support implementation of evidence-based practices required by ESSA for identified schools. The Pathways are developed by statewide content teams to include interactive professional learning courses that build participant knowledge and capacity. COMPASS Pathways bridge the gap between learning and implementation through aligned support that may include consultation, coaching, technical assistance and/or communities of practice. In this way, COMPASS Pathways are designed to equip and support teams and leaders as they improve their systems.

COMPASS Professional Learning Opportunities

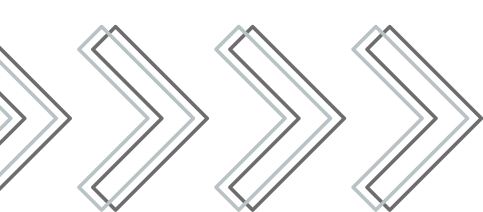
[COMPASS in MnMTSS Professional Learning Catalog 2026-27](#)



Becca Neal

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Media and Technology

Technology Meetings

The Northwest Service Cooperative hosts monthly technology meetings for its members. The meetings are held every other month, throughout the school year. There are vendor presentations in the morning and after lunch it is regional networking and sharing. You can register for these meetings at northbynorthwest.ning.com

Mercedes Coan

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NWSC Website

We will maintain our website and keep pages current. Our website serves as an information repository about the services we offer as well as an archive of board minutes, agendas, and policies. Our event calendar on the home page informs our members about upcoming events and provides opportunities for event registration. 2026-27 will be the third year of our 3-year contract with WIX as our web provider.

Alice Hofstad

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ABE Website

We will maintain our website and keep pages current. Our website serves as information repository about the services we offer as well as upcoming GED testing bootcamps, ServSafe Food Manager Courses, and other events that our Adult Basic Education program holds.

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Media Services

While LEARN360 video streaming was offered, no schools enrolled this year. This year marked the end of video streaming. After starting with 16mm films in 1978, switching to VHS video and then to DVDs and finally video streaming, 2026 marked the end of media services after 46 years of service to area schools.

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Northwest Service Cooperative | Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

(Excluding Munimum Premium Funds)

Revenue	General Fund	Comm. Service	Enterprise Funds	Grant Funds	Total 2026 Budget
Dues/Participation Fees	289,250		234,776		524,026
Contracted Services	223,500		118,880		342,380
Insurance-Admin. Fees	449,210				449,210
Federal/State Grants-Aids		669,105		1,637,156	2,306,261
Misc., Interest, Pharmaceuticals, Wex	945,500		1,000,000		1,945,500
Transfers In					
Total Budgeted Revenue	\$1,907,460	\$669,105	\$1,353,656	\$1,637,156	\$5,567,377
Expenditures					
Payroll	938,910	536,388	256,966	1,338,301	3,070,565
Purchased Services	661,750	105,351	745,089	224,530	1,736,720
Supplies & Materials	103,500	14,413	4,850	14,560	137,323
Capital Expenditures	191,500	8,108	10,000	8,775	218,383
Other Expenditures (chg./bk)	(111,987)	4,845	9,500	50,990	-46,652
Total Budgeted Expend.	\$1,783,673	\$669,105	\$1,026,405	\$1,637,156	\$5,116,339
Balance Revenue/<Exp.>	\$123,787	\$0	\$327,251	\$0	\$451,038

Note:

General Fund – includes all the general operating programs (i.e.– Board, Agency, Member Services, etc.) along with educational support programs such as Education Services, Technology Partner, and Coop. Purchasing..

Community Services – includes Adult Basic Ed. and Drivers Education Programs.

Enterprise Funds – includes the Mid-Year and January Insurance Pools and the Health & Safety Program.

Agency/Grant Funds – Regional Center of Excellence Grant program and MDH Nurse Grant.

Northwest Service Cooperative | Schools & CCOGA Members

SCHOOL DISTRICT MEMBERS		ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Ada-Borup-West	Laporte	Cass Lake Bena
Badger	Mahnomen	Circle of Life Academy
Bagley	Marshall County Central	Menahga
Bemidji	Nevis	Naytahwaush Charter
Blackduck	Norman County East	Trek North Jr & Sr High
Clearbrook-Gonvick	Park Rapids	Schoolcraft Learning Community
Climax-Shelly	Pine Point	Voyager's Expeditionary
Crookston	Red Lake County Central	Walker/Hackensack/Akeley
East Grand Forks	Red Lake Falls	Cathedral - Crookston
Fertile-Beltrami	Red Lake	Sacred Heart - EGF
Fisher	Roseau	St. Bernard's - TRF
Fosston	South Koochiching/Rainy River	St. Mary's Mission - Red Lake
Greenbush/Middle River	Stephen/Argyle Central	St. Michael's - Mahnomen
Goodridge	Thief River Falls	St. Philip's School - Bemidji
Grygla	Tri-County	Region 1
Kelliher	Warren/Alvarado/Oslo	
Kittson Central	Win-E-Mac	
Lake of the Woods	Lancaster	

CITY MEMBERS	COUNTY MEMBERS	OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES	NON-PROFIT MEMBERS
City of Ada	Clearwater County - CP Only	Bi-County CAP	Area Special Education Cooperative
City of Bemidji	Hubbard County	East Polk County DAC	BRIC
City of Blackduck	Kittson County - CP Only	Fair Meadow Nursing Home	NWRIC
City of Cass Lake	Mahnomen County	Heritage Living Center	Northern Cass & Bemidji DAC
City of Crookston	Marshall & Polk Rural Water System	Inter-County Comm. Council	NW Community Action - CP Only
City of Erskine	Norman County - CP Only	North Star Manor	NW Private Industry Council - CP Only
City of Fertile	Pennington County	Pennington Red Lake Public Health	Polk County DAC
City of Fosston	Polk County	Red Lake Band of Chippewa - CP Only	
City of Greenbush - CP Only	Red Lake County	Red Lake Watershed District	
City of Karlstad	Roseau County	TRF Regional Airport Authority	
City of Red Lake Falls	Lake of the Woods S&WCD	Tri-Valley Opportunity Council	
City of Stephen		White Earth Reservation - CP Only	
City of Thief River Falls			
City of Warroad			

Northwest Service Cooperative | Staff Members

Alice Hofstad	Media Services/Technology Training	763-453-0321
Mercedes Coan	Staff Development/Student Programs	218-681-0900 x1
Brian Byklum	Health/Safety Coordinator	218-681-0900 x4
Jason Carlson	Executive Director	218-681-0900 x2
Ron Ruud	Health/Safety Assistant	218-689-2836
Chris Wavra	Member Services/CCOGA/Health Insurance Director	218-681-0900 x3
Dawn Kasprowicz	Admin/Program AssistantCPC	218-681-0900 x7
Gina Drellack	Education Services Director	218-358-1211
Jaci Jorde	Business Manager	218-681-0900 x5
Kirsten Fuglseth	Adult Education Program Director	218-681-0900 x9
Laurie Bruley	Health/Safety Technician	218-289-4174
Sadie Miller	Accounts Receivable/Payroll/Insurance	218-681-0900 x8

COMPASS

Adrienne Eickman	Literacy Lead	218-689-1091
Colleena Bibeau	American Indian Education Equitable Access Specialist	218-689-1035
Jeremy Tammi	Culturally Responsive Instructional Leadership Lead	218-684-3401
Lorainne O'Shea	Continuous Improvement Coach	218-684-0489
Marcella Melby	Math Lead	218-689-0453
Meagan Bodeker	Climate & Culture Lead	218-689-0201
Michelle Johnson	MnMTSS Lead	218-416-2447
Rebecca Neal	COMPASS Regional Supervisor/Education Services	218-686-9719
Stacy Bender	Continuous Improvement Lead	218-280-2395
Stacy Hanson	Literacy Coach/Education Services	218-684-4432

NWSC CONSULTANTS

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Karyn Lutz	School Dietitian	218-647-2222
Barb Schmitz	Management Assistant	218-465-4009
Dan Weir	Health and Benefit Consultant	800-864-3797



Thank you for reading the 2026-27 Annual Plan!