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**BOONE-WINNEBAGO
REGIONAL OFFICE
OF EDUCATION #4**

**ANNUAL REPORT
FY23**



SCOTT BLOOMQUIST
REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

ALLISON PIERSON
ASSISTANT REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

300 HEART BOULEVARD | LOVES PARK, IL 61111

SUPERINTENDENT'S FY23 MESSAGE

Looking at the opening days of FY23, we at Boone-Winnebago Regional Office of Education 4 were confident we had put in the work and appropriately planned for the new fiscal year. The confidence came from knowing we had experienced staff in place, our Social Emotional Learning Hub was well-trained and eager to guide schools in our region, and the heartache of Covid was well behind us as we glanced in our rearview mirror. We vowed that we *could not* and *would not* settle for our regional partner schools ever describing ROE 4's support as "almost" hitting the mark.

In order to assure our districts (and ourselves) that FY23 would be successful, we offered courses and network meetings for teachers and administrators in dual format - both virtual and in-person. We increased our catalog of self-paced, online professional learning opportunities, as well as after school PL and large multi-course leadership cohorts with full-day trainings interspersed with virtual check-in opportunities. In addition, the SEL Department continued with a multitude of free workshops, and the Area 2 SEL Hub focused on supporting schools/districts in Northwest Illinois in achieving their SEL action plan goals. All the while, School Improvement guided leadership teams through the most efficient strategies in order to optimize their teams. "Almost" was simply NOT acceptable.

Summit Academy began and ended FY23 stronger than ever, strategizing protocols and systems that were well documented and would be delivered consistently. At-Risk Student Services hired additional interventionists and added schools to their daily truancy and court initiatives. And, the ROE 4 Central Office served more individuals from the community than ever before. Not surprisingly, the word "almost" never crept into the narrative at ROE 4.

You're sure to discover evidence of these remarkable numbers throughout this report, as well as noting continued growth in the partnerships created between the Regional Office and school communities in our region. Partnerships were also realized with neighboring districts and an ever-increasing number of community members who sought support from the ROE 4 teams.

The "100%" attitude is validated by the data we share in this report and is our objective at every level. We'll continue to raise the bar with quality staff. We'll increase collaboration with our trusted districts. We'll make appropriate adjustments as we receive feedback, train, and grow. And, we'll work tirelessly to look squarely through the windshield as we continue to grow, upholding our oath to advocate for, educate, and serve the districts and communities of Boone and Winnebago counties.



Scott Bloomquist
Regional Superintendent of Schools



Allison Pierson
Assistant Regional Superintendent

ROE 4 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

ROE 4 Central Office Serves Schools & Community



Current Front Office Staff (L-R): Mary Wilson, Leah Blake, Denise Rux, Paula West, Logan Watts, Madelynn Glenn

For the ROE 4 Central Office, FY23 saw several new faces manning the busy front office space. Once the office remodel was well underway in an effort to create a more comfortable setting for customers, Regional Superintendent Scott Bloomquist and Assistant Regional Superintendent Allison Pierson decided to implement a Professional Services Director. This resulted in the successful search and subsequent hiring of Leah Blake, who also assumed the position of Director of Licensure. This was a well-timed move as increased requests for fingerprinting and background checks indicated vacant education positions were finally being filled following the pandemic. Logan Watts also joined the front office team as Professional Services Assistant.

Mary Wilson, School Bus Driver Training Program Coordinator, increased the number of training sessions for the FY23 schedule. This was done in order to help remedy the school bus driver shortage by increasing training opportunities for both certification and re-certification of drivers as they passed state mandated courses. Another improvement in the school bus driver training process was to transition bus driver class sign-ups to the ROE's new course registration system on www.roe4.org. As a result, ease of registration increased participation numbers.

Another area of impact for the Regional Office staff was the opportunity to proctor GED testing for local inmates housed at the Winnebago County Jail. Brittany Bauer, ROE 4 GED Coordinator, traveled to the jail two afternoons a week to administer the tests in a special unit. The feedback was very encouraging, so much so that demand to test increased exponentially. At one point, the waiting list had increased to more than 75 inmates. This was viewed as a direct asset to our community, noting that with a diploma these individuals would have an increased chance of gainful employment and a more productive lifestyle post incarceration.

In March, we saw an eighth grade student from Roscoe Middle School win the annual Regional Spelling Bee. Julissa Negrón showed great poise and a sweet disposition toward other competitors as she earned the title of Top Speller in our region. Chelsea Luengas Flores of South Beloit Junior High was runner up, with three extraordinary young gentlemen coming in tied for third. Mr. Mike Garrigan of 23 WIFR again emceed the evening. The Bee is generously funded by the Eunice Wishop Stromberg Spelling Bee Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois.

With spring came a ridiculously busy licensure season, the end of the governor's grace periods and reduced fees for educators to earn credit or gain or retain certification, hosting of the Regional Superintendents meeting, and an all-smiles swearing-in of Scott Bloomquist following a successful bid for reelection.

ROE 4 Professional Services rarely has down time but continues to serve every customer with a gracious attitude and a treasure trove of knowledge. Professional Services remains prepared to support schools and members of our community moving into FY24.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

FY23 Annual Information



52,927

of K-12 Public School Students We Serve

801

of Square Miles We Serve

95

of Attendance Centers We Serve

25

of K-12 Non-Public Schools We Serve

13

of School Districts We Serve

1

of Alternative Schools We Serve

TESTING CENTER PROCTORED TESTS

- 64 Para Pro Tests
- 811 Pearson Vue Tests
- 1,459 GED Tests

ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

- 265 GED Diplomas Earned

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING

- 35 Initial Classes
- 380 Drivers Certified
- 30 Refresher Classes
- 721 Drivers Re-Certified

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

- 54 New Regional Substitutes

FINGERPRINT SERVICES

- 1,718 Individuals Fingerprinted

ILLINOIS MINOR WORK PERMITS

- 233 Permits Issued

ROE 4 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Successful FY23 Brought Changes and Continued Growth



With recent adjustments and new processes in place following the chaos of Covid, the Professional Learning Department took several steps to accommodate new concepts in educator training. One was to vary the catalog of events offered through the Regional Office. A second was to expand the Anytime Learning Library of self-paced, online courses available as a way to earn PD credit. These two changes made for a productive summer at 300 Heart Blvd in Loves Park, with over 450 participants registering over the summer of 2022.



Another big announcement shared by the PL department was to add Linda DeYoung to the team as Professional Learning Facilitator. In addition to her educator's license, the former teacher brought a new facet to PL as she had also earned an art degree. This was a welcome addition to the already creative group.



At the start of the school year, PL unveiled a new look and format to their PL Periodical. Approximately once a month, the department shared original content for educators, administrators, and social emotional learning teams in their green-bannered publication. In the fall, the three-person group co-hosted the annual Update on School Law in Freeport along with ROE 8. They also coordinated the Harlem #122 district-wide SIP day. Introduction of this whole-day coordination practice would subsequently be utilized by additional regional school districts in the months to come.

Over the winter, four staff members from ROE 4 presented at the large Raising Student Achievement Conference in the suburbs. PL also hosted Learning Technology Center of Illinois as Ben Sondgeroth brought a Drones in the Classroom workshop to the Regional Office.

A quick glimpse into a new way of offering PD for regional educators also presented itself. In a pivot from the usual workshops where attendees spend time at the ROE, Professional Learning took a multi-date training pathway directly to staff at North Boone. The idea of having all staff learn together caught on quickly as districts found this allowed immediate implementation of new ideas.

As the school year came to a close, the department said a sad goodbye to Director Casey Veitch and her innovative training and concept development. Mrs. Veitch departed having filled the catalog of events to the brim so that new Director Carrie Brockway could ease into the position with a smooth transition for both team members and workshop participants.

Following a rewarding FY23, the new Professional Learning Department was eager to complete their existing projects while expanding the pathways blueprint. They were also preparing to support schools and districts as the State of Illinois unveiled its updated literacy plan. Congratulations to PL on a successful FY23!

In-District Professional Learning

- 28 Events
- 1,486 Participants

Regional Professional Learning

- 138 Events
- 1,988 Participants

One-on-One Coaching

- 74 Events
- 126 Participants

AREA 2 SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING HUB

Supporting the SEL Needs of Students, Staff & Schools
throughout Northwest Illinois



Under the leadership of Assistant Regional Superintendent Allison Pierson, the Area 2 Social Emotional Learning Hub continued to be a driving force in the world of SEL - all the way up to the state level. In order to continually improve the SEL support to area schools, Mrs. Pierson paid particular attention to the feedback from her ROE-based SEL specialists following their visits with districts throughout Northwest Illinois.

With that impactful information and as the SEL needs of students and staff in area schools evolved, Allison initiated insightful adjustments to wellness trainings offered through the Hub. With the surge of interest in school wellness, these updated SEL trainings for school communities started off at breakneck speed. The SEL Hub scheduled five virtual informational meetings in August and early September in order to share information about The Hub and how they could support social emotional learning in schools. In addition, the new www.area2selhub.org website was created. The site was instrumental in supporting the increased number of partnering SEL teams and leaders, offering them the ability to work on SEL action plans at their own pace.

Area 2 SEL Hub Specialists then branched out to conducting in-person school visits and follow-ups with districts in NW Illinois. The Social Emotional Leadership foundations (SELf) cohort (led by CharacterPlus) began meeting monthly in order to train additional SEL leaders in response to the explosion of interest.

Restorative circles remained an integral part of all SEL sessions large and small. SEL began presenting at school SIP days and all-school trainings. The Hub initiated planning of the first annual SEL Symposium, which was to take place at Rockford University in June. There was an overwhelming response to the release of the symposium, driving the need to plan additional breakouts and presentations at the event.

As the year unfolded, SEL Specialists were asked to present on Youth Mental Health to the Rockford Public Schools Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC). Through the end of April, SEL teams in Area 2 districts and schools continued to sign up to participate in The REACH Project through Lurie's Childrens Hospital of Chicago. The Hub offered free or low-cost in-person and online professional development, including the opportunity to earn either traditional PDCs or CEUs, which are required for social workers, counselors, and therapists.

The end of FY23 was punctuated by the Social Emotional Leadership foundations (SELf) Circle-bration ceremony following completion of the group's nearly year-long SEL training commitment. With the culmination of the training, each "graduate" was fully prepared to bring effective SEL leadership support to their own school communities. FY23 was capped with the success of the SEL Symposium, which brought over 200 attendees to Rockford for the event. The Area 2 SEL Hub continues to be a leader in social emotional learning, ensuring our students attend schools that are both trauma-informed and trauma-responsive. Well done, Area 2 SEL Hub!



AT-RISK STUDENT SERVICES



Meghan Hawkinson
ARSS Director

As Director Meghan Hawkinson entered her fourth year with the ROE 4 At-Risk Student Services Department, she continued to be a visionary in guiding her team with two main objectives: 1) identifying chronically absent and McKinney Vento eligible students and 2) doing everything possible to remove barriers to education for those students in the 13 districts served by the Regional Office. If that alone sounds like an enormous undertaking, you would be correct. But, Mrs. Hawkinson did not stop there.

Meghan also understood that to remain successful in getting all students consistently in the classroom following the pandemic's "new normal", she would require increased resources. She was determined to invest in extra manpower. With that in mind, she hired three additional dedicated and experienced attendance interventionists and a full-time administrative assistant. She also created an intensive attendance interventionist position, the first step in a new 'school avoidance' team she was in the process of creating.

These updates were thanks to a successful rewrite of the competitive TAOEP (Truants Alternative and Optional Education Program) grant she had previously completed. This funding expanded her department budget and, in turn, her ability to add quality interventionists for schools and districts. She shared, "Budgeting and the grant funding allowed us to be even more impactful for those students and families who needed us the most - the chronically absent students due to refusal, transportation issues, family hardships, or a number of other barriers to education. Having staff that could work closely and consistently with these families was a top priority."

In October, Mrs. Hawkinson and interventionist Alex Zimmerman took part in the Summit Academy ribbon-cutting ceremony to introduce Second Chance at Summit Academy. They had been instrumental in developing this innovative program for regional middle school students who have attendance barriers to a successful educational experience. The program is separate from the middle and high school programs currently offered at Summit. This wellness-focused classroom would offer one seat for each of our district middle schools - as needed.

In mid March, the entire At-Risk Student Services team traveled to the annual Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth (ICEARY) Conference. It was at this conference that Meghan Hawkinson was surprised with ICEARY's state award, Excellence in Education. This was a well-deserved statewide nod for FY23, an award that had previously been won by ARSS team members Mary Bawinkel and retired director Harold Sweeney. The ARSS Department at ROE 4 remains a true leader in student advocacy.

The At-Risk Student Services Department rounded out the fiscal year by continuing to be an active supporter of students and families in Boone and Winnebago counties. Their "Success Stories" are well documented in each ROE 4 Connections monthly newsletter. Likewise, their presence and hard work are visible in the data shared here and in school classrooms all around us.

FY23 Truancy Information

Open Court Cases	336	665	Open Truancy Intervention Cases
Closed Court Cases	91	232	Closed Truancy Intervention Case
Districts Served	12	1,611	Children Identified as Homeless Under McKinney Vento Assistance Act ('20-21)
Total Interventionists	7		

GROWTH CONTINUES AT SUMMIT ACADEMY

Middle and high school students were welcomed back to Summit Academy by administrators and staff on August 17th for the FY23 school year. Executive Director Nicole Corbett's plan was to be prepared to fill the Machesney Park campus to capacity, supporting as many at-risk students as possible. At that time, the enrollment was close to 200 middle and high school students with more than 125 applications processed since July 1, 2022.

Mrs. Corbett had worked tirelessly to integrate all aspects of admissions into a fully self-supported process. She had spent the summer hiring quality admin, teachers, and staff who would share her vision of an ideal school environment that would allow all students to succeed. From over 680 applications, she was ultimately able to fill her final 20 positions.

A new initiative at Summit was the Second Chance Middle School Program. The team was preparing a special classroom with a full-time teacher, paraprofessional, social worker, and attendance intensivist for students with unique social, attendance, or behavioral barriers to education. The classroom would be separate from the general middle and high school sections and had a planned soft opening in October.

As autumn came, a team from Summit Academy traveled to St. Louis, Missouri with the leadership team from the ROE to attend the National Alternative Education Association 2022 Conference. There, Summit discovered they were one of only two alternative schools in the United States with a similar structure, one which is focused on positivity and multi-tiered systems of support as opposed to discipline.

Summit Basecamp was also launched during that time, the starting level for new students entering the alternative school. Successful from its introduction, Basecamp remains a positive launching pad for new Summit students. In December, the school community participated in the annual classroom door holiday decorating contest - a fun project for all.

January saw 57 students successfully transition back to their home school. Staff members Amanda Hathaway and Tara Klotz both earned a Master's degree. Teacher Kevin Weaver opened the Summit Reset Room, providing structure to the de-escalation process used for student behavior issues.

Quickly earning a reputation as experts on educational change in the alternative school world, Mrs. Corbett and her administrative team were asked to present on alt education at a statewide event. They delivered a 90-minute presentation at the Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth (ICEARY) conference.

As the referral process continued to be streamlined for district sending schools, Summit had an increase in student enrollment. Serving the maximum number of at-risk youth possible had been the focus of Mrs. Corbett's vision all along. The school year ended on a high note for Summit Academy and ROE 4 as over 200 staff, family, friends, and supporters celebrated 24 seniors as they received their high school diplomas. Congratulations to Mrs. Corbett, her staff, and the graduating seniors of 2023!



VISIT THE
SUMMIT ACADEMY WEBSITE:
www.saeagles.org

SUMMIT ACADEMY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION DATA

TOTAL STAFF	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	SECOND CHANCE ENROLLMENT	STUDENTS SERVED	TOTAL GRADUATES
73	335	26	559	34

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Continuing to Build Relationships

While most people believe summer is for vacation, good administrators understand that summer is when a lot of the work happens. The same holds true for Chris Collins, Director of School Improvement for ROE 4. A past administrator himself, Chris researches, strategizes, and plans during late spring and summer for the upcoming school year so school administrators in our region don't have to. And that held true for FY23, just like the previous three years in his position.

Throughout the summer of 2022, the School Improvement Department held nine professional development sessions with over 130 participants, including many school administrators. Separately, Chris consistently met with school leadership teams in the region, several from RPS as well as Summit Academy. There were also plans to do the same during the school year with leadership within the Harlem #122 district.

In August, Chris teamed with Regional Superintendent of Schools Scott Bloomquist to host the first annual Administrators' Breakfast. This event was attended by approximately 80 regional school building leaders and was created simply to celebrate administrators, who work on the front lines every day, and to send them into the new school year on a positive note. Successful event? CHECK!

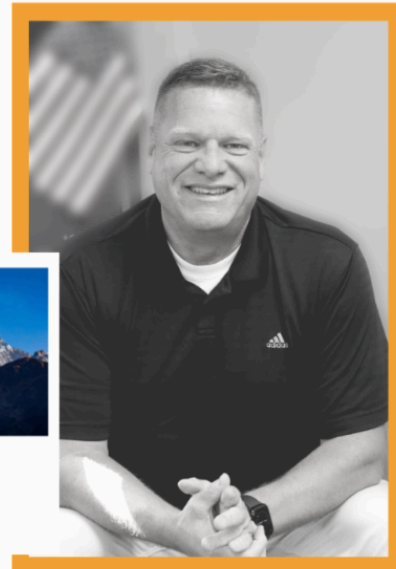
Mr. Collins' passion falls within the scope of building collective voice and effective teams. This begins with leadership team work, who then replicate the identical steps with their own school teams. The number of requests to collaborate with Chris exploded during FY23, and it doesn't appear that will slow down at any time in the near future.

Teaching on an even larger scale, Chris had the opportunity to present on Design Thinking at the Raising Student Achievement Conference (RSAC) 2022. During his breakout session, Chris taught the process, which utilizes elements of design. In turn, large and small organizations can utilize this to develop and incorporate collective voice. The strategy allows school teams to get from problem identification to a solution in under 60 minutes.

Also during FY23, Mr. Collins introduced his recurring blog "FOUR: For Leaders". In this new publication, he breaks down what would be complicated leadership strategies into four easily consumable bites. This demonstrates to education leaders that teachable concepts can be as easy as 1, 2, 3...4! Congratulations to Chris on this new undertaking. We hope he can find time to continue to write, and we encourage you to check it out!



FOUR: *For Leaders*



HEALTH/LIFE SAFETY

The purpose of the health/life safety provision is to establish minimum standards for public school facilities which will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of pupils, school staff, and communities, as well as others who use them.

\$113,464,538

Work Completed

0

New Schools or
Buildings Constructed

43

Permits
Issued

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023

With the retirement of Don Keigher from the position at the conclusion of FY22, Regional Superintendent of Schools Scott Bloomquist stepped into the role of Director of Health/Life Safety for FY23. He felt leading the HLS Division of ROE 4 during a transition year was important in making sure nothing fell through the cracks as districts continued with building improvements utilizing grant funding.

As part of HLS, each local school board operates and maintains compliance for its facilities. Inspections of each and every building take place annually under the authority of the Regional Superintendent of Schools.

With no new schools or buildings being constructed in Boone or Winnebago counties during FY23, the total number of buildings inspected by the Health/Life Safety Team at the Regional Office remained at 111.

The beginning of the fiscal year, or July 1, 2022 for FY23, marks the beginning of inspections of facilities for Boone and Winnebago counties. The goal is for all inspections to be completed by mid November. Facility inspections are coordinated with local fire departments to ensure strict adherence to all codes and standards. The ROE 4 Health/Life Safety inspection team includes Mr. Bloomquist, as well as long-time inspector Mr. Harold Sweeney and a crew of several ROE 4 employees who have successfully completed Illinois State Board of Education health/life safety compliance training.

Annual inspection results of each building are available at the Regional Office of Education (ROE 4), and a summary report is filed with the Illinois State Board of Education - as required by law.

Throughout the remainder of the fiscal year, the HLS Department issues building permits for planned construction within the same 13 districts within both Boone and Winnebago counties. As always, the department also completed data compilation and reporting prior to the end of FY23.

FY23 SPECIAL MENTIONS

ADMINISTRATORS' BREAKFAST



SECOND CHANCE PROGRAM



AREA 2 SEL HUB SELF COHORT



YOUNG PICASSO ART COMPETITION



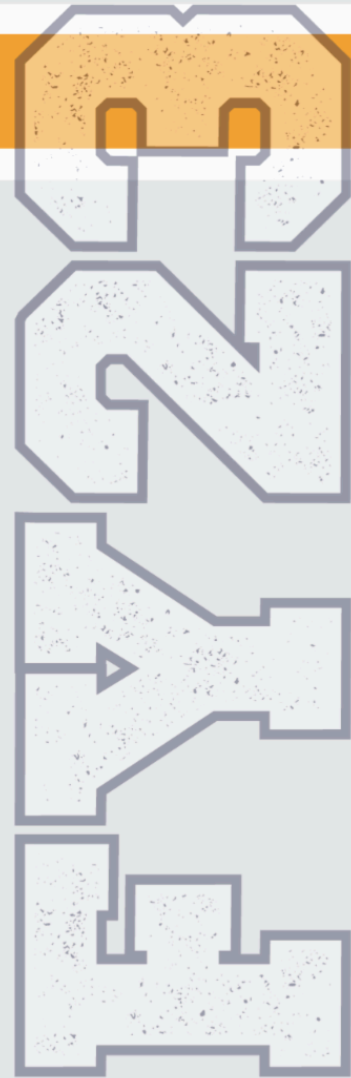
2023 SEL SYMPOSIUM



SUPERINTENDENT SWEARING IN



HAWKINSON WINS ICEARY AWARD



CONTACT INFORMATION

ROE 4 Superintendent

Scott Bloomquist, Regional Superintendent of Schools sbloomquist@roe4.org
Allison Pierson, Assistant Regional Superintendent apierson@roe4.org

Area 2 Social Emotional Learning Hub

Allison Pierson, Director apierson@roe4.org

At-Risk Student Services

Meghan Hawkinson, Director mhawkinson@roe4.org
Emily O'Neill, Assistant Director eoneill1@roe4.org

Finance

John Morrissey, Interim Director fiscal@roe4.org
Cole Yaun, Assistant Director cyaun@roe4.org

Human Resources

John Ulferts, Interim Director julferts@roe4.org

Professional Learning

Carrie Brockway, Director cbrockway@roe4.org

Professional Services

Leah Blake, Director lblake@roe4.org

School Improvement

Chris Collins, Director ccollins@roe4.org

Boone-Winnebago Regional Office of Education 4

Phone 815.636.3060

Fax 815.636.3069

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Regional Board of School Trustees

TERM EXPIRES

David Carlson Loves Park, Illinois	2025
Nathan Danielson: Vice President Belvidere, Illinois	2029
Tosca DeGennaro Belvidere, Illinois	2025
Todd France Rockford, Illinois	2027
Chuck Johnson Cherry Valley, Illinois	2025
Bob Walberg: President Belvidere, Illinois	2025

WHO WE SERVE

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

- 8 - Unit Districts (K-12)
- 4 - Elementary Districts
- 1 - High School District

PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDINGS:

- 61 - Elementary Schools
- 17 - Jr. High/Middle School
- 15 - High Schools
- 15 - Other Buildings

STUDENT ENROLLMENT:

- 13 Public School Districts – 52,927
 - 7,564 Belvidere CUSD #100
 - 510 Durand CUSD #322
 - 6,311 Harlem UD #122
 - 1,889 Hononegah CHD #207
 - 1,725 Kinnikinnick CCSD #131
 - 1,530 North Boone CUSD #200
 - 898 Pecatonica CUSD #321
 - 774 Prairie Hill CCSD #133
 - 1,602 Rockton SD #140
 - 27,836 Rockford SD #205
 - 103 Shirland CCSD #134
 - 902 South Beloit #320
 - 1,283 Winnebago CUSD #323
- 25 Non-Public Schools – *Data Unavailable for FY23
- **TOTAL ENROLLMENT – 52,927***

Contact Us

Boone-Winnebago Regional Office of Education
300 Heart Boulevard, Loves Park, IL 61111
815.636.3060
www.roe4.org
info@roe4.org



ANNUAL REPORT

FY23

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