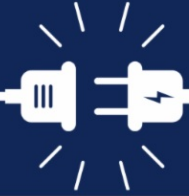


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August 2024

ROE 4
CONNECTIONS



Together, Everyone Achieves More: Let's Make it Happen!

At our ROE 4 kickoff, I talked about the acronym of "TEAM". This is the first step of getting us from where we are to where we want to go, but the "old" saying "Together Everyone Achieves More" has become so common that it loses its meaning. So, as we move into this month, what can you do to be a part of our region's "T-E-A-M"?

Together: How can you be more intentional in helping someone or receiving help from someone to make a greater impact? How can you include others in the journey instead of going solo?

Everyone: When two or more connect and collaborate, we start to create an everyone atmosphere. An "everyone" mindset doesn't leave anyone behind. Do you see teammates eating alone, sitting alone, or struggling alone? If yes, DO something.

Achieves: When we are intentional to help and support, connect and collaborate, lift up and encourage; we will get more done and do it better.

More: More what? Impact, influence, and opportunity to make a difference.

Take action. Make TEAM a VERB and not a noun. There isn't much more to say - just do it!

We can do it! Have a great month!



Take care,

Scott Bloomquist
Regional Superintendent of Schools



[CONTACT US](#)

From the Desk of the Superintendent

Regional Superintendent Helps Effingham District Kick Off New School Year



Regional Superintendent of Schools Scott Bloomquist was recently invited to participate in the Effingham (Illinois) Unit 40 Schools' all-staff back-to-school events.

While at the Southeastern IL location, he delivered "Before the Crisis AA1876", an interactive administrator academy about school safety and crisis planning. He also spoke at the district kickoff and presented "Introduction to School Threat Assessments" to the entire staff, important training so that building professionals would be prepared prior to welcoming students back to their campuses.

State Superintendent of Education Conducts Second Fireside Chat

Staff members of ROE 4 took over the Regional Office Main Training Room in August to view the State Superintendent of Education's second Fireside Chat. Dr. Tony Sanders' special guest was Sal Khan, founder and CEO of Khan Academy. While many topics were touched on, their focus was artificial intelligence and how it can be used productively in public education.



With AI being THE hot topic in education these days, it was no surprise when half a dozen of our employees joined in to watch the afternoon event. ROE 4 Director of School Improvement Dan Holder shared that the online chat had several significant conversation starters for him. Always engaging and engaged, Dan wrote, "After being asked about teachers/mentors with the greatest impact on his life, Sal shared an anecdote about a boss early in his career at a hedge fund who told him to go home, volunteer, and find other things in his life besides work."

Despite the stereotype in finance of being "busy" and working 80-hour weeks, his boss reframed their purpose as avoiding bad decisions and making a few good ones, pointing out that overworking yourself in isolation and getting overconfident in your own bad ideas and analysis is the quickest way to bad decisions. This led me to reflect: Amidst often rapidly changing needs and circumstances in schools, how do we create and nurture conditions that prevent burnout and enable educators to make great decisions?"

...continued next page

School Support Services Senior Director Autumn Czizek noted her biggest takeaway from the viewing party was that "Sal is leveraging AI to optimize the educational outcomes for students and teachers. He has been working to enhance the productivity of the stakeholders while providing assistance to these groups in real time in order to be effective and beneficial."

We enjoyed watching Dr. Sanders do a bit of "fangirling" during the Q&A session when he held up Mr. Khan's book, "Brave New Words." It was also exciting to learn from him that Khanmigo Writing Coach will be launched soon. This is an AI tool designed to support through the writing process and could

improve the written assessment process for both teachers and students by giving feedback and reporting progress in order to undermine all forms of cheating. Touted as a potential time-saver with assessment of written projects in place of multiple choice, Khan thinks this could be the future of assessment, allowing more free response entry, video and visual prompts, and testing interaction with AI.

Thanks to Illinois State Board of Education for providing a glimpse into AI through the words of Dr. Sanders, our State Education Leader, and Mr. Khan, a proven entrepreneurial success in the field of supporting students for the past 20 years.

Weaver Wins August Core Values Award



Pictured (l-r): Kevin Anderson, Meghan Hawkinson, Weaver, Faith McNamee, Paul Cassiopi

The team at Boone Winnebago Roe 4 invited Kevin Weaver of Summit Academy in to collect the Gift Card he won for being nominated for the ROE 4 Core Values drawing for the month of August. Awarded by random drawing, the submission by a coworker stated Mr. Weaver "demonstrated **OWNership** by taking on a huge, monumental task" during expansion of the alternative school. In fact, a large "soar" (yes, a group of eagles can be called a soar) of Summit Eagles escorted him in. Congratulations, Kevin!

Summit Academy

Welcome Back to School, Eagles!

Summit Academy opened its doors to the 2024-2025 school year and over 180 students on August 16, 2024. The arrival of hundreds of students brought smiles to the faces of dozens of staff members on hand to greet each and every one of them one-on-one. Sometimes we talk about this and have to remind people that this is with approximately two-thirds (or more) of the student enrollment being new students on EVERY first day of the school year at this alternative school.



They hit it out of the park with the opening day process as the entire system ran like a well-oiled machine. Several outside observers on hand from the local education scene, shared reactions like "WOW!" and "How did you make that happen so smoothly?" and "TEACH US to do that!" The One Team One Dream crew at Summit are now used to words like that and are happy to teach those who are ready and open to new ideas. That fact and the students themselves are most likely the two top reasons the first day of school always feels like an incredible celebration on the Summit Academy Campus.



Led by new co-executive directors Chris Collins and Meghan Hawkinson, the school's staff felt well-prepared following a full week of in-house professional learning in order to dust off the professional name badges and readjust to school life following the summer break. This time together also gives veteran staffers a chance to mentor new team members both formally and informally. Team building is pervasive on this campus as school wellness is a top priority in their trauma-invested and student-centered culture.



A Cool Treat for First Day Heat ...with Social Worker Anna Hobbs

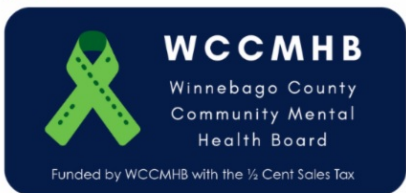
Kona Ice visited Summit Academy to help kick off the first day of school. Students were able to mix flavors and create customized snow cones. It was a very hot day, and students appreciated the cool treat as they listened to tropical music being played by the vibrantly colored food truck.

Staff were able to get snow cones as well, and it was a sweet bonding experience for classes to share on the first day. The Kona Ice staff shared with me how they were impressed with how respectful and grateful our students were. She said that she did not know what to expect from our diverse student body, but in learning about Summit Academy's mission, the various programs and - most of all - meeting the students, she said she would be glad to not only come back and serve us again but she would be excited to talk about the good work Summit is doing!



Summit Transition Program Ramps Up for FY25

Summit Academy was able to incorporate an expanded version of its Transition Program in a major way to start this school year thanks to the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board and funding by the 1/2-Cent Sales Tax. Transition Counselor Meg Parker shared that approximately 110 students were able to be "onboarded" at Summit in August via the new Transition Program. The WCCMHB's funding approval enables Parker to focus full time on acclimating new students to Summit's restorative school culture before they begin to focus on school work. Once those students are comfortable with their surroundings and any mental health issues that may be barriers to education have been addressed, they begin at "Basecamp" and work their way through the academy's leveling system for as long as they need the alternative school's support. Parker was confident that this year's Transition Program time investment will pay off for the kids attending Summit - in their education, their futures, and the future of our communities. We are so grateful for Parker and her team, as well as the WCCMHB's insight in supporting this important stage of education for at-risk youth.



GRATEFUL!



School Support Services

Professional Learning ... with Director Carrie Brockway



Back to School is a time where we are excited to partner with our local schools and districts to make the most of their professional learning as they welcome staff back to campus! This year, we kicked off the school year providing support for educational equity, special education co-teaching best practices, literacy, data analysis, student motivation and engagement for our region's schools.

Professional Learning Summer Success!

with Director Carrie Brockway

10

Districts Served:
We were able to support **10 different districts'** back-to-school professional learning programming for teachers, and several districts kicked off or are continuing yearlong partnerships with us here at ROE 4! We were honored to be a part of these first of the year events, and are also excited to partner for ongoing collaboratives throughout the 24-25 school year!

26

Schools Served:
We were able to assist **26 different schools** with their professional learning experiences provided to teachers!

267

Administrator Academies:
AAs allow us to meet the PL needs and license renewal requirements of administrators throughout our region. In 9 unique AAs, we have served **267 educators** since July 1st! Interested in attending an AA? We're excited to welcome back Brandon Wright on September 30th, and all participating administrators will be entered into a drawing for a **\$250 ROE 4 Professional Learning Scholarship** for their school!

489

Summer Programming Since July 1:
ROE 4 is excited to have served **489 educators and administrators** since July 1! We continue to add to our diverse programming opportunities, and if you have an idea for a session you would like to see added or are interested to present a session yourself, please reach out to PLCoordinators@roe4.org to learn how you can partner with us!



ROE 4 and Illinois SLD Support Project Kick Off First LETRS Cohort

The first ever LETRS Cohort Kickoff was held on August 5 at ROE 4. The PL Department welcomed educators from local schools and districts for the beginning of this exciting two-year partnership! While signups for this session are closed, we are looking to build a cohort for **LETRS for Administrators**. Please complete [this form](#) to learn more!

Supporting Paraprofessionals Across the Region

ROE 4 is proud to partner with our local districts to provide learning opportunities for paraprofessionals, too! To kick off the 2024-2025 school year, we have partnered with a district to onboard their new-to-the-district paras, arming them with the information and skills to be successful on their very first day! We will continue this work with ALL of the districts' paraprofessionals in cohorts through weekly trainings during their late starts. We also partner with local districts, offering training for these vital school support team members on early release days, late starts, SIP and Teachers' Institute Days. If you would like to provide training experiences for your paraprofessionals and non-certified staff team members, please contact our Director of Professional Learning, Carrie Brockway, at cbrockway@roe4.org or give her a call at 815-636-3060.



Current Course Offerings

- AA#3640: Compassion Fatigue and Burnout: Is Your Staff at Risk
- Educator Engagement and Mental Health
- Mindful Foundations
- Teacher Well-Being: Connecting SEL & Self-Care
- The Shelf Discovery Club

Coming Soon!

- Trauma, Social Emotional Learning & Mental Health Book Study: Offers both graduate credit and 36 PDHs!
- Podcast PD: If you missed out before, we're excited to bring this one back!
- Reel-to-Real PD: Do you enjoy watching to learn? Check out this engaging movie-based PD!
- Game-On: Transform Your Teaching with Gamification

NETWORKS

Fill out the interest form for a chance to win a gift card!
Drawing will be 9/3!

- Curriculum Leaders!
- Instructional Coaches!
- World Languages!
- Nurses!
- Tech Roundtable!
- EL Teachers!
- Math Teachers!
- and more!

REGISTER FORM

Networks Survey

We are here to serve YOU!!

We are adding several opportunities to network with your colleagues and collaborate. Please complete the networks survey **here** to help us best meet your needs or if you have suggestions for upcoming networks.



Fill out the networks survey interest form for a chance to win a gift card!

Drawing will be 9/3!

School Improvement...with Director Dan Holder



Celebrating Non-Public School Partnerships

The School Improvement Department at ROE 4 was excited to have had the opportunity to work with the Rockford IQRA School earlier this month and that they have chosen to partner with us for professional development support through the 2024-2025 school year in their data-informed school improvement journey!



Professional Development Grants Submitted

In collaboration with our Professional Services and Professional Development Teams, we submitted TWO grant applications in the month of August. Both applications are, in part, requests for assistance in subsidizing the costs of creating and delivering high-quality professional development for the teachers and districts we serve.



Holder Lends Personal Perspective to Administrator-Focused Content

Drawing from his own misadventures as a former building administrator and Director of Special Education, Dan knows firsthand the challenges of juggling a million tasks while keeping a smile (even if it's sometimes forced). He's here to have real, unfiltered conversations about the highs and lows of education, because let's face it—no one should have to carry the weight of the world (or a school) alone.



Collins Trains RPS Admin in New Academy

Summit Academy co-Executive Director Chris Collins recently delivered Boone-Winnebago ROE4's first two-day session of #AA4050 to school leaders at RPS205. Beginning July 1, 2024, this administrator academy will serve as the new OFFICIAL initial training or retraining for an educator's or administrator's legal qualification to evaluate principals and assistant principals in the State of Illinois.

WAIT! There's more to this Newsletter!

↓ Simply click "View entire message" below your email ↓

Social Emotional Learning ...with Director Jen Kaiser



This month has brought significant progress and exciting developments for the Social Emotional Learning Department at ROE 4. We were thrilled to welcome Alexis Rutishauser as our new full-time SEL Specialist. Alexis brings a wealth of knowledge and passion to our team, and we are eager to see the positive impact she will have on our initiatives.

We also successfully onboarded seven Area 2 SEL Hub Specialists, including four new team members. Their fresh perspectives and dedication will be instrumental as we continue our transformative work across the region.

Our department has been actively onboarding new schools into both the REACH program and the exciting new R-SSI initiative. As we look ahead, we're developing an intentional professional learning (PL) calendar for the 2024-2025 year, perfectly aligned with the R-SSI expansion of REACH. This ensures that our schools receive the best support possible as we continue to grow and innovate.

We're already gearing up for two of our biggest and most impactful events of the year: the Heart Summit in February and the Summer Symposium in June! These cornerstone events are designed to supercharge SEL capacity for our educators, students, and the communities they serve. We can't wait to see the incredible growth and connections that will come out of these gatherings.

And that's not all—collaboration is at the heart of our work! We're partnering with the amazing Heidi Lafleur to offer an impactful book study for Area 2 educators. Utilizing powerful texts like "Those Kids Are Our Kids" and "Soaring Balloons and Heavy Shackles," this study will deepen educators' understanding of trauma, youth mental health, and social-emotional skills and competencies. It's an incredible opportunity for growth, learning, and community building!

This month, we also focused on submitting three grants to sustain and expand the work of the SEL Hub, supporting over 16 counties and more than 120 school districts. These grants are vital to keeping our momentum strong and ensuring that we continue to make a lasting impact. We're not just maintaining—we're elevating our efforts to new heights!

Our participation in the Rockford Educator Summit was a smashing success! We connected with over 100 educators and youth services providers at our vibrant vendor booth, and we were delighted to award one local educator with a basket of trauma-informed tools and resources for both adults and the youth they serve (photo of the winner included). It was two days filled with inspiration, collaboration, and a shared commitment to making a difference in the lives of the students we serve.

As a final note, I am incredibly honored to step into the role of Director of the Area 2 Hub and Associate Director of Social Emotional Learning at ROE 4. The excitement and growth in the air are palpable, and I look forward to continuing our collective journey to support resilient school communities and foster the holistic development of all stakeholders in our region.

ROE 4 and Area 2 SEL Hub Welcome New SEL Staff



NEW ROE4 TEAM MEMBER

Alexis is already actively participating with the SEL Team during her first month with the Boone-Winnebago Regional Office of Education as a Social Emotional Learning Specialist. Originally landing in this area without any professional connections, she now enjoys many meaningful relationships with colleagues at public service organizations throughout our community!

An extroverted introvert, Alexis is dedicated to using data effectively and making it meaningful for all. She is excited to utilize her knowledge of student development and mental health to promote innovative projects and valuable PD that benefit districts, schools, educators, practitioners, students, and families.



FY25 Area 2 SEL Director and Specialists

Area 2 SEL Hub Kicks Off FY25 at Regional Office

Area 2 SEL Hub, led by new Director Jennifer Kaiser, held their FY25 Kickoff at the offices of ROE4. All on-site departments introduced themselves and shared how they could support the A2SH specialists in their roles throughout schools and districts located in NW Illinois.



Olson Park Elementary New REACH School

SEL Director Jen Kaiser and SEL Specialist Alexis Rutishauser recently met with SEL Leaders at Olson Park Elementary of Harlem District #122 and are excited to announce the local elementary is our area's newest REACH school. REACH supports school districts and schools throughout Illinois to create healthy learning environments that protect, support, and heal. These learning environments ensure optimal levels of academic success for students and staff. One way Olson Park is diving into SEL is by implementing regular well-being check-ins for staff in an effort to best support their teaching community as the most organic means to mental health and resiliency for their entire school community.

2025 Summer Symposium Planning Begins

Area 2 SEL Hub recently met with Embassy Suites in Downtown Rockford to begin planning for next summer's SEL Symposium, currently scheduled for June 12th!

Area 2 SEL Hub Shares Info at 7th Annual City Educators' Summit

Local members of the Area 2 SEL Hub not only attended sessions at the City of Rockford's 7th Annual Educators' Summit but also manned a vendor table at the event. Jam packed with information, literature, branding, fun giveaways, and even a large "mindfulness" giveaway basket, the colorful table drew many interested summit attendees. The Hub members, well-versed in the topic of trauma in schools, took the opportunity to share their knowledge with all who stopped by. Rachel Williams was the lucky winner of the gift basket drawing!



Check Out the Area 2 SEL Hub Website

School Safety ...with Director Will Hartje

Health Life Safety Work Set to Begin for FY25



We are excited to see the progress our districts and schools have made on their summer project lists and look forward to visiting their buildings during our annual Health Life Safety visits. A big shout out to all of the Facility Directors getting buildings ready for the new school year!

One recent project we've been following closely is the beautiful new CTE Addition at Harlem High School. Autumn Czizek, Senior Director of School Support Services, accompanied me on the ROE Occupancy Walkthrough recently.

The Harlem District website labeled this an "investment in students", but it is so much more. The 27,000 square foot facility connects to the east side of the high school. The facility will improve students' access to high-quality career and technical education programming. The expansion will include space for automotive, welding, construction, manufacturing, and learning spaces. It will also include a health clinic for staff and their dependents.

What an incredible extension this will be to the Harlem High School campus and its school community.

In preparation for the start of the FY25 school year and the intensive health life safety inspections that will start any day, Mr. Hartje has been attending multi-day trainings as well as a state conference. He is ready to take his experienced team into regional schools to ensure the safest environment for learning for both students and staff.

School safety is always viewed as a top priority at the Regional Office. Will's team will inspect over 100 schools each year to ensure they are compliant with Health Life Safety (HLS) school code. The ROE 4 team tries to make the process as smooth as possible for facilities directors while guaranteeing compliance.

The school compliance inspections usually continue through Thanksgiving or longer. Once the first half of the year's school reviews are finished and documentation is complete, the director will get to work on building permit requests for Boone and Winnebago Counties facilities.

Visit the Health Life Safety section at www.roe4.org for information about what we look for during school compliance inspections.



Student Support Services

ROE 4 Attendance Intervention Team Growing

Following a cool team building day, which included creation of pottery projects together at a local business, the core ROE 4 Attendance Team needed very little additional training as the majority are returning interventionists. While they will definitely feel the absence of long-time team member Mary Bawinkel, who retired following the FY24 school year after 35 years in her position, the strong and experienced group is excited to get to work with students this year.

With Meghan Hawkinson doing dual duty as both co-Executive Director at Summit Academy and Director of the Student Support Services Department, she will likely lean heavily on the wisdom of her large team to start off the year. Emily O'Neill will continue in her role in the legal system for students, taking the lead with truancy court cases.

The team expanded its coverage this year by introducing in-school specialists in regional buildings. Those intervention intensivists will be located full-time at schools to enable them to focus on the most at-risk youth and to bring an official presence to their mission of removing barriers to education for all students.

This dedicated team of professionals expanded to 14 total this year and will look to further grow in the years to come. Please welcome the new Student Support Services staff members:

- **Bianca Garcia**
- **Stacey Henderson**
- **Jordynn Meyer**
- **Michelle Perez**
- **Kimberly Quintero**



Regional Services and Licensure

Welcome Zayra Quintero
 ROE 4 Central Office Administrative Assistant

- Zayra was born in Mexico and came to the US at age 12.
- She is excited to learn something new every day in her new role and provide excellent customer service.
- Zayra is bilingual (Spanish/English) and has been assisting in our office with translating licensure questions and MORE!
- Zayra has stepped into her role with ease, and has already increased our level of customer support in her short time at the ROE. We are so glad she has joined our team!




Blake Spends Summer Months Working with Regional Educators on Licensure Questions for FY24 and FY25

ROE 4 Director of Licensure Leah Blake is excited to see her desk calendar turn over to September 1. Why? Because from the start of summer break through the end of August, she works on overdrive, ensuring educators and school staff have valid licensure in place for the first day of classes in the fall.

Ms. Blake fielded 56 in-person appointments just in the month of August. Those were just the face-to-face meetings. It does not include the telephone appointments, emails, phone messages, or appointments-in-passing - customers who visit the office for another reason, like testing, fingerprinting, or other Regional Services over the summer - who stop by her desk with questions, creating an impromptu appointment. Thank you for your hard work, Leah!



[Click Here for School Bus Driver Training Schedule](#)

ROE 4 Current Career Opportunities

We are including a list of OPEN CAREER OPPORTUNITIES at the **Boone-Winnebago Regional Office of Education**. This list also includes positions at Summit Academy that the Regional Office is looking to fill. Each position below is a clickable link that will take you to the listing on Indeed or the IASA Job Bank for Job Seekers.



- [ROE 4 Professional Learning Specialist](#)
- [ROE 4 Bilingual Student Support Specialist](#)
- [Summit Academy Middle School Teacher](#)
- [Summit Academy Middle/High School PE Teacher](#)
- [Summit Academy Paraprofessional](#)

Bookmark Openings at ROE 4 and Summit Academy

For the most up-to-date employment opportunities and information, please contact part-time interim HR Specialist Dr. John Ulferts at julferts@roe4 or find positions in THREE ways:

- Search "Boone Winnebago Regional Office of Education" on **Indeed**
 - Search "ROE #04" on the **IASA Job Bank** under the Job Seekers section
 - Visit the **NEW & IMPROVED** Regional Employment Opportunities page on the **ROE 4 website** with our current **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES** listed at the top of the page
-



Quote of the Month:


“What we learn with pleasure we never forget.”

~ Alfred Mercier ~

American poet, novelist, playwright, and doctor



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