

When Seasons Change... Respect, Own, & Empower

As the seasons change, I find myself reflecting not just on the growth we've experienced as a team but also on personal transitions. Within the past month, I sent BOTH of my kids off to college (in two different states). This milestone reminds me of the importance of **adaptation**, **resilience**, and the **values** we live by every day.

In this period of change, our core values - **Respect, Ownership**, and **Empowerment** - hold more importance than ever. These values guide our work, interactions, and decisions, shaping a positive and supportive environment.

Respect for one another's strengths, experiences, and perspectives is at the heart of how we collaborate. It's what allows us to listen openly, engage thoughtfully, and build strong, **authentic connections**.

Ownership drives us to take responsibility, not only for our own work but also for how we contribute to the broader goals of our effective teams. I've seen our teams' and partners' commitment to this value in countless ways, from leading projects with confidence to stepping up when challenges arise.

Empowerment is about lifting one another up - encouraging innovation, creativity, and growth. This value **ensures that every voice is heard, every effort recognized, and every opportunity for development embraced**. Building culture where everyone feels empowered to make a difference is happening at ROE 4 and in our districts.

As we move forward into this next season, let's continue to embody these values in all that we do. I am proud to see unimagineable accomplishments and excited for what lies ahead.

Dedication, passion, and investment in these values that define our region will surely help us all attain our ultimate goals - at this time and for seasons to come.



Take care,

Allison Pierson ROE 4 Assistant Regional Superintendent



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Regional Superintendent Heads to the US Capital with National Leadership Academy







Regional Superintendent of Schools Scott Bloomquist traveled to the nation's capital during the week of September 23rd to meet with his National Association of Education Service Agencies (AESA) Leadership Academy Cohort. According to AESA social media posts, the group was gearing up for the Advocacy in Action Conference and Pre-Conference, and made the most of their time in Washington, D.C. The Leadership Academy came together for scheduled programming, where they engaged in great discussions and leadership growth. It was an exciting time for the cohort, knowing they will be creating ripples in the days, months, and years ahead.

Always an advocate for happenings and education interests here at home in Boone and Winnebago Counties, Scott spent time meeting with staff members of several federal lawmakers from Illinois. He was able to share the important projects the Regional Office and Northern Illinois districts and schools have in the works. In fact, as a tremendous compliment, one senator's staff had already heard about the impactful work happening at Summit Academy!

While collaboration and training continued throughout the week, the Education Leadership Academy shared they are looking forward to an international trip to Singapore and South Korea in March of 2025, organized by ACES International. The Team learned specifics of that trip during the D.C. week, and Mr. Bloomquist has already touched base with his creative team at ROE 4 to begin planning his impact presentation while overseas.

The group's social media concluded the week by sharing - Now, the real work begins—taking what we've learned to navigate legislative landscapes and advocate for equitable policies. And, they will continue to drive positive change...together.





Caitlyn W Wins September Core Values Award



Pictured (I-r): Lorinda Green presents a Gift Card to Friend and Co-Worker Caitlyn Wingo

We hope Caitlyn spends her gift card on herself since she is so selfless at her job. An Attendance Interventionist for the ROE 4 Student Support Services Team, she was nominated with these straightforward words: "Caitlyn Wingo continues to empower her families. She continued to help them during the summer when she was off." We at the Regional Office know she is an amazing person, and we're so happy to be able to share how she goes above and beyond for the students and families she works with. Congratulations, Caitlyn!

New Illinois School Emergency Response Plan Requirement

ROE 4 will welcome Dr. Heather Baker to the Regional Office on October 16th with a new mandated requirement in the State of Illinois. Don't skip a beat >> YOU Could Save A Life. Visit https://bit.ly/101624hb5394 to read all about it and reserve your spot TODAY!





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School Support Services

School Improvement...with Director Dan Holder



Grant Updates



Last month, we shared that we applied for a grant opportunity through the **Janet Kjellstrom Family Foundation**. We are pleased to share that we received a **generous award of \$20,000** to support the creation and delivery of literacy content across the region.

At the federal level, we were able to meet with a representative from the U.S. Department of Education regarding details on a multiyear **Promise Neighborhood grant program**, for which portions, if not all, of our community could be competitive. Importantly, we learned that local partnerships with community agencies play a key role in grant applications for this federal grant, and so we are working to connect with existing (and potentially new) partners to discuss this opportunity.



Principal Collaboration



We are thankful to **Principal Chris Walocha**, the Kishwaukee Region Director-Elect for the Illinois Principal Association, for meeting with ROE 4 School Improvement earlier this month at Washington Academy in Belvidere to discuss regional needs of school leaders as well as opportunities for further connection through regional collaborative meetings. Incorporating feedback from a recent survey, we learned that--despite their busy schedules--principals would prefer to be able to meet in-person, after-school and that a quarterly schedule seems more manageable than monthly.



School Report Card/Accountability Data



I've recently connected with the Director of School and District Improvement at ISBE to discuss plans and opportunities for rolling out systematic support to schools. Following a review of publicly available report card data, a key focus in our region is identifying means for supporting schools currently in a Targeted school improvement status cycle.

While schools in Comprehensive and Intensive statuses receive additional funding to support improvement efforts as well as additional support from external learning partners, schools in Targeted status are eligible for much more limited support and assistance. Given that just over 20 schools across Boone and Winnebago counties are in Targeted status per the most recently accessible report card data from SY23, focus in this important area should yield positive results across the region.

Another finding from our review was that the most common reason for schools entering Targeted status was due to Children with Disabilities as a subgroup performing at or below the level of the "all students" group in the lowest 5 percent of all schools. This finding validates the importance of the work the ROE is doing with respect to co-teaching and paraprofessional training and suggests we further collaborate with schools and districts to find the most meaningful ways to support teachers in meeting the needs of children with disabilities.



Mental Health Roundtable with US Department of Education

Three Area 2 SEL Specialists and the Area 2 Hub Director attended the **Rural Youth Mental Health Roundtable** on September 4, 2024, hosted by Earlville Community Unit School District 9 and the U.S. Department of Education. This closed-to-press event provided a platform for students, educators, and mental health professionals to discuss mental health challenges faced by rural youth. Participants explored barriers to accessing mental health services, such as limited resources and staffing shortages, and strategies to improve support, including community partnerships and enhanced federal support for small and rural districts. Topics discussed included recruiting and retaining school-based mental health providers, equipping teachers with SEL skills to better support students, prioritizing mental health for both youth and staff, continuing programs like the SEL Hub, fostering community collaboration, streamlining access to services such as crisis care, and addressing the growing impact of social media on youth mental health.









Hub Teams Attend State-Level Training on RSSI Initiative

On September 17 and 18, our Hub teams, including Specialists, the Director, and the RSSI Data Navigator, attended a comprehensive state-level training in Decatur, IL. This training focused on aligning the RSSI Initiative with the REACH Process to strengthen resilience in schools.

Key topics during the event included using the RSSI app, understanding the pillars and their metrics, and developing a plan to support the rollout of the updated REACH Process and RSSI Launch Schools.



Restorative Practices



SEL Specialist Alexis Rutishauser attended an intensive two-day **Restorative Practices training** this month, where she deepened her expertise in creating safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. Building on this foundation, Alexis will be offering a five-part Restorative Practices series this fall. This series is designed to equip educators and community leaders with practical strategies that promote healing, strengthen relationships, and foster a sense of belonging within our schools. By focusing on these critical tools, Alexis is committed to ensuring that our learning spaces across the region are not only safe but also empowering for every student and educator.









School Outreach and Recruitment

Specialist Alexis Rutishauser has been actively connecting with schools to expand our reach and strengthen our support systems. Through her dedicated outreach efforts, she has already signed one new school to participate in our initiatives. This is an exciting step forward as Alexis continues to build relationships and bring more schools into our network, ensuring that even more students and educators benefit from the restorative practices and SEL strategies we provide. Her commitment to fostering safe, supportive learning environments is making a tangible impact across our region.



Speaker Outreach

As part of an outreach effort to explore new content topics and expertise, Director Jennifer Kaiser had the opportunity to connect with leading experts across our four key pillars: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Trauma-Responsive Practices, Mental Health and Well-being, and a Culture of Anti-Racism and Equity (CARE). It was inspiring to see how deeply passionate and committed people from across the nation are to this work. Presenters from Maryland to Colorado and California to Ohio were particularly impressed by the mission of the Hub and Illinois' leadership in creating safe, supportive learning environments where both students and staff can thrive. Hearing their praise and appreciation for the work we do was incredibly motivating and rewarding. It served as an energizing reminder of why we must stay committed to our youth and the educators who serve them, constantly striving to do better.

As the nation faces a mental health crisis and a growing pandemic of loneliness, **Illinois is setting a powerful example** in addressing these urgent issues. I'm excited to explore adding many of these experts' offerings to our calendar of events, further strengthening our commitment to equipping educators and students with the tools they need to succeed in today's world. This recognition fuels our passion and reinforces the importance of continuing our efforts to ensure our schools are havens of growth, resilience, and healing for all.

"It was an absolute pleasure speaking with you! The work that you do, the passion you have for it, and the care that you hold for the teachers in your area were absolutely evident. It truly made me excited about the possibilities of collaborating with you in supporting them and the students."

Professional Learning ... with Director Carrie Brockway



JOIN US

HR Advisory Council

October 8th 8:30-11:00 a.m. In-Person at ROE 4 or Virtual

Ed Tech Roundtable

October 31st 9:00am-12:00 noon In-Person at ROE 4

World Languages Network

October 22nd 2:00-4:00 pm In-Person at ROE 4 We cannot thank you enough for completing the recent survey! With nearly 160 respondents from across the region and representing nearly every role in a school or district, we are excited to announce our ROE 4 Networks for 2024-2025! We will soon be releasing the meeting dates for all of our newest networks. We appreciate knowing that you are looking forward to opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in your field, and we look forward to partnering with you in the coming months as networks begin meeting!



NEW Networks for 2024-2025 - First Meetings Coming Soon!!

- Elementary Teachers Network
- Instructional Coaches
- Curriculum Directors
- Principals/APs







(Pictured L-R): **Jenessa Fiduccia**, art teacher at Stephen Mack Middle School of Rockton School District 140 (; **Jennifer Decker**, Hononegah HS Art Teacher; and **Becky Swenson**, AP at Parker Center of Harlem District 122 filled out Boone-Winnebago ROE 4 networks surveys and had their names drawn as the lucky winners of Gift Cards and Yummy Treats! Congratulations, Friends!

Substitute Teacher License Application and Training



We know that the shortage of substitute teachers is very real for our member districts, and we want to help! If you or someone you know has thought about becoming a substitute teacher, please invite them to attend our Subs for Subs event on October 10th.

You may be interested in serving as a substitute teacher, but the license and application process seems overwhelming and confusing. ROE 4 is here to make that process easy! Join us for our in-person Subs for Subs event and receive:

- * Lunch
- * Complimentary fingerprinting
- * Substitute teaching toolkit that includes HR contact and application information for Boone & Winnebago School Districts
- * A hands-on walk-through of the application process from ROE 4 Licensure Specialist Leah Blake
- * "What to Expect When You Are Subbing," an adapted version of the ISBE sub training, facilitated by PL Specialist Leanna Keith

School Support Services Attend Conference

Leanna Keith, ROE 4 PL Specialist, and Dan Holder, Director of School Improvement, attended the Illinois Elevating Special Educators (IESE) Summit on Friday, September 20th, at Sauk Valley Community College.

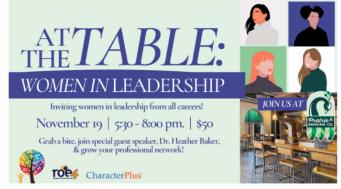
This third annual summit provided special education professionals opportunities to "come together to learn, share, grow, and connect." Cathleen Beachboard, an educator, best-selling author, and expert on raising psychological hope in schools, provided the keynote, as well as tools and strategies for educators and other school professionals who support students. Attendees chose their own sessions during the free event, and gained insight into the latest research-based strategies and tips applicable to supporting students with disabilities in the classroom.





In partnership with Character Plus and event funding by the Area 2 SEL Hub, dynamic professionals from ALL career paths are now encouraged to join our Women in Leadership Network.

The goal of At the Table is to grow your professional network and extend your own thinking around the power of being a women who leads with purpose to impact those you serve.



Be sure to mark your calendar for this impactful evening kickoff, centered around an influential message from our first empowering leader, Dr. Heather Baker, who will share her session, "With Heart!" She understands we are facing the highest levels of stress and burnout in decades, often forced to address and prioritize the health and well-being of others over their own. As a recovering stress-a-holic and Sudden Cardiac Arrest survivor, Heather will discuss the move from stressed and overwhelmed to healthy and successful. More details will be shared on our social media and website very soon!

Featured Professional Learning Opportunities for Educators



Watch movies online when YOUR time permits...and earn credit! Get ready to explore educational themes through popular films. Participants will analyze the film's content and apply it to classroom lessons that will enhance critical thinking skills. It's creative. It's interactive. It's an updated and unique approach to learning, perfect for educators seeking fresh perspectives and classroom ideas. Please silence your cell phone - the movie is about to begin...

Minecraft? Jeopardy? Pictionary? Trivia? Yes, please! Kiddos love games, but so do teachers! Discover strategies to gamify your teaching and capture that gaming energy right in your classroom. Increase student engagement by integrating game design elements into lesson plans and create an interactive classroom environment for EVERY student. Plus, you'll log off with a robust library of FREE resources and score an ultimate GG from the Regional Office to boot!

Here's Your Ticket:

www.roe4all.org/course/reel-to-real-pl

Skill-Check:

www.roe4all.org/course/game-on

WAIT! There's more to this Newsletter!

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

Update on School Law 2024 Moves to Regional Office



The Main Training Room at ROE 4 was this year's setting for **Update on School Law 2024**, the region's long-running annual law academy. Administrators filled the room as well as the wi-fi as approximately half of the attendees joined the educational legal event in-person and half via a virtual platform.

Back again for the FY25 school year, **Attorney Brandon K. Wright** of Miller, Tracy, Braun, Funk & Miller, Ltd. delivered detailed information about education mandates and their applications in his familiar common sense style. Attendees earned PDHs or Administators' Academy credits by engaging in the conversation and submitting a post-session assignment. This year's workshop topic centered around AA #229: The Legal Basis of Student Management.

Professional Learning Presents at CEANCI Event

There was an abundance of highlights from this month's **CEANCI** event at Boone-Winnebago ROE 4. **"CTE Straight from Industry: Connecting with Today's Student"** was an in-person session for area CTE instructors

During the full-day gathering, Leanna Keith, Boone-Winnebago Roe 4 PL Specialist, told her education story and talked Student Engagement with attendees. In the afternoon, Dan Holder, ROE 4 Director of School Improvement, took his turn presenting to the group. Sandwiched between those offerings from ROE 4, a four-person student panel took the stage. These CTE kids are headed into diverse career paths, including a future defense attorney and a member of the U.S. Army.

These students shared the impact great teachers had on them and how they learn best and connect with teachers, as well as their ideal learning experiences. One student shared that sometimes teachers rely too much on technology and that they need hands-on activities. (*They secretly love word searches!*) Coincidentally, one student even had their teacher in the workshop. These learners are the new apples of our eye, and we'd pick them again every time!



School Safety ...with Director Will Hartje



Health/Life Safety Work Will Extend through February 2025



We have started our Health/Life Safety visits for the 2024-2025 school year and will continue through February. Please be sure to have your Regional Office HLS binder ready for your visit.

We are looking forward to a great turnout at our October 11th Safety Training with the I Love U Guys Foundation. Topics will include communication when dealing with school safety events and robust reunification training for all of our schools. Regional Safe & Secure Schools programming is made possible by the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board and 1/2-cent Sales Tax funding.

Student Support Services ...with Director Meghan Hawkinson

September was Attendance Awareness Month

September marked Attendance Awareness Month, a time to highlight the critical role regular school attendance plays in student success. Consistent attendance is essential for building strong academic foundations, fostering social and emotional development, and ensuring long-term success both in school and beyond. Missing even a few days of school can have a significant impact on learning, especially for younger students who are developing key literacy and math skills.

During the month, schools, families, and communities are encouraged to come together to address barriers to attendance and promote a culture of simply "showing up." This idea is at the foundation of what drives Director Meghan Hawkinson's team.



Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of school days, is a widespread issue that affects millions of students each year. Addressing factors such as health, transportation, and family engagement can help ensure that all students have the opportunity to attend school regularly.

Attendance Awareness Month is a call to action for educators, parents, and community leaders to support students in attending school every day. By raising awareness, we can help students build strong habits that will last a lifetime and create a path to academic achievement and personal growth.

Summit Academy...with Assistant Director Faith McNamee

Summit Receives National NAEA Award







Summit Academy at 2023 Exemplary Practices Gallery Walk

Summit Academy has been notified that they are **ONE OF ONLY TEN schools in the nation** who have completed a 3-year exemplary practice cohort.

So, you may be wondering what the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) is and why the Machesney Park alternative school will be given such a prestigious award. The NAEA has developed 15 exemplary practices to enhance alternative education across the U.S., focusing on students who struggle in traditional settings. These practices aim to provide customized instruction, improve student engagement, offer behavioral support, and ensure a safe learning environment. The NAEA also outlines specific indicators of quality programming to help schools assess and improve their alternative education programs, establishing a national standard for serving atrisk students.

When explaining the process, Summit Assistant Director Faith McNamee shared, "For the past three years, our leaders have engaged in meetings to discuss an action plan and the exemplary practices we were focusing on.

We would discuss present levels and progress made in our focused areas. At the NAEA Conference, over the past two years, we met with the other schools in the cohort. Last year (year #3), we participated in a gallery walk at the NAEA Conference in Tampa to highlight what we had done at Summit to improve our practices. We also spoke to schools who were interested in joining the next cohort.

It is highly significant and also humbling to be **ONE OF ONLY 10 schools** being recognized nationally that completed the first-ever Exemplary Practices Cohort. We will receive an award on stage just prior to the keynote speaker at this year's conference. In addition, we have been invited to mentor the next cohort, speak to them at their first meeting, and be a contact for those schools as they start their own special journey."



Counseling Center Adds Staff Due to Increased Enrollment



With a more streamlined referral system and the addition of a dedicated Student Transitions Program Counselor on-site, Summit continues to see growth in student enrollment at their Machesney Park campus. As a result, many departments have added staff in order to offer the level of support students so desparately need.

One that has seen a year-over-year increase in staff members is the Student Counseling Center. Located just off the main hall in the heart of the school, this area sees a steady stream of activity. This year, the team increased by

two with the addition of social worker Shae Herman and Mental Health Professional Aerianna Cicero. The newly fortified team (four members pictured above left: Kari Cullen, Jen Garcia, Anna Hobbs, and Shae Herman) aims to enhance the range and quality of services provided to Summit students with:

- 1. Increased Availability to Students Crucial for those needing immediate support.
- 2. **Specialized Services -** trauma-informed care/mental health, substance abuse, and crisis intervention.
- 3. Reduced Counselor-to-Student Ratio Personalized attention and stronger relationships.
- 4. **Proactive Outreach c**lassroom visits, wellness checks, and mental health awareness
- 5. **Intensive Crisis Response**: Effective response to crises, when and where they arise.

Summit Transition Program September Data





Student Transition Counselor Meg Parker shared some impressive data for the month of September. Over the summer, her team had processed over 100 students who were referred to Summit from their home school for credit recovery and/or other barriers to education. This number includes middle school through high school students ages 13 and up.

During the month of September, 41 student files were processed from home school referrals with 28 Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) completed. The ILP is done individually with each student, where Ms. Parker meets with a student for 10-20 minutes, discussing big picture goals and smaller goals. These are assessed and then revisited in a 6-week timeframe. An increased number of students onboarded minimizes the number of students who linger on a waiting list, NOT in a classroom. It also supports the efficacy of the new Transitions Program's processes and procedures with dedicated one-on-one time as students enter and exit Summit Academy. Summit's ultimate goal is to get students in classrooms, learning.

Summit Academy Student Transitions Program Counseling is made possible by the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board and funded by the 1/2-Cent Sales Tax, voted on by county residents.

Thanks, Apple!



As part of their kickoff of Pre-K through 5th grade teacher nominations for 2024, the Golden Apple Foundation made a SWEET delivery to Summit Academy (and ALL schools in our region) last week. We appreciate that Golden Apple includes Summit in this fun day each year. We appreciate all the Foundation does for education and their recognition of regional educators.



Introducing New Summit Staff

Welcome! SUMMIT Açademy



Rob Conerton Technology Specialist



Jazmine Monroe Paraprofessional



Jaylen Marks Paraprofessional

Regional Services and Licensure



NEW ROE 4 TEAM MEMBER

Mary joins the front office as an administrative assistant. She will be supporting the busy central office by training in the testing center, administering tests at the Winnebago County Jail, fingerprinting, and issuing diplomas and transcripts through the ROE 4 website's online request system.

Mary attended Harlem High School and Rock Valley College. She enjoys camping, swimming, and spending time with her grandson. She also has a Cocker Spaniel named Coal.

ROE 4 Now Offers Assistance for Bilingual Customers

need you Spanish interpretation, support, or assistance at your next Boone Winnebago Roe appointment, we now have you covered! Simply let us know when you call to schedule any office hours appointment, and we will have our bilingual staff available to help. We've placed a notice right on the home page of the ROE 4 website. Find us at www.roe4.org to learn more.





Sweet September Data

Bus Drivers Recertified: 90
New Bus Drivers Certified: 15

Customers Fingerprinted: 214
Work Permits Issued: 3



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 Behavioral Assessment Training Regional 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



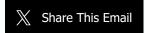
Quote of the Month:

"At harvest, farmers give up having meals at the dinner table so we can have meals at ours."

~ Unknown ~









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