

# Regional Office of Education Report

April 2022

## HLS/Compliance

We have completed our health life safety inspections of the 73 school buildings in Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties. All buildings inspected have passed inspection. There were some changes that the districts needed to make and most have completed those changes or have it on their 10 year health life safety plans. Regional Offices of Education are also entrusted with assessing compliance of local school districts and recognized non-public schools in the state of Illinois. This process consists of a systematic review of district documentation and recording compliance with state and federal laws and Illinois School Code. The resulting designation is reported on the state website and as part of the Illinois Report Card. The compliance process is seen as an opportunity to improve operations and support the programs that deliver quality educational experiences to students. We are in the process of working with 6 of our school districts right now on this process and hope to have it finished by the end of May. Each school has to go through the full compliance review process every 4 years.

## Professional Development

<b>Current Programs - Office of Professional Learning</b>
Induction & Mentoring
Community Partnership Grant
Education Pathway Endorsement
Manufacturing & Agriculture Endorsement Programs
Elevating Special Educators
School Improvement & Strategic Planning
School Improvement Cooperative (instructional coaching, training, networking)
Social Emotional Learning/Trauma/Youth Mental Health First Aid/TRS I-A
Early Childhood Professional Learning
Family Education & Engagement

The Office of Professional Learning continues to support as much training as possible in a digital distance format. School improvement meetings, teacher coaching, career pathway endorsement work, and transitional math & ELA work also continue on a virtual basis. We have

provided opportunities for teachers to network, collaborate, and connect through Zoom. Sessions have been well received by educators, who appreciate the support and opportunity to come together.

The Office of Professional Learning is busy preparing summer learning opportunities for educators, support staff, and administrators in Lee, Ogle & Whiteside counties. Each program has also engaged in strategic planning for FY23. The department anticipates adding at least 5 positions to the department to accommodate new programs and to address area needs.

On March 11th, the Professional Learning team received notice from ISBE that they have been awarded funding through their competitive community partnership application. The program will support districts with students, teachers, and family mental health needs in partnership with community stakeholders/agencies. Funding for this initiative will run through September 2024. A Year 1 scope of work is articulated below:

## ROE 47 Community Partnership Grant

<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the program is to address gaps in opportunity and the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on interrupted learning by developing or expanding relationships between schools, community-based organizations, and mental health providers to benefit the well-being of children, parents, and school staff.
<b>Goals</b>	<p>The program will support local efforts to develop comprehensive school systems grounded in mental health and trauma-informed practices by achieving the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide communities the <b>flexibility</b> to determine the best approach to respond to the local mental health needs.</li> <li>● Allow funds to be used for a range of responses, from prevention to <b>early intervention to treatment</b>.</li> <li>● Support local efforts to <b>integrate programs</b> focused on non-cognitive development (social, emotional, and behavioral) and mental wellness for children.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Objectives</b>	<p>OBJECTIVE 1: In collaboration with community partners, provide integrated wellness supports that address student and family needs and eliminate barriers to access.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 2: Provide additional opportunities for students to grow academically, socially and emotionally.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 3: Engage families and community partners to make schools a neighborhood hub for learning and resources.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 4: Build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibilities amongst all partners.</p>

<b>Year One</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish regional partnership committee</li> <li>2. Administer family, school, and community needs assessment</li> </ol>

3. Identify evidence based Social Emotional Screener
4. Train at least one staff member in every school building in high priority interventions
5. Build comprehensive set of resources for all stakeholders to be published at [www.roe47.org](http://www.roe47.org)
6. Sponsor annual Social Emotional Learning Summit with community partners
7. Develop a comprehensive professional learning calendar for FY23.
8. Complete TRS-IA
9. Expand regional summer programming to address student mental health needs
10. Plan district and regional family education & engagement events for FY23
11. Implement quick wins for engagement and wellness
12. Develop resources for families and caregivers to be healers for their children, as well as working on their own healing
13. Expand implementation of IRIS referral platform
14. Define and evaluate community partnerships and existing partnership structures
15. Provide SEL coaches to work with school districts to develop a plan for social emotional learning and trauma informed systems
16. Provide a coordinated intake specialist to build community relationships and expand referral networks
17. Link districts to partner services
18. Identify regional data that would be helpful in monitoring social emotional and mental health of communities

**Upcoming April Events:**

**4th Annual**  
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING SUMMIT

*SOARING BALLOONS & HEAVY SHACKLES*  
Helping the Most Challenged Kids Soar



Created & Presented by Heidi LaFleur

**APRIL 8, 2022**  
**8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**  
SAUK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



**HEIDY LAFLEUR**  
Author, Teacher, Administrator  
Founder of Heidi with a WHY

**Register Today:**  
**roe47.org**  
PL Workshops

**PLAY-BASED LEARNING**  
**THE WHAT, WHY & HOW**



**EARLY CHILDHOOD SUMMIT**

- Julie Kallenbach, Ed.D
- April 25, 2022
- 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.
- Sauk Valley College
- Pre-k thru 2nd grade educators



**REGISTER AT ROE47.ORG**

The First Annual **Educator Symposium** will be held at Sauk Valley College on April 29th from

8:30 to 1:30 p.m. Dr. Carmen Ayala (ISBE State Superintendent of Schools) will serve as keynote and will interact with students and educators throughout the day. Key activities include:

- Mock interviews
- Keynote Address
- Photo Booths
- Junior and Senior students will participate in mock interviews with local administrators.
- Team Based Challenge Showcase: Pathways students will be given a trifold poster board to display their team based challenge work, process and results.
- A celebration of seniors from each school that have earned the education pathway endorsement this school year.

Family Educators in the department maintain close contact with their at-risk preschool families in Rock Falls & Amboy. Family Educators have identified and communicated community resources during this uncertain time.

The department's social media presence continues to grow. Like our page on Facebook (Regional Office of Education #47) and download our ROE47 App for weekly teacher talks, instructional tips, news, giveaways, updates & more! Follow us on Twitter @RegionalOffice47

## **March Participants – 75**

### Monday, March 7

New Teacher Cadre @ 3:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, March 8

Early Childhood Expansion Community Based Planning @ 9:00 a.m.

Ed Pathways Cohort 1 & 2 @ 3:15 p.m.

Wait, that EdTech tool updated and does what now? @ 3:30 p.m.

### Thursday, March 10

Special Educators Community Cohort @ 3:30 p.m.

Dare to Lead. Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts (Book Study) @ 3:30 p.m.

### Friday, March 11

Priority Learning Standards @ SVCC

*Regional Center for Change*



We have wrapped up the month of March at C4C and our students and staff are on a much deserved Spring Break! Students and staff return April 4th for the home stretch. With only 8 weeks left of school this year students are working hard to earn high school and middle school credit. So far this school year students have completed 550 classes for either middle or high school credit! Wow, amazing!

Welcome New Hires! We are so excited to welcome them to the Team! Phoenix Strong!!!

Ashley Meyers is our new Administrative Assistant starting on April 4th! Ms. Meyers comes to C4C with a wealth of knowledge and experience working with at-risk kids! Welcome to the team, Ashley. You can reach her at [ameyers@roe47.org](mailto:ameyers@roe47.org)

Mandy Johnson is our new RSSP Paraprofessional starting approximately on May 2nd! Ms. Johnson has worked as a paraprofessional for the last 3 years with both middle and high school students! Welcome to the team, Mandy. You can reach her at [mjohnson@roe47.org](mailto:mjohnson@roe47.org)

Enrollment is up at C4C and we now have 70 students in our Options and Safe School classrooms. School districts continue to refer students to our two programs. We have seen an increase in referrals to our safe school program over the past few weeks.

Now more than ever we see the importance of our shared mission - dedicated to student achievement in school and life; inspiring hope for a future, self confidence now and resilience forever!

## Nexus

This month we are working on planning for the next school year. We are pleased to say we will be expanding in staff and school districts for next year! We will be hiring a full-time Nexus staff member. The job will be posted this month. In addition, we will be adding Riverbend school District, Rochelle Elementary school District, Steward School District, and Meridian School District for the next school year. Our breakdown for school districts that have signed up for next year is:

- **Whiteside:** Riverbend, Erie, PLT, Morrison, Montmorency, Rock Falls Elementary, East Coloma, Bi-County, C4C
- **Lee:** AFC, Amboy, Paw Paw
- **Ogle:** Oregon, Byron, Meridian, Rochelle Elementary, Polo, Steward

Lee County Parent Testimonial:

“This program that has been put together has been an absolute blessing to me. Michelle came to me during the worst year of my life. I have been overwhelmed and depressed after losing my dad (who was my best friend and only 68). The first time we met, she brought a goodie bag for

my toddler niece. I have foster custody of her and was trying to find a pre-school because the foster care system requires it. Michelle stepped in and found a home-based program until we got her in somewhere. Thanksgiving and Christmas came and there she was to help us. She checks in and actually asks ME if I'm okay instead of only how the kids are doing. I think this program is an incredible asset to families that need someone to help them navigate and simplify life for a bit. Thank you for it and thank you for finding Michelle for us." Lee County Parent

### **Parents as Teachers First Years/ Early Childhood News**

As COVID numbers decrease and more and more families are feeling more comfortable letting us back into our homes, the referrals for our services keep coming into our program. Although we are almost at capacity, each referral represents a family experiencing multiple stressors who could certainly use extra support as they navigate parenting their very young children. Stressors faced by our families include but are not limited to:

- Children/families with DCFS involvement
- Children who are in foster care
- Children diagnosed with a disability
- Families with housing instability
- Families involved with the correctional system or children who have a parent who is incarcerated
- Families experiencing intimate partner violence
- Families experiencing poverty (less than 200% FPL) or very deep poverty (less than 100% FPL)
- Parents with less than a high school diploma equivalent
- Parents diagnosed with a disability
- Parents with a mental health issue
- Parents with a substance abuse disorder
- Babies born with very low birthweight (under 3.5 lbs)
- Children of teen parents
- Children in families that face barriers based on culture, language, and religion
- Families who face barriers due to immigration status
- Children with a relative who is their primary caregiver

As we analyze the demographic data from our participants, our families are averaging 3.5 of these stressors per family this year.

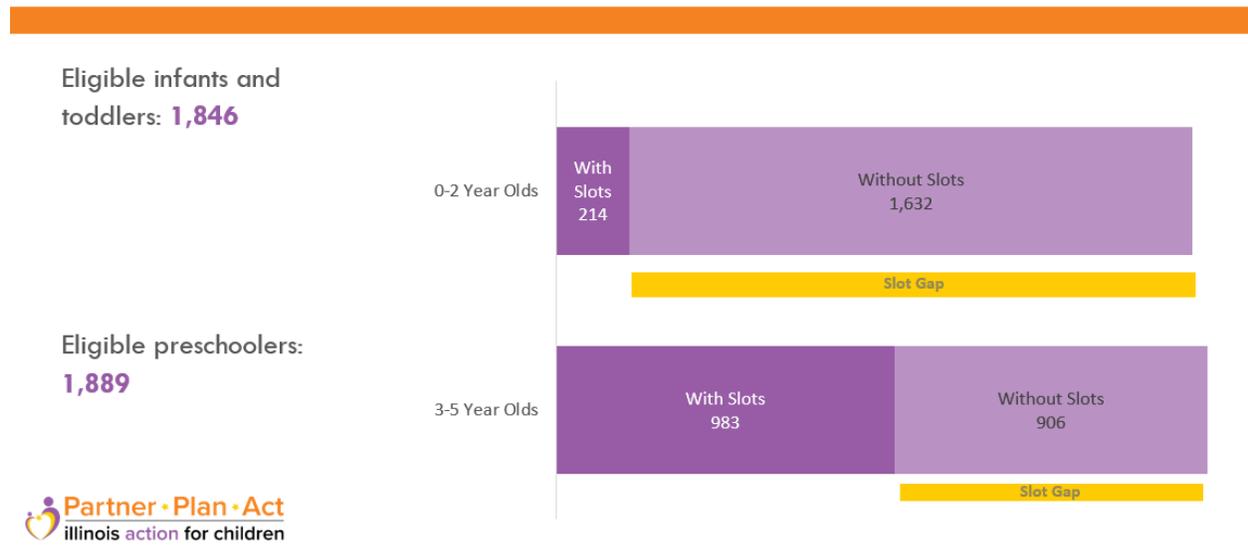
An indicator of the level of poverty experienced by the majority of our families is demonstrated by the cash and non-cash public benefits they receive, including: Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, energy assistance, housing assistance, SS disability, and child care assistance.

We also have 10 families enrolled who speak Spanish as their first language and one family who speaks Portuguese as their first language. One of our home visitors is a native Spanish-speaker so she is able to provide support to the Spanish-speaking families in their first language. Almost all of our written materials are also available in Spanish. She talks with the family who speaks Portuguese using a combination of Spanish and English with written materials provided in Portuguese as they are available.

***In other Early Childhood news...***

We are ready to add a Coordinated Intake worker to our office. The worker will support IRIS work – recruitment and enrollment of programs, managing data, training requests, etc. She will also be responsible for monitoring enrollment in the home visiting programs that serve our three counties and working to direct potentially eligible families to the home visiting program of their choice. This position begins to address the identified “slot gap” issue that we know is a problem in our area. As illustrated in the graphic below, we are only serving 13% of eligible infants and toddlers in home visiting programs.

## Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties Publicly Funded Early Child Care and Education Slot Gap



The Early Childhood Expansion work is also addressing these slot gaps. We have begun work on our final plan that will be submitted to Illinois Action for Children, working in partnership with

the Governor's Office of Early Childhood. We've met with all the school districts and have scheduled meetings for child care providers and businesses that may be interested in exploring how to provide child care for their employees.

### **Education Outreach Program**

The Education Outreach Program provides academic services to individuals aged 17-24 in Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside County to help them to earn their High School Equivalency Certificate (GED). In addition to the academic focus of the program, our students are provided opportunities for employment skills training, job shadowing, and paid work experience jobs to help prepare them for employment upon completion of the program.

We want to congratulate our March graduates - Anthony and Damon!

Anthony earned his HSE certificate and we are working in conjunction with BEST, Inc. to provide job shadowing opportunities for him to explore the field of veterinary medicine.

Damon earned his HSE certificate and we are working with BEST, Inc. to provide job shadowing opportunities for him as well. Damon is interested in the field of culinary arts.

We are proud of these students and are looking forward to seeing them start on the path to begin their careers.

### **McKinney Vento Homeless Education**

Our ISBE McKinney Vento Grants have opened for the next fiscal year. Work is being done to best allocate the financial resources to benefit the most students in our area. Collaborative work with community agencies is on the rise. This allows for the resources to be used in the most effective means for all. In March we had our State McKinney Vento Homeless Education Conference. Energy was directed at reinforcing the work of the district persons as well as the local Homeless Liaisons. Spring Breaks for our McKinney Vento students is not always a positive experience. This takes away their consistent meals and support. Referrals increase to try and best cover those time periods. Identification by local district personnel is vital more than ever before.

### **Truant Alternative Program**

Our program recently shared some statistics, as reported to ISBE, reviewing the growing need for truancy interventions and prevention services over the past five years after our program executed a major overhaul in the way we provide services. In 2018, we serviced 50 'chronic truants' ( 5% or more of unexcused absences during the last 180 days) out of 490 students. By 2021, we serviced 413 chronic truants out of 702 students. In addition in 2021, we had over 55

students in which we provided services but were unable to be included as 'active' due to State requirements and a lack of availability/time for our staff to complete a comprehensive service plan before the end of the school year. This year, we currently have 285 chronic truants out of 684 students. Our deadline to accept new referrals will be the end of March as caseloads are beyond full capacity. We are in the planning stages to create a pilot program to move our referral system into IRIS by the end of this year with the goal to have it solely based through IRIS for the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. This will allow community based tracking visibility for Truancy services, a direct location for all referrals to be processed, and provide information for districts as to when our program will be full.

One success story I'd like to share is with a student who is a personal favorite of mine. I have been working with this student for a few years, on and off. Her dad was one of my first truancy students when I started working at the ROE 16 years ago. She has shared her story of her great grandmother, her grandmother, and her mom having a history of being incarcerated. She has shared her story of multiple family member's involvement with drugs. She has shared her story of being homeless. She has shared her story of having the responsibility, at 14, to take care of her elderly grandparents. She has shared her story of being one of six people living in a two bedroom trailer. She shares these stories as if it was 'a matter of fact' and a normal part of life. This student is incredibly intelligent, kind, and caring. She has the potential to do great things if her environment doesn't step in her path. Our conversations consistently revolve around college and her goals beyond high school. She finally agreed to counseling this year. The counselor called recently and thanked me for sending her to them. They also see the capability and possibility for her. She asked the counselor if Truancy could carry her through high school because our services have been so supportive for her. She will be my exception to carryover - regardless of her attendance success - because I believe in her potential, and I think she is recognizing it as well. We will continue to advocate for not only this student, but for all the students we assist.