



# 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

**CITY  
OF  
WILLMAR**



City Attorney  
City Clerk-Treasurer  
Community Ed & Recreation  
**Cultural Liaison**  
Finance  
Fire  
Planning & Development Services  
Police  
Public Works



# Annual Report

*Calendar Year 2005*

## West Central Integration Collaborative



**INTERGRATING** *the* **COMMUNITIES** *of*  
Atwater, Cosmos, Grove City;  
New London, Spicer;  
Maynard, Clara City, Raymond;  
and Willmar

*Respecting our differences and  
celebrating our similarities*



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# Annual Report



*Calendar Year 2005*

To Those We Serve:

The West Central Integration Collaborative is a cooperation of school districts serving the communities of Willmar, Atwater, Cosmos, Grove City; New London-Spicer; and most recently Maynard, Clara City and Raymond, Minnesota. Our focus is to promote the development of multicultural and culturally competent school and community projects. We do this by promoting cultural integration in the education, health and business systems for the betterment of the community.

We are pleased to provide you with the 2005 Annual Report of the West Central Integration Collaborative. This report describes achievements of WCIC and its staff in carrying out the Collaborative mission. The report highlights the programs and projects of WCIC during Calendar Year 2005.

In 2004 and 2005, our programs grew and we positively impacted school districts and business development for minorities on a greater level. We worked with many organizations, Latino business start-ups and/or expansions throughout the Willmar area and coordinated networking events and activities such as with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Minnesota. Businesses both minority and mainstream were provided

assistance in a number of ways including business training, providing loan information through Kandiyohi County Economic Development, Latino Economic Development organization from the Twin Cities, and local lending institutions. Furthermore, WCIC assisted the Center for Cross Cultural Health with fundraising to carry out the "Changing Communities, Skills to Action Series", A Cultural Competency Leadership Development Program for Emerging and Existing Leaders. Partnered with the Minnesota/Willmar Design Team to encourage minority representation and be an inclusive community.

We also continue to help local businesses with workforce development by referring qualified minority clients.

With regards to our school districts, we continue to add programs and started planning with MACCRAY school district to join WCIC. Moreover, we share culturally competent programming by providing activities to our partner schools in the forms of cultural events, showcasing the Latin Dancers, Mix-It-Up Choir, Youth Community Circles, providing after school tutoring services, and Foreign Language Instruction in the Elementary Schools. In addition, we started the planning process for our Fifth Annual Celebration of Cultures (February 25, 2006). Also partnered with Ridgewater College and coordinated the first Ridgewater College Summer Camp for WCIC students.

Participated in the release of the State of Students of Color from Minnesota Minority Education Partnership in which the report described the continued achievement gap between Anglo and Minority students and suggestions to narrow the gap. This information is vital and was shared with our local school administration.

During the past year, WCIC hired additional staff to work both in the office and in our community as Cultural Liaisons and Bilingual Assistants in the four school districts and community at large. We translated data for the City of Willmar such as Building Permits, Sex Offender Notification Notices, Snow Removal, Vehicle Auction Notices, etc. These translation services are essential to be inclusive of all community members.

We started the planning and feasibility study for the Willmar Area Multicultural Market.

WCIC was also successful in receiving a grant for Healthy Youth Development from the Minnesota Department of Health, Office of Minority and Multicultural Health to work with minority youth in Kandiyohi County.

Finally, we closed the fiscal year, by winning the "All American City Award" in Atlanta, Georgia in June 2005.

We expect continued growth and success in 2006. We are building our internal capacity in order to support organizational growth and our ability to continue providing high quality services! We improved the look and functionality of WCIC's website, [www.wciconline.com](http://www.wciconline.com). If you wonder how your interest or needs might be met by engaging with us, we invite you to give us a call. We promise to listen, share resources, and as always, encourage new ideas that support our mission. To our supporters, and community partners, we thank you and look forward to your continued participation throughout 2006 and beyond!

Sincerely,

Idalia "Charly" Leuze  
Director



# The Mission

of this organization is: To enhance the quality of life for all community residents by developing multicultural competent school and community projects that promote inclusiveness, healthy youth development, and economic growth.

## Advisory Committee

*Pam Kyllingstad*  
Superintendent ACGC Public School

*Paul Carlson*  
Superintendent NL-S Public School

*Gary Spawn*  
Superintendent MACCRAY Public School

*Kathy Leedom*  
Superintendent Willmar Public School

*Michael Schmit*  
Willmar City Administrator

*Ann Stehn*  
Kandiyohi County Public Health

*Kate Selseth*  
Area Agency on Aging Representative

*Antonio Tejada*  
Latino Representative

*Hibo Ashour*  
Somali Representative

*Michael Olson*  
Native American Representative

*Desirae Housman*  
ACGC Student

*Natasha & Tara Lee*  
NL-S Students

*Juana Salazar*  
Willmar Student

## West Central Integration Collaborative Staff

*Idalia Leuze* Executive Director

*Leslie Kelly* Office Manager/Project Coordinator

*Lourdez Schwab* WAMM Coordinator

### FLES - Foreign Language in the Elementary School

*Jana Hilleren-Garcia* FLES Coordinator

*Rhonda Woltjer-Holien* ACGC

*Erika Obregon* NL-S

*Jill Lara* MACCRAY

*Katie Fernandez* Willmar

### New Comer's Program

*Donna Cairns* Kennedy Elem. School Willmar

*Barb Leritz* Roosevelt Middle School Willmar

*Catherine Nilles* Jr. High School Willmar

*Judy Thoreson* Sr. High School Willmar

### Retention Coordinators

*Shane Hagstrom* ACGC High School

*Brenda Dylla* NL-S High School

*Denise Smith* MACCRAY

*Maria Diaz* Willmar Senior High School

### Cultural Liaison

*Peter Turpin* *Jesus Pena*

*Hibo Ashour*

### Bilingual Paraprofessionals

*Brenda Kircker* *Jennifer Saulsbury*

*Jeanette Morales* *Teresa Sieu*


*Khadija Osman* *Maleele Osman*

*Tracy Texley* *Jennifer Gogoi*

*Umi Mohamed*



# 2004 -2005 Cultural Awareness Efforts

<p><b>Goal #1: Retention</b> Provides opportunities that allow families to receive services that are culturally competent, integrated, comprehensive, and student focused. Enhance relationships between the student's school / families and community. Provide opportunities for school personal to receive cultural competency training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMART CLUB– after School Tutoring</li> <li>• Summer Enrichment Camp - Students explore college educational opportunities</li> <li>• Youth Circles - Cross Cultural Dialogue</li> <li>• Latin Dancer - Culturally competent activity for Latino students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal #2: Outreach</b> Will provide a inclusive and respectful environment to attract and retain diverse student and families. Staff provides behavioral/ social/ emotional/ economic support for students and families to enhance academics success and family stability by referring to Early Childhood program, social services agencies, workforce center programs, Adult Basic education, and to the GED on TV in English and Spanish Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prairie Woods Environmental Learning center-</li> <li>• Soccer Program</li> <li>• Kandiyohi County Mentoring Program</li> <li>• Youthworks Program</li> <li>• DEMO, Inc</li> <li>• Arts Interactive-</li> <li>• C.A.T-Cultural Awareness Theater</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal #3: Language and Cultural Barriers</b> Promote communication and understanding by providing Language assistance in integrated learning environments. WCIC will provide clear and concise communications and cultural understanding with multicultural resources, materials, and instructional support that help to create more Appropriate multicultural perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FLES-             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Spanish/ English Language Culture Camp</li> <li>* Mix-it-up Multicultural Choir</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Newcomers program             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Newcomers Summer Camp</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Multicultural Resource Office</li> <li>• Learning and Parenting Program-</li> <li>• Kinder Readiness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal #4: Create and Expand Community Cultural Awareness</b> Expand community cultural awareness so everyone has respect for one another. Educate staff, family, and community members to recognize positive cultural differences in integrated learning environments.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebration of Cultures</li> <li>• Staff Development             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Youthwork matters workshop series</li> <li>* Willmar Public Schools</li> <li>* Will "U" Classes</li> </ul> </li> <li><u>Community Partnership</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East African Coalition of Kandiyohi</li> <li>• Ridgewater College                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Native American Awareness Gathering</li> <li>*Summer Enrichment Camp</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Vision 2020</li> <li>• Kandiyohi County Economic Development commission</li> <li>• Minnesota Department of Health</li> <li>• University of Minnesota</li> <li>• Center for Cross Cultural Health                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Regional Cultural Diversity Coalition</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Jennie-O-Turkey Store</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**PROFILES OF INTERDISTRICT TRANSFER &  
VOLUNTARY INTEGRATION PROGRAMS  
IN THE UNITED STATES**

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Fall 2005

*Prepared for West Metro Education Program  
by Gayle Zoffer and Elisabeth Palmer, ASPEN Associates*

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<b>West Central Integration Collaborative (WCIC)</b>
<b>Contact Information</b> Idalia "Charly" Leuze, Director Willmar, MN 56201 320-231-8546 Idalia.leuze@swsc.org <a href="http://www.wciconline.com">http://www.wciconline.com</a>
<b>Date Initiated</b> January 2001
<b>History</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ In 1999, the Minnesota Legislature passed a desegregation rule (Minnesota Rule 3535, Adopted Permanent Rules Relating to Desegregation) that provides financial incentives and requires schools and communities to work together to: 1) reduce racial isolation of schools through voluntary and effective local strategies and 2) create educationally sound inclusive learning environments. A "racially isolated" school district is defined in the law as "a district where the district-wide enrollment of protected students exceeds the enrollment of protected students of an adjoining district by more than 20 percentage points." School districts that border on racially isolated districts must develop voluntary plans to enhance student, staff, and community cooperation to reduce racial isolation and create multicultural, diverse, and racially integrated learning environments that parents can choose for their children.</li><li>▪ The West Central Integration Collaborative (WCIC) is a multicultural, multidisciplinary collaborative that works within the spheres of education, health, and business. WCIC promotes the development of multicultural and culturally sensitive school and community projects and the promotion of cultural integration in the education, health, and business systems.</li></ul>
<b>Organization Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A 17-member advisory council governs WCIC and its four goal area workgroups (20-30 community members, school staff, youth, etc.). Members of the advisory council include four superintendents, six student representatives, one Latino representative, one East African representative, one Native American representative, one city administrator, one county public health official, one aging representative, and one representative of a large employer of diverse populations. The advisory council, along with workgroup members, provides programmatic oversight. The superintendents, the collaborative director, and participating school boards oversee financial decisions and approval of desegregation plan.</li></ul>
<b>Participating Districts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The West Central Integration Collaborative involves the school districts of Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City; Maynard-Clara City-Raymond; New London-Spicer, and Willmar. In 2004-2005, the four districts had a total enrollment of 8,460 students.</li></ul>

### **Funding**

- School districts in Minnesota are eligible for integration revenue, based on the district's adjusted pupil units, funded through a combination of state aid and local levy. Districts must submit a budget and plan to the state for integration expenditures. In Minneapolis, the rate is \$445 plus an additional \$35 per adjusted pupil unit levy; in St. Paul, the rate is \$445; in Duluth, the rate is \$206. Districts that are contiguous to an isolated district and have more than 15% protected student enrollment are eligible for up to \$129 per adjusted pupil unit; other districts are eligible for \$92 per adjusted pupil unit. Integration revenue follows students who attend schools in other districts if they are eligible for free or reduced price school meals. Over the past several school years, the integration revenue statute has generated \$75-78 million annually for district voluntary integration efforts.
- Each participating district allocates the maximum allowable amount generated by the state integration revenue formula to fund operation of the West Central Integration Collaborative. Willmar is the racially isolated district.

### **Programming**

#### **Year-Round Efforts**

*Celebration of Cultures.* The Celebration of Cultures takes place every other year at Kennedy School in Willmar, drawing more than 3,000 community members. Representatives from the cultural groups who have set up the displays make presentations to school children and community groups who wish to visit the cultural event.

*Smart Club (Study More to Achieve Results Tomorrow).* The West Central Integration Collaborative has school success coordinators that serve young people experiencing barriers to school success. Students in junior high and senior high who have academic needs meet after school three times per week and are also enrolled in summer programs to access tutoring services. All students have access to computers, printers, or any other technology items necessary to get homework or school projects done. Because transportation is provided to students three times a week, the program has been a success and we have had a higher graduation and passing scores per school year. The Willmar program alone serves between 50 and 70 students a week. In addition, some of the Collaborative's member school districts use peer-to-peer tutoring across culture, gender, and age groups during the school day.

*Latin Dancers.* This youth dance group includes students from all four school districts who want to keep their cultural traditions or learn a new way of dancing (30 to 50 dancers) and perform at community events. The dance group consists of mostly young Latino and Anglo students. For students who were not involved in after school or community events, this dance group offers that cultural opportunity to participate. Transportation is provided and is crucial for student participation.

*Soccer.* WCIC co-sponsors the soccer program with the Willmar Soccer Association to reduce duplication of services and provide an integrated co-curricular learning opportunity. The soccer program has grown from serving 40 students to more than 150 students of varied ethnic backgrounds each year.

Year-Round Efforts (continued)

*Youth Leadership.* All four school districts work together through their Community Education/Youth Services Departments to provide cultural awareness. Classes in Salsa, Merengue, and Cumbia dancing are offered along with Mexican cooking classes. Soon to follow will be Arabic language classes as well as East African cultural classes.

*Youthworks.* Students of diverse backgrounds gain instruction and experience in the construction field in an after-school work-experience program for youth from the four districts. Participating students are at a high risk of dropping out, and this program helps to keep them attending school and at the same time learn and acquire good-work-ethic skills. Students are also connected with mentors and adult role models to enhance student achievement. Public and not-for-profit agencies are used for the actual work experience (Habitat for Humanity; public schools; Parks and Recreation; YMCA, etc). Students receive school credit, an hourly wage, and the change to practice social skills.

School-Year Programming

*Elementary Spanish.* Elementary students in all of the four districts within the collaborative area receive Spanish-language instruction and multicultural education from licensed elementary teachers daily throughout the school year. In addition, children are taught early on about cultural understanding through classroom instruction, games, music, theater, food, field trips to local ethnic stores and markets, community experts that come into the classroom, etc. Spanish-language camps are held in the summer months at various school districts and were cited as one of the “best practices” in achieving cultural competency by the Center for Rural Policy and Development 2002-03.

*Mix-It-Up Multicultural Choir.* The Collaborative’s fourth-grade students participate in bilingual and multicultural singing sessions designed to promote self-esteem, team building, respect for diversity, and integration. This integrated activity allows all students to develop skills that will allow them to challenge cliques and racial segregation throughout their adolescence and adult years. The students participate in community events throughout the year.

*Theater Performances.* Throughout the school year, the Integration Collaborative pays for students in grades 3, 4, and 6 through 9 from the participating school districts to attend professional drama presentations that feature a cultural or integration theme, including programs such as Teatro del Pueblo’s “Manzi” about Cesar Chavez, Tou Ger Xiong on Hmong culture, Mixed Blood Theater’s production on Minnecanos (Mexicans who grew up in Minnesota), the Latino History Traveling Museum, etc.

*Youth Community Circles.* YCCs emerged from the League of Women Voters’ “Community Circles” concept. High school juniors meet monthly to discuss topics such as diversity, bullying, and racism and also volunteer their time on a community service project (e.g., fundraising for a food shelf or adopting a highway to clean). Group members also participate in a series of events, one each season, to celebrate cultural differences and to plan for the future of their communities.

*Youth Leadership.* High school students from all four districts are trained in facilitating initiative games and challenge activities at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. These students then train others through prearranged field trips for students of a specified age group held throughout the year with a mix of students from all districts. Youth leaders provide hands-on team-building experiences in a fun and safe environment. Students from all four districts also have a chance to “mix and mingle” on a social basis while building better understanding of cultural diversity.

**School-Year Programming (continued)**

*Youthworks.* Students of diverse backgrounds gain instruction and experience in the construction field in an after school work-experience program for youth from the four districts. Participating students are at a high risk of dropping out, and this program helps to keep them attending school and at the same time learn and acquire good work ethic skills. Students are also connected with mentors and adult role models to enhance student achievement. Public and not-for-profit agencies are used for the actual work experience (Habitat for Humanity; public schools; Parks and Recreation; YMCA, etc). Students receive school credit, an hourly wage, and the change to practice social skills.

**Summer Programming**

*Summer College Camp.* Co-sponsored with Ridgewater Community College, this program allows up to 200 students to enroll in a week-long experiential learning experience on the college campus. College faculty and community leaders teach courses to students entering grades 5 through 9. Students take part in classes including nursing, auto body, veterinary, law enforcement, social work, and forensic science.

*For the Health of It.* This program is offered during the summer months to students ages 10 to 17 who want to participate in healthy youth development. The program includes an education component, learning about preventive health as well as exposing minority youth to health services in the community.