

## Scott Monson's Personal Statement

**Scott Monson - Superintendent**

**Marshall Public Schools**

The vocational/technical training program that our school district has been fortunate to be a collaborating member of in Marshall is a model that can be replicated in other districts and communities. I inherited the basics of the model when I began as Superintendent for the Marshall Public School District – after learning more about the concept/idea, it immediately became evident to me that this program would have multiple benefits for many different people and organizations.

In my opinion, this type of model is beneficial to/for:

Students: this program is helpful to those who may not be college-bound so they can have opportunities for hands-on and relevant learning, all the while earning college credit for courses leading to potential opportunities for careers; these courses help narrow the “opportunity gap” that often exists between college-bound students and those who may not be interested in attending college.

Business/Industry: businesses and industries are often willing partners, yet the creation and maintenance of this program demonstrates our district's willingness to help employers find employees who have skills that are desirable.

Our community: this program provides students of all ages the opportunity to learn a craft/trade in an employment area where they can stay in Marshall or the surrounding communities – we often educate students to leave Marshall, yet this program educates students and gives them a realistic opportunity to start a career in Marshall.

The testimony I have heard from students who participate in the vocational-technical education model in Marshall is some of the strongest I have heard in 25+ years in education. Phrases such as “opportunity”, “reason to be in school”, and “hope for the future” are all powerful statements that students have shared. Additionally, the opportunity for high school age students to attend class and – in many situations – work and learn next to and with adults has provided benefits that I am not certain we anticipated...benefits for both adult students and high school students.

As an educator, I have always desired that my legacy would be the opportunities I was a small part of creating for students. This program creates opportunities for students that would not be possible with a traditional model. There certainly are costs to the district associated with the program, yet those costs are far outweighed by the many, many benefits realized by students, businesses and industries, and our community.

## Terry Gaalswyk's Personal Statement

**President**

**MN West Community and Technical College**

During my first year as the President of Minnesota West Community and Technical College I have experienced the pleasure of learning about the outstanding, long-term innovative partnerships and relationships the College has throughout our service area and the impact these initiatives has on the individuals, the workforce, and our employers. In this period of workforce prosperity, it is critical to assist our current and future workforce align their interests, skills and talents with those of our industry partners and employers to foster continued prosperity within our communities.

We are passionate about making a positive impact for the individuals and their families which ultimately results in a talent driven workforce for our employers. The SW Minnesota Career Pathways Partnership model is an effective, long-term collaboration that utilizes the strengths and specialties of each partner to have the greatest impact on the education, skills development, personal achievement, and career outcomes for our students.

Creativity and innovation continue to be the foundation driving the positive outcomes achieved by this partnership as well as establishing best practices business approach to program delivery. The opportunity to incorporate both youth and adult training programs cultivates sound business practices, enhances the attainment of technical skills, soft-skills, and establishes a respect for inter-generational communications creating a win-win environment for all involved.

At Minnesota West we are dedicated to serving the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in affordable, accessible, and supportive settings. Our deep involvement with the Career Pathways Partnership supports our mission and our service to Southwest Minnesota.

## Juanita Lauritsen's Personal Statement

Director

WorkForce / SW Private Industry Council

The ability to offer an intergenerational learning platform in the southwest region of Minnesota has proven to be a value added opportunity. In order to provide this experience and open an opportunity for the integration of adults and youth in one learning environment required a strong and well developed partnership between business, workforce development agencies and education (K-12; post-secondary; and Adult Basic Education). The ultimate 'winners' of the youth/adult learning platform includes the students, business, and ultimately the entire community. One of the unexpected outcomes was the 'respect' and 'support' that developed between the generations and the ability of each to challenge the other toward the ultimate goal of successful completion of the training and employment. The ability of the partnership to come together to design the learning platform provided opportunities to leverage resources resulting in a well-defined and sustainable design.