A Message from Regional Superintendent
Robert A. Daiber, Ed.D.

Another school shooting at a Colorado high school has again heightened the concern for safety in our schools. These repeated acts of violence bring to the forefront the need for greater preventive measures. The school personnel and law enforcement staff who attended Lt. Col. David Grossman’s presentation on November 25 were urged not to live in denial that such an incident will not happen at their school. Also, staff needs to be prepared to defend themselves against violent actions when they occur. A detailed summary of Grossman’s presentation is provided in this newsletter. The ROE will continue to sponsor professional development to help school security personnel better understand violent behavior.

Most recently, States Attorney Tom Gibbons, Sheriff Bob Hertz, and myself conducted a seminar on the new conceal carry law (P.A. 98-63). The purpose of the meeting was to openly discuss the impact of this public act on public schools, businesses, and other public areas. I encourage those who are interested in this act to review the language. The act may be accessed electronically at http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/98/PDF/098-0063.pdf. I encourage all educators to review section 65 of the act which addresses prohibited areas. This section may be helpful to review when considering taking children from school to public or private sponsored events.

This school year is half complete and many great strides are being made in our districts to implement the Common Core State Standards, field test the PARCC assessment, and complete the 5 Essentials Survey. Great progress has been made in Madison County schools to implement the Common Core State Standards due to the efforts of the Madison County Professional Development Steering Committee. Much of the focus now is centered around training to utilize “shift kits” to implement the Common Core State Standards. There has been true leadership exhibited by educators of this region to make this curriculum shift happen. The work of Steve Oertle and the development of Course Mason is recognized statewide. More outcomes are about to occur with the training that will take place in conjunction with the Statewide System of Support (SSOS).

The ROE is once again a sponsor of the SIU-E Arts and Issues series February 27. We will provide an opportunity for educators to hear from Dr. Temple Grandin, a leading expert in the field of autism. Individuals who register for this event will have the opportunity to hear from one of the most famous autism advocates in the country. Additionally, the SIUE Arts and Issues series will feature a special screening of the film, “We’re All� Well.”

Deter

On November 25th the Madison County Regional Office of Education, in conjunction with the Southwestern Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (SILEC), sponsored a workshop on school safety and violence prevention. This workshop featured Lt. Col. David Grossman who has presented to over 100 different colleges and universities worldwide. He has trained educators and law enforcement professionals in the field of school safety at the state and regional level in all 50 states and in over a dozen foreign nations.

During the workshop Grossman laid out four steps to preventing most school massacres and limiting the damage from those that do occur: Eliminate Denial, Deter, Detect, and Delay.

Eliminate Denial

The people who get nervous and uncomfortable hearing about guns and school safety are in denial. “Denial is the enemy. It gets you killed”, said Grossman. “Denial has no survival value.”

What are people denying? The facts are clear, Grossman says. Armed good guys in the school deter school massacres. That’s what he calls them, “massacres” not “shootings”. “I’m a shooter. You’re a shooter”, he said. “These people, they’re killers. They’re murderers.” “School shooters” is a euphemism; the people who use the term are in denial. When school murderers begin their crimes, they continue precisely until armed opposition shows up. To say that we just need to keep all guns out of our schools, or that armed good guys on campus will cause deaths, is to live in denial.

He said our problem is not money for guards, it is denial.

Dr. Robert A. Daiber
Safety, cont. from page 1

The psychology of school attackers – the fear of failure – means they always look for the weak link, the soft target. Grossman said that there has not been even one school attack at a school with police on duty. In response to a question about what he believes should be uniformed police and/or guards or concealed carriers, he said both are effective, as long as you advertise the fact to the students and the public that someone is in charge. He added that the back door will be locked and dealt with immediately. Utah passed a law in 2006 allowing concealed carry in schools. By 2012, Grossman said, nearly every school district in Utah had staff on site who were not carrying. Total number of school homicides in Utah during that time: 0.

Grossman gave the example of a school massacre where two unarmed security guards were manning the metal detector; they were the first to be shot. For virtually no extra money, those guards could have been armed. Better yet, (with the steps described below) they could have fired one guard, armed the other, and had a hundred times better security at half the cost.

Detect

School administrators and police have gotten much better at this, but they need to keep vigilantly on the lookout for these trends. Sometimes we hear stories about a kid found with a “hit list” or making other plans. The ones we hear about let us know that someone is doing their job. The proactive approach encourages them not to be in denial, but to actually look for and take appropriate action when such things are detected.

Delay #1 – Single Point of Entry

This is where schools can do the most with the least amount of resources. Every second that killers can be delayed from their slaughter is another second for responders to show up and engage. The biggest thing that can be done here is a single point of entry. All the back and side doors need to be LOCKED, and all visitors must come through a single point of entry with a buzzer system so they can be identified before they enter. It may be more “convenient” to allow a back door to be open for whatever reason, or the smokers may want to prop a back door so they can go smoke. But is this worth the risk of allowing a massacre?

Grossman was introduced to the subject of school massacres in a very personal way. He had recently retired from the Army and was living in Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1998, with his child in middle school there. He got a call from a relative in Florida, asking him what happened at the middle school in Jonesboro, as it was all over the news. He turned on the TV and found out about a massacre that took place that day at a middle school in Jonesboro. Two children, an 11 year old and 13 year old, had stolen rifles, set up an ambush, and then one of them went in the back door at the middle school and pulled the fire alarm. When a girls' PE class exited the building, they opened fire, slaughtering 11 students and two teachers.

They would not have been able to pull that fire alarm and then get back into position for the slaughter if the back door had been locked and they had to use the single point of entry.

Grossman immediately went to his son’s middle school, and found out it was at the other school. He then phoned the principal and where the massacre had taken place. You can imagine the horror he went through until he found that it was the other school. Ever since then, school security has been added to the list of subjects on which Grossman speaks and teaches. The presentation was very emotional; and he suggested that each of us should take school safety seriously, and make sure that our teachers and administrators do as well. “Don’t ever lose your sense of outrage,” he said.

Delay #2 – Rooms need to be secure, fast.

Lockdown drills are an important feature of a school safety plan. But it doesn’t do much good to lock down a classroom if it is not secureable. Take, for example, a door with a glass window. An attacker can shoot out the glass, reach in, and open the door, defeating the purpose of the lockdown. This is VERY fixable. Glass in doors should be made wire embedded. If not, a transparent film can be put over the glass, making it shatterproof. You can shoot through it, but it will not shatter and fall out. You can take a hole in it, but that takes time. The bottom line is what you’re trying to buy. This is a very low-cost step (about $1 per window) that can be taken immediately.

Rooms also need to be locked as a general condition. Just like when you get in your car, as soon as you get in and start driving, the doors lock automatically; so should the classroom doors. Shatterproof glass won’t do much good if the door is kept propped open during class, or left unlocked.

Where are these killers coming from?

In his school safety presentation, Lt. Col. Grossman not only addressed the “how” of keeping schools safe from mass murderers, he explored, from a psychological perspective, “why.”

Grossman noted that we’ve had murder since Cain and Abel; we’ve had gunpowder arms for 500 years, and repeating firearms for 150 years. But up until 1976, there had not been one case of multiple murder in a school by a student. The first case happened that year – in Canada, where two students were murdered. A double homicide happened in California in 1978, and the numbers have only gotten worse since then. The killers for most the murders in this category? Germany holds that distinction.

What changed? How did we go from zero to Columbine to Virginia Tech? What’s different? What all of these types of events have in common is the sickest video games and the sickest movies. What type of violent imagery inflicted upon children is the biggest change.

In the “Grand Theft Auto” series of games, for example, players’ characters gain more points and levels by, among other things, killing cops, shooting, selling drugs, and prostitutes, and then killing the prostitutes. Another series of games, “Manhunt 2” for Wii, has players using the motion sensor controller for the game to actually physically reenact the actions of the character on the screen. Players learn how to use a knife to slit throats and a baseball bat to smash in the heads of people. Grossman said that all of the multiple school killers tended towards being loners and anti-social. All of them spent many hours playing these types of violent video games.

Grossman did not just assert the ill effects of violent imagery; he backed it up with science.When violent scenes are depicted on screen, for example, or in some cases even initiated and pantomimed, the brain is filled with “fight or flight” hormones. He showed a picture of a side by side brain scan, comparing the brains of a teenager who played a lot of violent video games, and one who did not. The areas of the brain used were markedly different.

What to do about it?

The good news, according to Grossman, is that the brains of children and teenagers can “detox” from the overflow of fight or flight hormones in about 48 – 72 hours if no violent imagery is presented to them. He said he’s heard anecdotal evidence from people who run church camps, that the first two or three days (as the kids are going through withdrawal from their steady diet of violent imagery) behavior is not very good. The pastors at these camps commented that there was no spiritual movement the first two or three days. But after that, the kids are detoxed and ready to listen.

Grossman highly recommended a TV tune out curriculum called Take the Challenge www.takechallengenow.net. Families, classes, schools, and even whole school districts are employing this curriculum, where the participants pledge to go electronics-free for a week. Kids get outside and play, they talk and interact more with their parents and others, and the detoxing of their brains from the flight or fight hormones does wonders for them.

Some critics say that video games and violent movies can’t be blamed, because murder rates are dropping. Grossman countered that it’s not the murder rate you need to pay attention to; it’s the rate of serious assaults per capita. Studies have shown that the murder rate is down because of advancing medical technology, not because there are fewer murder attempts. If today’s medical technology was the same as in the 1970’s, the murder rate would be three times as high. If we had 1930’s medical technology with today’s assault rate, the murder rate would be ten times as high. The rate of serious assaults rate has dropped five times since 1957. Regarding school massacres, before 1976 there were none. Then, middle schoolers started mass killing (Jonesboro, AR), then high schoolers (Colorado School of Mines) and now college age (Aurora, CO, Newtown, CT). Grossman urged those present to check out the Take the Challenge site, implement it themselves, and bring it to the attention of those who can make a difference in their school.

2013 Raising Student Achievement Conference

Moving All Children Forward

The Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) holds an annual statewide professional development conference in early December at the Pheasant Run Resort near St. Charles, IL. This cutting edge conference, Raising Student Achievement Conference, featured keynoters and speakers included:

- Ann Bancroft, first woman to cross the ice
- Dr. Anthony Muhammad, noted school leader in developing professional learning communities (PLC’s)
- Brian Curtin, 2013 Illinois Teacher of the Year
- Jon Bergmann, pioneer in the “Flipped Classroom” movement
- Dr. Richard Voitzl, highly sought after speaker on teacher evaluation

This year Madison County ROE 41 offered scholarships to Madison County Schools to attend the conference. These scholarships were offered to defray registration, travel, and lodging expenses for attendees from Madison County. We had three districts – Roxana, Bethalto and Triad – take us up on our offer. Please stay tuned for details regarding next year’s conference so that you/your district might take advantage of this great opportunity!
Regional Office of Education to Sponsor Temple Grandin Presentation

The Madison County Regional Office of Education is pleased to sponsor Dr. Temple Grandin for the 2013-2014 Arts and Issues series at Lewis & Clark Community College. Dr. Grandin’s presentation, “Different Kinds of Minds” will be held in the Mulvane Ballroom, Morris University Center on February 27, 2014.

Temple Grandin, PhD. is the most accomplished and well-known adult with autism in the world. Dr. Grandin’s fascinating life was recently brought to the screen in the HBO production full-length film, “Temple Grandin”, which claimed seven Emmy Awards, including Outstanding Made for TV Movie. She has been featured on NPR (National Public Radio), major television programs, such as the BBC special “The Woman Who Thinks Like a Cow”, ABC’s Primetime Live, The Today Show, Larry King Live, 48 Hours and 20/20; and has been written about in many national publications, such as Time, People, Forbes, U.S. News and World Report, and The New York Times. Among numerous other recognitions by media, Bravo Cable did a half-hour show on her life, and she was featured in the best-selling book, Anthropologist from Mars.

Dr. Grandin didn’t talk until she was three and a half years old, communicating her frustration instead by screaming, peeping, and humming. In 1950, she was diagnosed with autism and her parents were told she should be institutionalized. She tells her story of ‘groping her way from the far side of darkness’ in her book Emergence: Labeled Autistic, a book which stunned the world because, until its publication, most professionals and parents assumed that an autism diagnosis was virtually a death sentence to achievement or productivity in life. Dr. Grandin has become a prominent author and speaker on the subject of autism because as she has stated: “I have read enough to know that there are still many parents, and yes, professionals too, who believe that ‘once autistic, always autistic.’ This dictum has meant sad and sorry lives for many children diagnosed, as I was in early life, as autistic. To these people, it is incomprehensible that the characteristics of autism can be modified and controlled. However, I feel strongly that I am living proof that they can’.

Even though she was considered “weird” in her young school years, she eventually found a mentor, who recognized her interests and abilities. Dr. Grandin later developed her talents into a successful career as a livestock-handling equipment designer, one of very few in the world. She has now designed the facilities in which half the cattle are handled in the United States, consulting for firms such as Burger King, McDonald’s, Swift, and others. Dr. Grandin presently works as a Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University. She also speaks around the world on both autism and cattle handling.

Dr. Grandin’s current bestselling book on autism is The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism and Asperger’s. She also authored Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships, Animals Make us Human, Animals in Translation, Thinking in Pictures, Emergence: Labeled Autistic and produced several DVDs.

Target Moves for Students in Illinois

by Dr. Kenneth Spells, Superintendent, Alton CUSD #11

The Illinois State Board of Education made the decision last year to raise the cut scores for the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). As a result, the 2013 ISAT scores, scheduled for release next week, will appear as though student achievement plummeted in every district across the state as compared to their prior year’s performance. However, this is not a full and accurate portrayal of student performance in Illinois schools.

In order to meet the challenges of the new Common Core State Standards, the state raised ISAT cut scores in preparation for upcoming assessments (provided through PARCC) that will measure a student’s growth against these new rigorous standards.

The Common Core outlines deeper performance standards for the essential skills and content students need to be successful in college or the workforce after high school graduation. The state is also changing how we prepare teachers and implementing new principal/teacher evaluations that incorporate student growth.

Illinois is raising its performance expectations on ISAT in Math and English/Language Arts to provide a clearer picture of students’ progress toward college and career readiness. As a result, far fewer students statewide will be able to meet and exceed performance expectations on ISAT during the early implementation of this major shift. In other words, a different measuring stick is being used compared to prior years and the target has moved. As a result, it will appear as student achievement scores have severely decreased.

However, these higher expectations do not mean that our students know less or are less capable. Illinois is simply raising the bar on how much it expects from students and teachers.

Within our district, teachers are moving at a rapid pace and with a sense of urgency to better prepare students for mastery of the new Common Core State Standards. It is not a simple task due to the depth that instruction and learning must now reach for each standard. Teachers can no longer depend solely on prescriptive reading and math series. Rather, they must now utilize supplemental resources to fortify instruction to meet that depth and ultimately, assist students in making real-world connections and applications to learning.

The move to a more comprehensive accountability system with higher standards for students and stronger evaluation/preparation tools for teachers will certainly better prepare our students. After all, the goal of our schools and every other school in Illinois is to keep students on the path to college and career readiness.

While these continue to be uncertain times with major changes to our testing system and measures for accountability, one constant remains true, Alton schools continue to provide our students with outstanding opportunities for success as we prepare them for college and careers.

Each year the Illinois Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers presents one teacher the Physics Teacher of the Year Award. If you have a teacher that exemplifies excellence in teaching in general and in physics in particular we would like to encourage you to nominate him or her for this award.

Nominations can be submitted at their website http://helios.augustana.edu/aaptaawards/html.

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Helping Schools Make Common Core Instructional Shifts

by Marvin Warner, Director of School Improvement Services

The English/Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have raised the bar for all of us in education. An honest review of the CCSS indicates that expecting our students to think, write and speak more deeply are reasonable expectations. However, how do we get there from our present situation that over emphasizes content coverage and a skill/drill/kill mentality? This is the very question the Madison County Professional Development Steering Committee has been grappling with for the past two years. The Professional Development Steering Committee, comprised of curriculum specialists from all 13 public school districts in Madison County, has organized a professional development plan to assist school districts in making the curricular and instructional “shifts” necessary to successfully implement the ELA CCSS. This plan will utilize “Shift Kits” to address the shifts or changes needed to move our instruction to a deeper, more thoughtful level as required by CCSS.

So, you might ask, what are these “shifts”? The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) identifies three major areas of focus in the ELA CCSS and shifts within in each focus area in which our students need expertise to be successful in college and in a career. The first major area of focus is engaging in complex text. Engaging in complex text requires students to grapple with difficult texts and make sense of them. It also requires an understanding of academic vocabulary that is consistent across all disciplines. The second major area of focus is extracting and employing evidence. This requires students to cite evidence, respond to questions with multiple answers and then write using sources to substantiate their claims. The third major area of focus is building knowledge. This requires students to read and use informational text to compare, analyze and synthesize ideas. The following graphic illustrates the three major areas of focus and the resulting instructional “shifts” needed to successfully implement the CCSS:

The Madison County Professional Development Steering Committee then developed six “shift kits” containing resources to assist school districts in making the needed instructional shifts. Generally speaking, the resources included in each kit are:

- Student/Teacher/Administrator roles and responsibilities
- PowerPoint presentations for in-school presenters
- Books highlighting best practices
- Websites
- Flipcharts and task cards for teachers

The details addressed by each “shift” are as follows:

K-5 Informational Text

- CCSS alignment requires an instructional shift toward –
  - Providing students with equal exposure to informational text and literature
  - Students reading a true balance of informational and literary texts
  - Students time spent reading listening to, speaking or writing about texts
  - Teaching strategies to keep all students persevering with challenging tasks

6-12 Informational Text

- CCSS alignment requires an instructional shift toward –
  - Students reading 55% info text/45% literature by Grade 8; 70% info text/30% lit. by Grade 12
  - Teachers modeling comprehension strategies with the content they teach
  - Teachers using strategies to keep all students persevering with challenging texts
  - Teachers focusing the majority of student time on reading, listening to, speaking or writing about text
  - Utilizing primary and secondary sources in instruction

Academic Vocabulary

- CCSS alignment requires an instructional shift toward –
  - Understanding the 3 tiers of words and create a list of words that students will use most frequently
  - Students understanding that word meaning can be determined by context clues
  - Teaching fewer words, but teach the words using a research-based method

- CCSS alignment requires an instructional shift away from –
  - Long lists of words with copied definitions where students do not truly understand what they are learning
  - Teaching too many words so students do not retain them
  - Assuming students can use context clues

Text Complexity

- CCSS alignment requires an instructional shift toward –
  - Understanding the 3 measures of text complexity
  - Ensuring students are engaged in more complex texts at every grade level
  - Engaging students in rigorous conversations about texts
  - Giving students text to read and reread, but use caution in the amount of text to be “deeply understood” in a given time
  - Providing scaffolding when reading difficult text, then gradually removing the scaffolding to move students towards independence

- CCSS alignment requires an instructional shift away from –
  - Telling students what is in the text (study guides or lectures) resulting in students not reading
  - Assuming the texts we are giving students are at the appropriate reading level and that all students can independently tackle the texts.

Writing to Sources

- CCSS alignment requires an instructional shift toward –
  - Expecting students will generate their own informational texts (spending less time on personal narratives)
  - Presenting opportunities to write from multiple sources about a single topic

All thirteen of the Madison County school districts and two parochial schools have purchased sets of shift kits and are participating in the corresponding professional development. Twenty-eight sets of the six shift kits were assembled by School Improvement Services to implement this initiative.

see Shift Kits, page 5
Having students write short, focused research projects
Creating opportunities for students to have deep, evidence-based conversations about text
February 13 and 14, 2014 – Writing to Sources training to be provided by Dawn DeNap, Triad MS Social Studies Teacher and Steve Oertle, Roxana Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

March 26 and 27, 2014 – Text Dependent Questions training to be provided by Kim Henke, Triad Literacy Coach, and Lynne Newton, retired Highland Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. (Approximately 80 Madison County teachers and administrators were trained.)


January 13, 16 and 17, 2014 – Academic Vocabulary training to be provided by Kara Turley, Madison HS English Teacher, Joni Taylor, East Alton-Wood River English teacher, and Kim Henke, Triad Literacy Coach.

January 29 and 30, 2014 – 6-12 Informational Text training to be provided by Dawn DeNap, Triad MS Social Studies Teacher and Dr. Karen Gauen, Highland HS Principal.

February 13 and 14, 2014 – Writing to Sources training to be provided by Laura Owca, Madison Instructional Coach, Heidi Fredericksen, Highland HS English Teacher, and Suzanne Meyer, Highland HS English Teacher.

March 26 and 27, 2014 – Text Dependent Questions training to be provided by Dawn DeNap, Triad MS Social Studies Teacher and Kim Henke, Triad Literacy Coach.

April 7 and 10, 2014 – Text Complexity training to be provided by Steve Oertle, Roxana Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, and Lynne Newton, retired Highland Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

May 6, 2014 – Celebration/Sharing Session

August – December, 2014 – all six “shift” trainings will be presented again.

It is our hope and plan that this ELA Shift Kit Initiative will build a network of teacher experts within all 13 districts in Madison County, which will lead to positive shifts in instructional practice, and increased student success in learning.

Free Field Trip Opportunity
JFK Experience Exhibition at Builders Home & Garden Show

The Home Builders Association welcomes the JFK Experience Exhibition to the Builders Home & Garden Show March 6-9, 2014 at America’s Center in St. Louis. This compelling, interactive exhibit features memorabilia and items from John F. Kennedy’s life and presidency.

In addition to the exhibit, students on a school sponsored field trip will receive free admission to the Home & Garden Show on Thursday, March 6 & Friday, March 7. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the various aspects of construction and home building by visiting exhibits from nearly 500 home product and service companies.

For more information, please contact Tammy Ridgley at 314-817-5624 or RidgleyT@hbastl.com

2014 Leo & Antonia Gershanov Memorial Student Essay Contest

All Illinois students in grades 9 through 12 are invited to address the theme: “Indelible Images: Photographs Make History” in an original essay no longer than 2,000 words.

Students should choose a specific photograph and describe what it has contributed to the study of the Holocaust or other contemporary genocide. Further, students should examine how photographs document a moment in time, and play a role in the formation of collective memory.

Deadline for all entries is January 23, 2014.

Complete contest details and entry guidelines are posted at www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/contest.
Bethalto Elementary Students Get iPads

The Telegraph/KATHIE BASSETT

BETHALTO — Confident of the benefits of technology to student learning, the Bethalto School District began rolling out iPads to all of its elementary students Tuesday morning in its final phase of a digital conversion begun five years ago.

For her students’ first assignment, fifth-grade teacher Jenny Hanks asked her class at Meadowbrook Intermediate School to use their iPads to create an “It’s About Me” keynote presentation incorporating images, photos and videos that reflect their interests.

“In the past, we’ve done ‘About Me’ bags, where they have brought in items from home to talk about themselves,” Hanks said. “Now instead of the items going into their lockers, I told them once we got the iPads that we would put together presentations, and they can take the iPads home to take a picture or a short video of their cat, dog or their families — whatever they want to do.”

As an introductory exercise, students were searching the Internet for pictures of their favorite sports and video games to embed in their presentations.

“This is really fun, and it’s a really cool way to learn,” fifth-grader Abbi Geiger said. “I like being able to touch it and play around with it. I like that whenever I make a mistake that I can just wipe it off.”

Students no longer have to stand in front of the classroom to share their presentations; they can now “mirror” or project it onto a screen from their desks. Geiger also said she likes being able to look down at the iPad and be able to follow the notes Hanks has projected onto the screen at the front of the classroom.

If the presentation includes a word she doesn’t know, Geiger said she “can go to the dictionary on the iPad and look it up.”

The reading curriculum includes visual cues with vocabulary words along with the definition, an example with antonyms or synonyms and another sentence, so there are different ways of reinforcing learning.

“And every time I want them to have a new app, I can sync my machine to theirs through a station,” Hanks said. “This way, their material is always up to date.”

However, the biggest advantage in teaching, Hanks said, is that the iPads allow those students who need to re-read material to be able to do so while other students can move ahead with enrichment activities without being aware of what anyone else is doing.

“There can be so many things happening in the classroom at one time,” she said. “We want the kids to be able to guide themselves through lessons, so these options help me to better engage students at multiple levels.”

The district began integrating technology into the curriculum with the issuance of individual laptop devices to Tilman Middle School students in 2009. Since that initial roll-out, all high schools have received MacBook Air devices and middle school students have been “refreshed” with the same Apple device.

“We decided to do fourth-grade and fifth-grade pilot rooms last year to glean what these particular grade levels needed,” said Jill Griffin, the district’s curriculum director. “We were looking at the iPad and the MacBook Air options, and we decided the iPad would work best, based in part on the potential wear-and-tear to the machine because these kids are younger.”

To safeguard the machines, the district elected to cover each device with an OtterBox case and screen protector for added durability.

“We looked at what apps the device offered, and we were influenced by the fact that our curriculum could be easily delivered on iPads,” Griffin said. “We also looked at cost, which is about half that of a MacBook Air.”

Director of Technology Jay Stemmley said the older elementary students were given iPads with more storage space, with 32 gigabytes on the machines issued to fourth- and fifth-graders, and 16 gigabytes on machines given to kindergarten through third-grade students.

“We looked at students as consumers of information and content creators to determine what they would need,” Stemmley said. “We saw no difference for fourth- and fifth-graders between the MacBook Air and the iPad.”

The MacBook Air cost between $900 and $950, compared to a 16-gigabyte iPad priced at $490. The 32-gigabyte iPad costs about $100 more.

This year, the district purchased 1,000 iPads for student use, bringing the total number of laptop devices issued to students in the district to approximately 2,600 machines.

“Everybody has a laptop now,” Stemmley said.

As a result, students can use iPads to take snapshots of examples on the board or assignments for their personal use.

“One thing we worried about was whether students would have access to the Internet at home,” Hanks said. “But because the iPad uses apps, it’s really OK, because Internet use isn’t required, because everything is already downloaded for them. All they need is a charger.”

18th Annual Science in the South Conference

Friday, January 31, 2014
SIU Carbondale Student Center

Continental Breakfast 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Multiple Sessions from 9:00 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.
LUNCH and special prizes 12:40 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Program information and registration is at http://dce.siu.edu or call 618-536-7751.

Sponsored by the SIU Carbondale College of Science and The Illinois Science Teacher’s Association
On October 30, the Teaching with Primary Sources program introduced a one-day workshop focusing on Historical Newspapers in the Classroom.

Introduction to the Library of Congress Website - Teaching with Primary Sources

January 23 & 30, 2014
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

The Teaching with Primary Sources Program offers certified educators training in strategizing how to use the Library of Congress’ online digital primary source collections. Effective teaching strategies will also be shared to help meet standards by using primary source informational texts that promote inquiry and critical thinking in the classroom. During the 12-hour workshop series, K-12 educators will collaborate to create an activity for their classrooms that uses historical resources found at the Library of Congress website. All disciplines are welcomed! (Workshops are especially well received by school librarians and social science, English/language arts, and special education teachers.)

Presenter: Margaret Fredericksen

For more details on Administrator Academies, workshops and how to register to attend please visit our website at www.roe41.org

This fall, Kim Henke presented Aligning Lessons and Instruction to the ELA Common Core Standards for Grades K-5.

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The Madison County Regional Office of Education and Southern Illinois University will sponsor the Hoge Lecture Series on April 11, 2014 from 9:00am to 3:00pm. This year’s topic will be Cultural Responsiveness in the Classroom and Clinic.

Watch for more information on our website at www.roe41.org

Mathematics Transition Forum Invitation

The Illinois State Board of Education Mathematics Transition Team would like to invite you to an opportunity in discovering the benefits of the Integrated Mathematics Model Curriculum. This meeting for middle, high and/or middle/high school teams will support the articulation and value of the Mathematics Common Core Standards in an integrated model of mathematics instruction.

The meetings are free of charge and lunch will be provided. It will be very beneficial for district team members (including administrative leadership) to attend and consider your current mathematics practice in conjunction with development of the Mathematics Common Core Standards.

January 28, 2014 - Mt. Vernon, IL
January 29, 2014 – Springfield, IL

For registration information, please visit http://webapps.isbe.net/ISBEConference/
Since 2000, the Illinois Mathematics & Science Academy (IMSA) has been offering FUSION, a student enrichment and teacher professional development program, to schools throughout Illinois. FUSION, an award-winning program, serves 4-8th grade students who are talented, interested, and motivated in mathematics and science.

FUSION partner schools are provided with curriculum, lab kits, ongoing teacher professional development and support for the delivery of hands-on, minds-on science, technology, and engineering, and mathematics (STEM). FUSION is a co-taught program that helps refine and develop inquiry-based teaching strategies. Activities used in the IMSA FUSION curriculum are designed to intrigue and engage students to ignite their interest in math and science. FUSION unit topics include Forensics, Biotechnology, Nanotechnology, Secret Codes, The Electromagnetic Spectrum, and much more!

Each year, the number of FUSION partner sites in the MetroEast has grown. In fact, the Metro East is one of the fastest growing FUSION regions in Illinois. FUSION welcomed two new schools this fall: Emge Middle School in Belleville and East Alton Middle School in East Alton, with two programs. Additional partner schools in Madison County include: Meadowbrook Elementary, Trime Middle, Highland Elementary and Middle, C.A. Henning Elementary, St. Jacob/ Marine Elementary, Silver Creek Elementary, and Triad Middle School.

The goals of IMSA FUSION are:
1. To increase student interest, involvement, and literacy in math and science.
2. To enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers in math and science.
3. To stimulate excellence in schools’ math and science programs.
4. To increase access to programming for students historically underrepresented in math and science or in areas of the state that are under-resourced in STEM opportunities.

East Alton Middle School (EAMS) is the newest FUSION partner school in Madison County. EAMS implements a 7th grade and 8th grade embedded FUSION program for over 40 talented students. The program is run during a modified block of time every Wednesday. According to Principal Butch McGill, significant scheduling adjustments have been made to make the program possible. EAMS had an incredible parent event turnout at the FUSION parent meeting in the fall and another meeting is scheduled in November. Families have been extremely excited about the opportunity for STEM enrichment in East Alton. As an IMSA partner, teachers are running curricular units in Sensational Senses, a study of sensory perception and learning, and Tectonics and Seismicity, a study of the effects of tectonic shifts. Students have had field trips, visiting speakers, and many wonderful hands on Problem-Based Learning experiences. Many of the students say they wish FUSION met every day! It has been a wonderful addition to our curriculum and school experience for the students involved. Jeff Spithalman and Allison Ringering have been teaching the 7th grade class and Tyler Sims and Principal McGill have been teaching the 8th graders. The teachers and Principal Butch McGill would highly recommend the IMSA FUSION Program to other schools in Madison County!

Each year, schools can apply for consideration to become an IMSA FUSION partner school. Applications are available from December 1 to March 1 at https://www.imsa.edu/extensionprograms/fusion.

The internationally recognized Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy® (IMSA) develops creative, ethical leaders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As a teaching and learning laboratory created by the State of Illinois, IMSA enrolls academically talented Illinois students (grades 10-12) in its advanced, residential college preparatory program, and it serves thousands of educators and students in Illinois and beyond through innovative instructional programs that foster imagination and inquiry. IMSA also advances education through research, groundbreaking ventures and strategic partnerships. (www.imsa.edu)