

Regional Office of Education Report

March 2022

Regional Spelling Bee

The Regional Office of Education hosted the annual Spelling Bee on Thursday 2-24-22 in the James A. Wiltz Auditorium at Dixon High School. The talented field consisted of 31 champions from different elementary and middle schools in our three counties. There were some very tough words this year and it only took 11 rounds to determine that Merit Namaste Rose would be our champion! Merit is an eighth-grade student at David L. Rahn Junior High in Mount Morris and she will be headed to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Maryland to represent our area. The Nationals start the week right after Memorial Day with the finals on June 2nd. Big thanks to First National Bank in Amboy and Sauk Valley Media who co-sponsor the event with our office and pay for Merit's trip to the Nationals.

Professional Development

Current Programs - Office of Professional Learning
Induction & Mentoring
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.

On February 21, 2022, the Education Pathways program team presented the annual College & Career Readiness Summit on zoom. This year's focus was "Challenging our Default: Pushing the Reset on Education" Stephanie Malia Krauss served as the keynote for the event. Krauss described what students need to succeed in life and how our school districts can step up to meet these new challenges. Representatives from Ridgewood High School, ISBE, ICCB, Wahl Clipper, and Ed Systems Center served on a panel and challenged the long-accepted norms of what it means for a student to be prepared for college & career.

As we move to an endemic phase of the pandemic and mask mandates lift, the office is beginning to transition to more face to face learning opportunities, including the annual Social Emotional Learning Summit, early childhood summit, priority learning standards training, and the new Education Pathway Symposium.

<p style="text-align: center;">4th Annual</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING SUMMIT</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><i>SOARING BALLOONS & HEAVY SHACKLES</i> Helping the Most Challenged Kids Soar</p>  <p>Created & Presented by Heidi LaFleur</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">APRIL 8, 2022 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SAUK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>HEIDY LAFLEUR Author, Teacher, Administrator Founder of Heidi with a WHY</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #00AEEF; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 20px; text-align: center;"> <p>Register Today: roe47.org PL Workshops</p> </div> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">PLAY-BASED LEARNING THE WHAT, WHY & HOW</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">EARLY CHILDHOOD SUMMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Julie Kallenbach, Ed.D -April 25, 2022 -8:30 - 11:30 a.m. -Sauk Valley College -Pre-k thru 2nd grade educators <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: purple; color: white; padding: 5px;">REGISTER AT ROE47.ORG</p>
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The First Annual **Educator Symposium** will be held at Sauk Valley College on April 29th from 8:30 to 1:30 p.m. 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.

The department continues to wait to hear about their \$250,000 Community Partnership Program Grant application to support districts with students, teachers, and family mental health needs in partnership with community stakeholders/agencies.

Planning for summer learning is underway.

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. They are also working to develop family engagement opportunities for families and young children using platforms such as Facebook and zoom.

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

February Participants – 241

Wednesday, February 2

Literacy Essentials for Administrators @ 9 a.m.

School Counselors & Social Workers Networking Session @ 1:00 p.m.

Monday, February 7

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

New Teacher Cadre @ 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 8

Leading Data Based Conversation to Benefit ALL Students @ 9:00 a.m.

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

Media Literacy: Helping Students Make Sense of their Digital World @ 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 9

Literacy Essentials for Administrators @ 9 a.m.

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

Thursday, February 10

Understanding Ourselves to Help Guide Our Students @ 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 15

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

Wednesday, February 16

Deanery School Improvement Networking Session @ Newman

Illustrative Math Networking Session @ 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 17

Administrator Networking Session @ 9:00 a.m.

Curriculum Directors & Instructional Coaches Networking Session @ 11:00 a.m.

Monday, February 21

College & Career Readiness Summit @ 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, February 23

Literacy Essentials for Administrators @ 9 a.m.

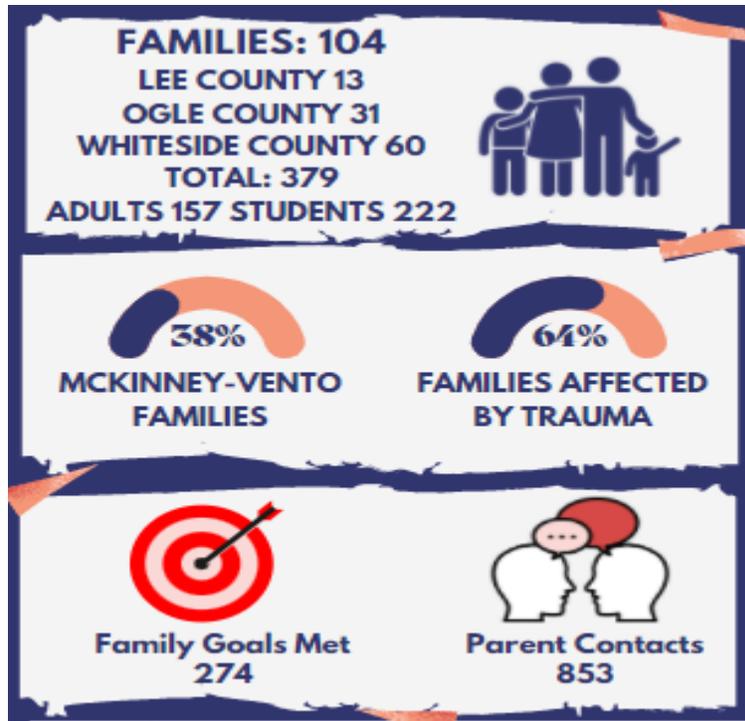
Thursday, February 24

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

Regional Center for Change

We have wrapped up another great month at C4C and we are in the final weeks of our 3rd quarter which ends March 15th. Not only are students at C4C achieving academic excellence they are also given the opportunity to flourish in other ways. A special shout out to Elijah Z. our January student of the month from Ms. Brushaber's class. We had 5 classrooms share in winning the Door Decorating Contest for the month of February. Our theme for February was an emphasis on black history and showing love for your school and community. A special shout out to Mr. Knuth for coming and judging the doors. Students did an amazing job; both in decorating and in educating on black history. We were able to recognize three high school graduates in the month of February. Jaidah O. and Noah A. were able to graduate early. We are so proud of them, way to go! 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



Ogle County Parent Testimonial:

I cannot thank the ROE enough for what they have done for my daughter and our family. My daughter experienced a life-changing event that affected her mentally and physically. As close as she and I are, we needed additional professional help on how to go forward. The timing of the email from her school offering this service could not have been more perfect. My daughter was concerned since we are from a small town. I called the number provided, and it started the ball rolling. My daughter was able to just text, which was her comfort zone. As she became comfortable, she had a phone number to someone if/when she wanted to talk. My daughter was given additional resources that have helped her so much over the months. These resources could help my daughter in a way I could not. No one at school is aware of the situation; everything is kept confidential. We are forever thankful we reached out. My daughter has rebounded and has the tools to help her in the future. ❤️

Parents as Teachers First Years/ Early Childhood News

Our enrollment has really picked up in the last few months. We are on track to be fully enrolled very soon. Currently we have 60 parents from 51 families with 65 children 0-3 and 3 prenatales. As we look at data, we have 9 children who are identified as homeless and 10 children who are part of the foster care system. That's almost 30% of our babies who are dealing with extremely traumatic events in their lives!

In other Early Childhood news...

IRIS and the Early Childhood Expansion work are moving forward. We hit 300 referrals in IRIS on Feb 25th and are adding new referral partners every week. We are almost at 50 partnering programs already! A big part of the early childhood expansion work is bringing in community partners and educating the community about the early childhood work that is happening.

The following is a guest editorial we were asked to write for the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce's upcoming newsletter:

Sauk Valley STARS Early Childhood Education Coalition

Support To Achieve Readiness for School

Vision: *Every child and family reaches their full potential.*

Mission: *To plan, provide, and promote a comprehensive and collaborative system that identifies, coordinates, and facilitates equitable access to early education and community services designed to help all children, prenatal through age five, and their families reach their full potential.*

The Sauk Valley STARS Early Childhood Education Collaboration began in 2004 in Whiteside County as a collaboration between the Regional Office of Education and Whiteside County School Districts. Since then, the coalition has expanded to include early childhood service providers in Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties. Membership now includes a variety of public and private preschool providers, home visiting programs, child care providers, health care services, early intervention and special education providers, social service programs and community organizations who support Early Childhood Care and Education initiatives.

Priorities and activities are driven by the membership, and are identified through discussion and review of current data and community needs. Regular activities address newly-identified gaps in service, foster collaboration between programs, share resources, and address ongoing concerns regarding the access to and availability of county-wide early childhood programming. The overarching goal of the coalition is to collaborate in providing services and support for an efficient and effective use of grant funds in order to meet the needs of the children and families and reduce the duplication of services.

Over the last year and a half, the Coalition has embarked on several ambitious projects. The three home visiting programs in the Coalition, Parents as Teachers First Years (ROE #47), Early Head Start (Tri-County Opportunities Council), and Healthy Families Illinois (Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.) partnered to bring IRIS to the region. IRIS is a centralized Integrated Referral and Intake System that *can help eliminate many of the barriers that prevent families from engaging with services that are available to them. The organizations who partner together in IRIS can*

benefit from the increased ease of identifying clients who are interested and eligible for their services. There are now over 50 partnering agencies and programs using the IRIS network with more than 250 referrals in less than 6 months of use. 97% of referrals have been accepted by the receiving agency and 59% of referred clients have enrolled in services.

In the Fall of 2021, the Coalition, led by the Regional Office of Education, launched a Community-Based Planning for Expansion Project. This work has brought together a planning group with diverse community stakeholders to complete a community needs assessment and to develop a community plan for expanding early childhood care and education (ECCE) services that will address the identified gaps in the availability and quality of, and equitable access to ECCE services throughout the ROE's service region. To date, the project participants have explored the following:

- Data and asset mapping of the Sauk Valley region
- Inclusion of family and community voice in ECCE planning
- ECCE program models, blending and braiding funding streams
- Building a qualified ECCE workforce

Plans are in place to address the following issues in upcoming sessions:

- Parent perception of ECCE programs
- Strengthening collaborations between ECCE providers
- Addressing the lack of ECCE facilities
- Building community/ECCE partnerships
- Finalizing a regional plan for expanding ECCE services

Other recent activities of the Coalition include:

- Redesigned marketing strategy and developed an inclusive brochure to promote choice of home visiting programs
- Redesigned the Coalition's webpage
- Renewed Memorandum of Understanding documents
- Updated Early Childhood Provider Resource Directories and distributed them throughout the service area
- Reviewed and updated marketing materials for the Coalition and Early Childhood Education
- Provided shared professional learning opportunities directed at home visiting staff
- Supported the ROE's family educator professional learning group
- Submitted and received a Request for Support for a PDG B-5 Pilot for IRIS for Coordinated Intake for Home Visiting.
- Developed a Memorandum of Agreement and Community Standards for IRIS
- Launched the Sauk Valley STARS IRIS Community on August 16, 2021
- Supported the ROE's Request for Support for a Community-Based Planning for Expansion Project and are participating in this venture
- Updated the by-laws for the Coalition
- Developed a Logic Model and Theory of Change for the Coalition

- Provided support for and/or participation in other community-based initiatives and/or projects that impact early childhood throughout the service area in the form of representation or consultation/expertise

If you are interested in learning more about or becoming involved with the STARS Coalition, IRIS, or the Planning for Expansion project, please call Lois or Diana at the ROE at 815/625-1495.

Education Outreach Program

The Education Outreach Program is continuing to accept new students for this program year. GED classes are held at the Wallace Educational Center in Sterling and at the Rock River Center in Oregon.

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. Additional services include transportation, financial assistance with GED testing fees, and stipends for completing GED exams.

We want to congratulate our February graduates - Dontae and Mason!

Dontae earned his HSE certificate and is employed as an account manager in a service industry.

Mason earned his HSE certificate and is considering a career in the building and construction trades.

McKinney Vento Homeless Education

Attention has been directed at training in the district's for their various staff. All persons working in the district need to be aware of the definition of a McKinney Vento Homeless Student and the services the district is to provide to offer them the best possible success with their education. We have had to work with various hotels for emergency housing, pest control agencies, and a wide array of community providers. It is never too early to start working toward safe Summer housing options. The summer months result in a loss of stability that the district's provide for many of our families.

Truant Alternative Program

As of the end of February 2022, the Truant Alternative Program has actively worked with 622 students and our numbers continue to increase. February and March tend to be our busiest time with students reaching minimum program eligibility. On average, we are receiving 10-13 new

referrals per week. Caseloads are ranging from 75 - 170 students per staff member. With the development of IRIS, a centralized and coordinated referral system, our At-Risk Team has made 80+ outgoing referrals (out of 306 referrals since September) to participating IRIS community resources, along with ongoing referrals to additional organizations to address the needs of our students and families, with an emphasis on social and emotional services. Truancy has consistently been shown to be a secondary factor of other issues within the family, school, and/or environment. One success story we would like to share comes from an extremely caring team member during this school year:

"I've worked with a high school student for several years who was caring for his ill grandmother throughout the night and, often, also caring for his own mother who had addiction issues. He missed a lot of school and was often tired and stressed. He had a lot of responsibilities for a young man. Throughout the years, I linked the family to services such as: hospice and lifescape services for the grandmother, Tri-county for utility and rent assistance, and multiple crisis intervention assistance when the family reached out to me. I helped ensure that the student received McKinney-Vento services in the school district when mom entered a rehab facility. The student was then provided with gas cards to assist with transportation needs while his mom was in treatment.

Every time I spoke to the student, he was adamant about graduating to fulfill his dream of being in the Army. I did some research and found a residential program called Lincoln's Challenge Academy through the Department of Military Affairs that offered credit recovery, life skills training, community service engagement, job skills training, and a mentor to be assigned to each cadet through their 5 month stay. The student was extremely excited about the program when I shared it, but his role at home kept stopping him from enrolling. Sadly, his grandmother passed away in January, but that gave the student the independence he needed to enroll in the Academy the same month. I am so proud of the progress he has made with his education and the hard work he is putting towards his dream of joining the military one day."

Our team will also be attending the ICEARY Conference which provides professional development opportunities in March.