



# Goodhue County Education District

Enhancing educational opportunities through interdistrict cooperation

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- Coaches' Perspectives....Year End Reflections
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- In the Spotlight:

## Important Upcoming Events/Meetings

June 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 2017: LSCI Training @ RBEC  
 June 6, 2017: National Higher Education Day  
 June 12, 2017: National Children's Day  
 June 12, 2017: Leadership Team Meeting (Sped Coordinators/ADs)  
 June 20, 2017: American Eagle Day  
 June 22, 2017: Superintendents Council

## The Progress, June 2017: Volume 2, Issue 9

### The Progress archive

[Click here](#) to view past issues from the current school year.

### Comments? Suggestions for new articles?

Contact Jillynne Raymond, Editor, The Progress,  
[jraymond@gced.k12.mn.us](mailto:jraymond@gced.k12.mn.us)

## MTSS: Where

Minnesota Public Radio recently interviewed Cherie Johnson, GCED Executive Director; Maggie Helwig, RBEC Principal; and RBEC teachers regarding the teacher shortage. While we are not able to reprint the article, [click here to access the article](#).

## FAST through a Secondary Lens

As the elementary principals went through the minutia of details to plan their FAST implementation, secondary principals have other pieces to consider. Our assessment framework covers universal screening in grades K - 8 for reading and math. 9 - 12 principals and their teams need to develop and consistently use a protocol for identifying at-risk students, including a plan to progress monitor those identified.

### Secondary School Screening Assessment

by Weston Johnson, GCED Instructional Coach

While system components are foundational across grade-levels, the implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support at the secondary level requires different considerations. Considerations may center on course schedules, credits, and academic history, among others. Assessment and interventions differ based on three assumptions argued by Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2010). First, the range of

Q: What do you use for universal screeners in high school?

A: Rebecca Sarlo, PhD.

The best "universal screener" for identifying at-risk students at the high school level is a systematic review of existing historical data. At the secondary level, we do not typically have to screen students to know who is at-risk for academic failure and disengagement. Students come to us with years of data, which indicate that without intervention, these students are likely to experience course failures, continue to have skill deficits, and remain disengaged. So, **I recommend developing a structured protocol for reviewing existing data to identify students in need of support.** The earlier high schools can receive information from feeder middle school regarding their incoming students the better. Earlier identification can help schools in their development of a data-informed master schedule.

The time and personnel energy saved on screening can be re-allocated to conduct diagnostic assessments which are necessary to design effective intervention plans and progress monitoring assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of programming.

Source: <http://rtinetwork.org/professional/rti-talks/transcript/talk/33>:

## Implementing FastBridge Learning: Comforting Insights

By Weston Johnson, GCED Instructional Coach

I had the opportunity to setup the FastBridge Learning (or FAST) system a couple of times this past year. In comparison to my experience with STAR and AIMSweb, things were less complicated with FAST. The fact that all our assessments were in one system was convenient. Since all the assessments were in one system, there was one set of procedures and a single template to upload. From a teacher's standpoint, there is only one account to access for student data.

Setting up the account is quite easy. Setup focuses on assessment information, student information, and managing roles. Basically, assessment information is determined by the assessment calendar, GCED-wide framework, and any local decisions regarding which measure should be available. This information is entered into FAST. Student information is uploaded using an Excel template provided by FAST. FAST's customer support is very helpful, but once the template is figured out, it is an easy process. Lastly, managing roles is about access. Teachers are uploaded with their students and use their email address to get into the system. Assessment proctors, specialists, school managers, and district managers are all setup behind the scenes.

Training is another big topic that comes up regarding FAST. Unlike STAR or AIMSweb, the training for FAST measures is built-in to the system. It is available 24/7. Teachers may or may not take comfort in this amount of access, but I found it convenient. For my own training, I completed several sessions while lounging in a comfortable chair drinking coffee. When planning for training, teams should review the GCED-wide framework. Training needs are directly connected to the assessment framework. The GCED instructional coaches can provide additional insights on training.

If you have the student information formatted to the FAST template and identified staff roles, the process could be completed in a couple hours. In fact, roster uploads typically occur within minutes. The indication of success is nearly immediate. Also, as you implement training, accessing the certification reports will help your school teams keep track of your implementation fidelity. If there are any questions about implementing FAST, I'm usually available to answer them. As we implement FAST across GCED, it makes sense that we continue to collaborate and benefit from our collective group of districts.

## Co-Teaching: The Basics

student performance is greater, so the typical screening of students is not needed to identify students. Second, the need to determine responsiveness to less intensive interventions is not required to place students in intensive interventions. Third, the effectiveness of interventions is not the same across grades because academic difficulties are more complicated and varied at the secondary level. These assumptions are important considerations.

Vaughn and Fletcher (2010) provide some clarification to these assumptions. First, universal screening at the secondary can be accomplished through reviewing student academic history and identifying patterns of low achievement. Second, students should be provided interventions that match their level of instructional need instead of being required to move through each tier by demonstrating non-responsiveness prior to receiving more intensive supports; sequential movement is not a requirement at any level, but it is a necessary consideration because of resource limitations. Third, there is a continued need to identifying interventions for inadequate responders regardless of grade-level. There is also a need for increasing the effectiveness of preventive instruction so more intensive tiers of instruction are not impacted by the high levels of students requiring additional resources.

by Dr. Martina Wagner

Sharing a classroom with another teacher may feel strange in the beginning. But try thinking about it this way. When two teachers work together to serve the same number of students, the workload is not only lighter but shared - no more working in isolation. Transitioning to co-teaching can be challenging, but ultimately co-teaching partners give students so much more (and more directly address their individual needs) than either teacher could do on his/her own. And of course, that's what this is all about - helping students achieve!

When you're looking after children outside of school (your own kids, nieces, nephews, etc.), it almost always makes life easier to have a caretaking partner ("Thank goodness you're home! You start their baths while I make dinner...."). The transition to co-teaching can be challenging, but ultimately you're likely to find that you and your partner can give your students so much more (and more directly address their individual needs) than either of you ever could on your own.

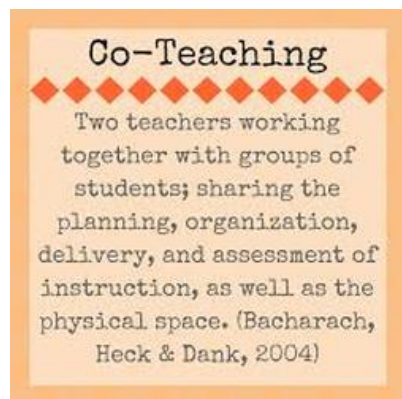
As the co-teaching partnership progresses, the goal is for both teachers to share equally in planning, instruction, and assessment. That might not be the case at first - co-teaching is definitely a process. Using the Co-Teaching Framework and always keeping communication channels open will help co-teachers - over time - develop a strong partnership that benefits all students in the classroom. The Co-Teaching Framework includes 3 essential elements:

1. Collaborative Planning
2. Co-Instructing Students
3. Co-Assessment and Reflection

### Reflective Questions for Co-teachers:

- Are we equally sharing all the elements of co-teaching?
- Are we delivering universally designed instruction and assessment to address the diverse learning needs of all of our students?
- Have we established a classroom environment conducive to learning that engages all students?
- Have we reviewed student products and assessments to reflect upon our instructional strategies that led to student success or to identify needed changes?
- Did we share in the decision -making regarding which co-teaching approach would work best with the content and the learner's needs?
- Have we identified additional supports needed or professional development topic areas to enhance our instructional practice?
- Are we meeting the other standards of high-quality co-teaching?

## Co-Teaching in Red Wing and Zumbrota Mazeppa



General education and special education teachers at Red Wing High School and Zumbrota Mazeppa Primary School began developing their co-teaching skills this year. Working with Dr. Wagner, RWHS teachers have begun their collaborative learning journey. Professional development has included on-site training, coaching, and educational rounds with Dr. Wagner. In addition, a team of RWHS teachers visited North St. Paul High School to observe exemplary co-teaching in action. Teams of co-teachers there welcomed us into their classrooms and demonstrated the seamless transitions between teachers in the classroom. It was challenging to identify which teacher was general education and which teacher was a specialist. The same should be true at RWHS as teachers continue to build their collaboration.

Collaboration requires shared planning time, which is a common situation in public education. That may be why we get creative with our problem solving in this field. Dr. Wagner has had creative options to find that time for teachers. Although not working with Dr. Wagner, Zumbrota Mazeppa Primary School teachers Stacy Liebenow and Jake Smith co-teach kindergarten students. Their district incorporated planning hours in their overall budget. The day-to-day reality is that they touch base every day to discuss student needs, plan collaborative time with students, and discuss big picture of where they are going with learning goals. As an EBD teacher new to kindergarten, Jake readily admits that "Stacy is mentoring me! Being so new to kindergarten, I am soaking up the knowledge she passes to me." That works beautifully for the academic progression; they are on the same page for behavior management. They think alike, understanding the importance of building relationships with the students. Stacey understands that those relationships and co-teaching provide "a great way to keep kids in the classroom instead of getting pulled out for services."

Our ultimate goal is always to meet students' needs in the least restrictive environment, which Stacey identified. Co-teaching offers great potential to meet *all* students needs.

## Diving into Data

Principals from GCED and its member districts dove into data at the quarterly principals meeting. Four years of reading, math, and special education data provided opportunities for reflection.



**Longitudinal Math Winter Data  
Download File**



**Longitudinal Reading Winter Data  
Download File**



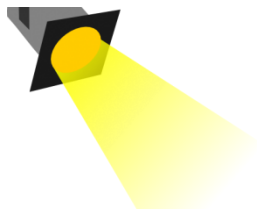
**Longitudinal SPED Data  
Download File**



## Going the Extra Distance

GCED is so fortunate to have dedicated staff members committed to serving our students, our member districts, our communities. *Thank you all.* We would like to recognize Jessica Tlougan, nominated for and recipient of our Extra Distance award.

**Jessica Tlougan** goes the extra distance to ensure that students needs are met....no matter what. She had been meeting student needs for years as an occupational therapist. Going the extra distance does not stop at individual student needs. When GCED's former vision teacher moved out of the district, we posted for the opening but the teacher shortage includes service providers. We reached out to GCED staff members regarding the need to grow our own vision teacher. Jessica stepped up and has been going the extra distance ever since. As always, she continues to be dedicated to go the extra distance for all students, but there is more. She is going to school FT, which includes 6 weeks in Michigan for 2 summers in a row. *Perhaps her husband and children have been going the extra distance on the home front!*



## In the Spotlight: Tracy Oliver, Bluff View Elementary School Assistant Principal

Sometimes in life we reach in one direction for something only to find ourselves in a different spot, going a different way. Sometimes, everything all works out as it was meant to be. This is certainly the case of Tracy Oliver, Bluff View Elementary School Assistant Principal in Lake City.

Tracy grew up in the Zumbro Falls area. She and her family had a Millville address and a Zumbro Falls phone number. She attended Lake City Public Schools and her family attended church in West Albany. All that she needed was in the Zumbro Falls area. Tracy was the oldest of 5 children and was obviously a positive role model for her younger siblings. Two brothers are successful businessmen, one in the Twin Cities and one in Colorado; one sister is a social worker and one sister is an attorney.

When Tracy headed to Gustavus College her intent was to be a physical therapist. She bit into it and found that it was not her niche. The summer after freshman year she was talking with a neighbor, who was a kind man that was a grandpa type figure for Tracy, and he simply mentioned that he always thought Tracy would become a teacher. A simple thought led to more thinking and for Tracy to check into education. She earned an AA degree at RCTC before she transferred to Winona State. She completed her student teaching in Winona and Onalaska for special education and in Rochester for elementary education.



### Rapid Round with Tracy

#### **Book you're reading now?**

*Energy Bus*

#### **Book that turned you into a reader?**

*A Dog Called Kitty*

#### **Veg Out Activity?**

*Long walk by myself*

#### **Pizza Topping?**

*Pepperoni*

#### **Favorite Subject in High School?**

*Social Sciences, Social Studies*

#### **Challenging Subject in High School?**

*Math*

**If you could visit anywhere and money was not a concern?**

Following graduation, Tracy substitute taught in Winona and a bit in Lake City. A month of subbing reinforced her desire for a permanent teaching position when an opportunity opened up. That school year Bluff View experienced a growing 6th grade class. After winter break, Lake City posted for a 6th grade teacher and hired Tracy to teach reading and math. She taught 6th grade for 7 years, then she served as Lake City's curriculum coordinator and assessment coordinator for 5 years. While in that role, Tracy picked up the work load of Lake City's retiring special education coordinator.

At that point, she thought this education business might work out for her so she went back to school for her administrative license and now serves as assistant principal. She easily admits that she likes her work - the behind the scenes work that makes "teachers lives easier, supporting students and families." There certainly are challenges in public education with more to come. When asked what she thinks is one of the main challenges for public education, she responded "just to go through all of the changes on how schools operate with personalized learning is one of the greatest challenges. The needs are so complex. I wonder how we are going to meet all of the needs. Can we change enough to meet the needs?"

While facing the challenges I had to ask, "What's in it for you Tracy?" She articulates her "why" with ease and grace, "The interactions with people. Seeing a kid feel connected, understand something. Same with a staff member, being able to set up someone else for success. There is nothing better."

Basically Tracy began with Lake City Public Schools as a student at the age of 5 and 29 years later she is still there. Her work extends beyond the work day, which according to Tracy is easy. She and her husband raise their 3 children (9th grade daughter and 2 younger sons) in the area.

Physical therapy may not have been her niche, but things *do* work out for a reason. In fact, although Tracy did not get into her first choice freshman writing seminar; however she did get into "Issues in Education - the Media." For Tracy Oliver and for Lake City Public Schools all is as it should be.

New Zealand

**If not in education, what job would you hold?**

*Travel Blogger*

\*\*\*\*\*

*"My heart is here. It is fun to support the community you live in; I'm so vested in the community. And I've had so many opportunities here - as a kid working in the child age program, to being trusted with teacher and administrative roles."*

- Tracy Oliver

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Goodhue County Education District is a group of six southeastern Minnesota school districts: [Cannon Falls](#), [Goodhue](#), [Kenyon-Wanamingo](#), [Lake City](#), [Red Wing](#) and [Zumbrota-Mazeppa](#). Working together, the districts provide effective and efficient educational services and funding for special education programs, staff development, extended and alternative summer school services.