Regional Office of Education #41  
Madison County

Dr. Robert A. Daiber, Regional Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Andrew Reinking, Assistant Regional Superintendent of Schools

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

As the 2017-18 school year draws to a close, the Regional Office of Education is proud to recognize one hundred and twenty-seven retiring educators. Among them are two superintendents, Dr. Cullen Cullen of Venice District #3 and Mr. Virgil Moore of East Alton Elementary District #13. Both exit their positions at the close of the fiscal year. This issue of Educational Benchmark highlights the service of these retiring educators.

Also, in this edition, the ROE congratulates twenty-three educators and two teams of teachers who have been recognized for outstanding education contributions to their respective districts. This edition is inclusive of complimenting three hundred and five young authors who participated in this year’s annual Young Author’s Award ceremony held April 28 at Edwardsville High School. A special thank you is extended to the committee who ensures the success of this event each year.

The Regional Office will again award scholarships to history teachers who wish to participate in the Madison Historical project. The classroom work of students at Civic Memorial High School who are taught by Ms. Suze Gibson are featured in an article in this edition. Ms. Gibson was a scholarship recipient last summer and implemented the Madison History project in her teaching of U.S. History. I encourage you to visit the Madison Historical website to see the results of the work accomplished this past year at madison-historical.siue.edu. Other teachers who may be doing exemplary lessons like this unit, please advise the ROE so we may feature your work as well.

On Friday, May 6, students from Madison County middle

District Superintendents Earn Retirement

Cullen Cullen, Ed.D. will be retiring as Superintendent of Venice CUSD #3 in June, 2018. Dr. Cullen has been the Superintendent at Venice CUSD #3 since July, 2009. Dr. Cullen and the Board of Education have worked collaboratively to improve the financial standing of the district, improved school facilities, and most important, improved student achievement and growth.

Dr. Cullen believes that the future of our community is determined by the home and school. Dr. Cullen said “We are what we are taught, and our role as educators is to enable every child to succeed.” Dr. Cullen plans to spend retirement traveling with his family.

Virgil Moore  
East Alton

My career in education began in 1984 as a teacher in the Cahokia School District. I was very proud to teach in the same district that I had attended as a student. After ten years of teaching, I went on to become an assistant principal at Cahokia H.S. for seven years. I left Cahokia to serve stints as Principal of Centralia H.S., Belleville East H.S., and Southwestern Middle School. The last eleven years, I have had the honor of being Superintendent of East Alton District 13.

I am reminded of just how incredibly fortunate I have been over the last thirty-five years to be a part of the lives of children every time I have a former student tell me, “Don’t have a great day, make it a great day. The choice is yours.” In my humble opinion, there is no greater profession than that of an educator.

My hope for my retirement is that I will be wise enough to follow God’s plan for the rest of my life and continue to make a positive contribution to society. If that does not work out, I am just going to relax and enjoy my ten grandchildren.
Civic Memorial H.S. Students Work With Madison Historical

Over the past week, students who enrolled in Dual Credit U.S. History at Civic Memorial High School had the unique opportunity to work with the historical team from Madison Historical: The Online Encyclopedia and Digital Archive for Madison County whose goal is to document, preserve and share the rich history of Madison County, Illinois. Madison Historical is coordinated by the Department of Historical Studies at Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville.

The team that visited Civic Memorial High School consisted of three graduate students who were eager to share their experiences and love for history with the high school students. Students enjoyed interacting with the SIUE students and were surprised to find out about the many aspects and jobs historians are involved in. During the three day lesson sequence, the students analyzed how the local history of Madison County speaks to the larger narrative of the history of Bethalto and the United States in the 20th Century. Besides bringing history alive, the project gave students a chance to work as real historians, rather than merely as students of history. For many students, this was a great opportunity to make real world connections between what they are learning in the classroom and the resources available in their community.

Students were asked to gather and evaluate information they collected in the community. This meant that students had to go out and talk to family members, neighbors or others within the community that could contribute a narrative or possessed an artifact that was significant of past experiences. Under the guidance of the SIUE students, the CM students conducted oral interviews and analyzed the collected artifacts. The students were then given the tasks to consider the credibility, structure and context of the artifact, and place it within the greater national or historical narrative. The collected items were scanned and became digitized artifacts by the Madison Historical team. Students were taught how to participate in the digital archiving process and how to synthesize information texts and artifacts into a concise written narrative.

There is no doubt that this project pushed some students out of their comfort zone; some were unsure if they were up for the task. However, the step-by-step approach in the teaching methods presented by the Madison Historical team put the students at ease and resulted in some impressive outcomes that will make great additions to Madison Historical’s digital archive. The projects created by the students will be evaluated by Madison Historical for possible inclusion in the online database and publication on the site. The experience was unique in that it gave high school students the chance to work closely with accomplished historians and graduate students which ultimately gives them the chance to have their work published. The Madison Historical projects gave students a sense of pride in their community, knowing that they had contributed to the documentation of history.

Safe Transportation

In recent reports, one too many school bus accidents have us wondering what could have been done and many even speculate a different outcome if certain steps were taken. In Illinois, school bus drivers are held to higher standards than other professional drivers. Districts and companies are required to have licensing steps in place for continued monitoring for student safety. Each fiscal year, Madison County Regional Office of Education trains over 800+ new and seasoned school bus drivers at some point during the year to either gain or uphold their school bus driver permit credentials. These trainings typically cover Illinois laws concerning student transportation as well as updates in best practices for the continued safety of our school age children. Beyond drivers’ bus permits, drivers also have other yearly testing, trainings and duties to uphold their CDL driving privileges for Illinois.

Along with the school bus drivers monitoring and training for safe transportation and student safety, districts also provide continued training to their students in safe riding practices each school year. The State of Illinois requires districts to provide one on-site training at each school for all students, so students understand school policies at each step of their daily transportation routine. This includes expected behaviors at the bus stop, when loading and unloading a school bus and while the bus is in motion. These trainings also include how to efficiently evacuate a school bus in the event of an emergency. As stated in the school code, district staff and bus drivers work together to provide these trainings.

Madison County school bus drivers continue to show dedication to their students and support for our schools. Their success is the outcome of the safe transportation process that includes the school districts, the students as well as the parents of the students who ride their buses. Communication and training for our districts, drivers, students and parents is key to a successful ride on the school bus.

Kudos to all for another safe year of transportation!

Madison County Schools Participate in United Way’s Families Food Drive

The United Way of Greater St. Louis held their Third Annual Food for Families Food Drive for Madison County Schools. This year there were 13,905 pounds of canned foods collected. An additional $2,900 in monetary donations were collected. The top 3 schools with the most pounds of food collected received cash prizes. St. John Neumann School (Maryville) came in first place with 2,000 lbs. of food collected and receiving $1,000. St. Peters & Paul School (Alton) came in second place with 1,366 lbs. receiving $750 and third place with 1,030 lbs. and receiving $250 was Venice Elementary.

Other participating schools included: Lovejoy Elementary School (Alton), North Elementary (Godfrey), Highland Middle School, Frohardt Elementary (Granite City), Mitchell Elementary, Granite City High School, Maryville School, Highland High School, Prather Middle School (Granite City), Coiddle Middle School (Granite City), SIUE, Alton Middle School, East Elementary (Alton), Alton High School, West Elementary (Alton), St. Elizabeth School (Granite City) and the Granite City High School National Honor Society.

McKinney-Vento Program Lends Helping Hand to Madison County Students

The McKinney-Vento program is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under this program, state educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youth. Homeless children and youth should have access to education and other services needed to enable them to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. States and districts are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth. Throughout the 2017-2018 school year the McKinney-Vento program has served 1149 students in Madison County Schools.

Madison CUSD #12 elementary students package hygiene kits

East Alton School District #13 fill food boxes.

Granite City CUSD #9 staff assemble backpacks with needed supplies.
Congratulations to the 2018 Retirees

Thank you for your years of dedicated service to the students of Madison County!

Roxana
Crystal Hagen - 17 Years
Chief School Business Officer
District Office
Mary Maynard - 23 Years
Librarian
South/Central Elementary
Dee Luijohannes - 33 Years
Special Education Teacher
Roxana Jr. High
Kathy Wittch - 32 Years
Math Teacher
Roxana Senior High
Marsha Ribe - 17 Years
Computer Tech Teacher
Roxana Jr. High
Judy McGill - 16 Years
Music Teacher - Roxana
Senior High
Mike Arbuthnot - 32 Yrs.
P.E. Teacher - Roxana
Senior High
Lou Ann McFarlane - 18 Years
Custodian
Central Intermediate

Triad
Laura DiCristofano - 17 Years
Teacher
Triad Middle School
Kathy Hardesty - 31 Yrs.
Teacher
Triad Middle School
Kimberly Henke - 23 Yrs.
Teacher
C.A. Henning Elementary
Carrie Metze - 31 Years
Teacher
Triad High School
Annette Mills - 25 Years
Media Specialist
Triad High School
Laura Pruett - 33 Years
Teacher
St. Jacob Elementary
Bobbie J. Richardson - 21 Years
Teacher
Triad Middle School
Melissa Taylor - 33 Years
Teacher
Triad High School
Susan Berkel - 14 Years
Bus Driver
District

Cullen Cullen - 9 Years
Superintendent
District

Highland
Dianna Cricelli - 18 Years
Insurance/Transportation
District Office
DeAnna Dobbs - 20 Yrs.
English Teacher
Highland High School
Tami Duft - 17 Years
Kindergarten Teacher
Althamra Primary

Josie Elliott - 33 Years
Kindergarten Teacher
Highland Primary
Karen Gauen - 25 Years
Principal
Highland High
Nancy Genteman - 21 Yrs.
Media Specialist
Highland School District
Gina Hirsch - 31 Years
Science Teacher
Highland High
Terri Lurkins - 20 Years
Grade 4 Teacher
Grantfork Elementary
Jackie Mollet - 33 Years
Special Education Teacher
Highland Primary
Marlyn Paur - 15 Years
Grade 5 Teacher
Grantfork Elementary
Carol Stratton - 29 Years
Secretary to Business Mgr.
District Office
Marylenn Wolters - 16 Years
Program Assistant
Highland High

Edwardsville
Jon Parkin - 24 Years
Teacher
Edwardsville High
Michael Waldo - 31 Years
Teacher
Edwardsville High
Mark Haun - 33 Years
Band Teacher
Lincoln Middle School
Sandra Hillmer - 20 Years
School Nurse
Columbus Elementary
Cynthia Cassens-Mickle - 33 Years
Elementary Teacher
Columbus Elementary
Cathleen Vano - 22 Years
Elementary Band Teacher
Cassens Elementary
Stephanie Lysakowski - 18 Years
Teacher
Lincoln Middle School
Diane Mercer - 27 Years
Teacher
Edwardsville High
Kimberly Sansone - 17 Years
Assistant
Columbus Elementary
Ann Ritzheimer - 12 Years
Secretary
Lincoln Elementary
Steven Morrison - 27 Yrs.
Director of Facilities
District
Lisa Doubet - 23 Years
Principal Secretary
Woroen Elementary

Bethalto
Donnell Campbell - 17 Years
Teacher
Civic Memorial H.S.
Rita Coulter - 17 Years
Teacher
Wilbur Trimple Middle
Penny Cress - 18 Years
Teacher Aide
Wilbur Trimple Middle
Emily Eubanks - 24 Years
Teacher Aide
Civic Memorial H.S.
Leonard Fisher - 10 Years
Maintenance District
Frank Graser - 24 Years
Teacher
Civic Memorial H.S.
Kimberly Heinz - 18 Years
Principal
Parkside Primary
Julie Lindsay - 14 Years
Teacher Aide
Bethalto East Primary
Debra Mayer - 20 Years
School Nurse
Parkside Primary/ Meadowbrook Inter.
James Smith, Sr. - 20 Yrs.
Custodian
Wilbur Trimple Middle
Nancy Stille - 24 Years
Cook
Parkside Primary
Diane Waldo - 28 Years
Teacher
Wilbur Trimple Middle
Susan Worthen - 12 Yrs.
Custodian
Wilbur Trimple Middle
Dee Zakrzewski - 19 Yrs.
Teacher Aide
Meadowbrook Intermediate

Granite City
Linda Ahlers - 13 Years
Cafeteria
Granite City High
Frances Barnhart - 29 Yrs.
Cafeteria
Mitchell Elementary
Allen Barnhart - 25 Years
Custodian
Wilson Elementary
Kristina Batsios - 26 Years
Nurse
Coolidge Intermediate
James Bladdick - 24 Years
Custodian
Granite City High
JoAnn Brewer - 18 Years
Executive Secretary
District
Cynthia Gagich - 27 Years
Director of Secondary Ed.
District
Beverly Golden - 29 Years
Monitor
Granite City High
Margaret Harris - 21 Years
Secretary
District
William Harrison - 25 Yrs.
Custodian
Frohardt Elementary
Virginia Ladd - 24 Years
Teacher
Prather Elementary
Tom Lanham - 13 Years
Teacher
Granite City High
Terry Rogers - 20 Years
Cafeteria
Maryville Elementary
Shelley Ryan - 24 Years
Teacher
Frohardt Elementary
Kathleen Schooley - 8 Yrs.
Secretary
Coolidge Jr. High
Lisa Smith - 24 Years
Teacher
Granite City High
Karen Trask - 15 Years
Interpreter
District
Pam Walk - 23 Years
Cafeteria
Granite City High
Denise Worthen - 18 Years
Paraprofessional
Wilson Elementary

Collinsville
Patrick Baquet - 38 Years
Maintenance District
Jayne DeLuca - 20 Years
Secretary
Summit Elementary
Mary Fierce - 20 Years
Secretary
District
Danny Hamilton - 39 Yrs.
Maintenance District
Annette Heth - 16 Years
Grade 3 Teacher
Summit Elementary
Andrew Kosberg - 33 Yrs.
Industrial Arts Teacher
Collinsville High
Anita Kramen - 28 Years
School Psychologist
Renfro Elementary
Karen Lesker - 17 Years
Social Worker
Webster Elementary
Paula Moad - 10 Years
Educational Assistant Dorris Intermediate
Donna Moody - 30 Years
Grade 4 Teacher
Summit Elementary
Ellen Nicholl - 13 Years
Teacher/Visionally Impaired District
Sherry Oliver - 17 Years
Secretary
Town Echo Elementary
Thomas Siegel - 31 Years
Custodian
Renfro Elementary
Jame Toombs - 11 Years
Custodian
Collinsville High
Diana Warhoover - 10 Yrs.
Secretary
District

Alton
Christine Bohne - 26 Yrs.
Teacher Assistant - East Elementary
Christine Dreith - 21 Yrs.
Social Studies Teacher
Alton Middle
Cathy Droste - 28 Years
Supervisor Special Ed.
District
Lonetta Edwards - 38 Yrs.
Security Guard
Alton Middle
Joyce Forschnecht - 20 Years
Title I Teacher
West Elementary
Valarie Franklin - 24 Yrs.
Safety Aide
North Elementary
Kimatha Hardesty - 20 Years
2nd Grade Teacher
West Elementary
Teri Harvey - 27 Years
2nd Grade Teacher
East Elementary
Sandra Jackson - 19 Yrs.
Bookkeeper, Special Ed.
District
Rebecca Minor - 28 Years
Special Ed. Teacher
West Elementary
Linda Mortland - 2 Years
Teacher Assistant
East Elementary
Vicky J. Osborn - 31 Yrs.
Kindergarten Teacher
Lewis & Clark Elementary
Patricia Paustian - 25 Yrs.
Math Teacher
Alton Middle
Brenda L. Powars - 22 Yrs.
Language Arts Teacher
Alton Middle
Barb Raya - 33 Years
Clerk
Alton Middle
Kathy Reimer - 17 Years
School Nurse
Alton High
Marsha Schroeder - 25 Years
2nd Grade Teacher
North Elementary
Richard Scott - 25 Years
Vocational Teacher
Alton High School
Katherine Simones - 7 Years
Art Therapist
Motivational Achievement
Brenda Sowards - 25 Yrs.
2nd Grade Teacher
North Elementary
Tracy Summers - 34 Years
Computers Teacher
Alton High
Katherine Walters - 33 Years
Title I Teacher
North Elementary

See Retirees, page 4
Summer Workshops!

June 11
Stressed Brains Can’t Learn: The Effects of Trauma in Children and How Schools Can Help Them Heal

June 18
Building At-Risk Student Resilience

July 30
Multi-Sensory Instruction

July 31
What You Need to Know About Dyslexia

August 2
Engaging the Unengaged Student

August 6 & September 26
Project Wild!

August 7
Restorative Practices with Trauma Affected Students

For complete details and to register for upcoming workshops, please visit our website at www.roe41.org (select workshops/events tab). Any questions contact Anna at 618-692-5560.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for additional summer workshops and year round for more professional development opportunities.

Schools Problem Solve at 2018 Olympiads

In March, the Madison County ROE welcomed more than 200 students to the Junior and Senior Olympiads. Teams of four students competed in a variety of projects and activities designed to test their problem solving skills using minimal resources. Teams consisted of students who excel across the disciplines. If you are interested in sponsoring a team from your school or have any questions related to the Olympiads, please contact Anna Dyson, School Improvement Services at 692-5560 or adyson@roe41.org.

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Many issues surround education today regarding disenfranchised youth, social emotional issues, and school safety. I believe the more we try to help students leave the school year feeling good about their experience the better job we have done. As you prepare to depart for the summer, please take time to wish your colleagues farewell for the summer and find time to enjoy your break.

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Community relations better than others giving service hours to their communities. Also, my compliments to the Triad engineering team who earned second place in the Source America Design Challenge. It is rewarding to see young people competing academically with students throughout the U.S. and representing this region so well.

Although the school year is drawing to an end, summer camps for students and professional development activities are being planned. Please see announcements included in this edition. Once again, the Directions Conference has an outstanding line up of presenters and an opportunity for administrator academy.

Please see the conference announcement for full details of this event.

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Congratulations to Our Retiring School Administrators

Karen Gauen
Principal
Highland High School

After more than 40 years in education, Highland High School Principal Dr. Karen Gauen is going to retire to Minnesota. Not a sunny, warm climate for her! Two of her three kids -- Christopher and Heather -- have moved north and Grandma and Grandpa Gauen are going to follow. The Gauens will live in Rochester, MN, where son Chris Stephenson is a doctor at the Mayo Clinic. He is married to Jennifer Rogier Stephenson at the Mayo Clinic. Their son Chris Stephenson is a doctor in Rochester, MN, where he and his wife, Jennifer Rogier Stephenson, are parents of two children, Christopher and Heather.

Cindy Gagich
Director of Secondary Education
Granite City CUSD #9

Cynthia Gagich is retiring as Director of Secondary Education of Granite City CUSD #9 after 33 years of service to education. She began her career as a math teacher, track, and volleyball coach at Freeburg Community High School. After six years she became a business teacher and volleyball coach at Granite City High School along with a math and computer teacher at Cooledge Jr. High School in GC. For 22 years she held various administrative positions in the Granite City School District, including vocational director, assistant principal, vice principal / curriculum, high school principal, and the last five years at central office.

She has worked with various school programs, and partnered with community organizations with a commitment to enhance academic and extracurricular offerings for students. She was instrumental in the Granite City Partnership for Excellence in Education, a business-education partnership, which has sponsored the Job Shadow Program for over 25 years and serving over 2500 students since inception. She was also a leader in expanding dual credit opportunities for students and, along with the guidance dept. chair, initiated the school's partnership with Saint Louis University's 1818 Advanced College Credit Program in 2006. GC CUSD9's 1818 program now offers over 30 hours of college credit with SLU. Mrs. Gagich also spearheaded SWIC's pilot program for Running Start in 2012, which has grown to now serve over 300 students throughout the SWIC District.

Over the course of her career, Mrs. Gagich was a member of the Granite City CEO Advisory Board, Madison Co. CTE System Board of Control, SWIC Industrial Technology Advisory Board, Madison Co. PD Steering Committee, Illinois Principals Association, IL CTE Association, ILASC and ASCD. She has been recognized by her colleagues for local awards and four times has received an ISBE Those Who Excel award in various categories.

Her retirement plans are to remain active with hiking, biking, volleyball and to do more traveling. She wants to read more, spend more time with family, and volunteer. She shares, “I have been committed to working hard to improve programs and to strengthen curriculum, assessments, and the instructional abilities of our staff for the benefit of our students and families.”

Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers Program

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) Foundation is making $36,500 in grant money available statewide in Illinois. This special grant money will provide additional funds to public school educators (Pre-K through 12) so that their students will have the means to participate in special projects. Please download, complete, and submit the application online by visiting www.irtaonline.org and looking under the IRTA Foundation section. All proposals must be submitted by June 1, 2018. A special committee will select the recipients of the grant money over the summer. Grant awards will be presented in the fall.

Former Trustee Passes Away

Clyde Jones, former member of the Madison County Regional Board of School Trustees, recently passed away. Mr. Jones served on the board of school trustees from 1996-2013. He served in the capacity of Vice-President and President. Mr. Jones had previously served as a member of Bethalto Community Unit District #8 from 1964-1986. His continued service to public education was admired by the community he served.

Pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade. Following that, Kim was the elementary principal at Summit and Jefferson schools in Collinsville, Illinois, before making her way to Bethalto, Illinois as principal at Parkside Elementary. Throughout her 18 years as principal at Parkside, the school has housed K-5 students, K-3 students, and most recently, 2-3 students.

Kim feels very fortunate to have worked alongside many, many quality educators over the past 34 years! She believes she has fulfilled her calling, and hopes her efforts have made a positive difference in the lives of the students and staff members she’s served. She is now ready to begin a new chapter of her life. In retirement, Kim hopes to have more time to devote to her hobbies of singing, dancing, listening to music, and relaxing poolside or beachside in the sun! She also hopes to travel and partake in a wide variety of activities and experiences with friends and family.

As her retirement progresses, if she’s really lucky, you might even find Kim at the Children’s Hospital, rocking and singing to babies. There she can combine two of her passions... singing/music and children!

Kim Heinz
Principal
Parkside Primary School

In 1984, Kim eagerly began her career in education, teaching Kindergarten in her home town of McLeansboro, Illinois. After seven years teaching Kindergarten, Kim took a position at SIU Carbondale as an early childhood educator in the Even Start Family Literacy program. Kim came back to the public school system in 1994, teaching second grade in Murphysboro, Illinois and then Chapter 1 Reading in Marion, Illinois.

Kim switched gears in 1996, beginning her career as a principal. Her first administrator position was in Edinburg, Illinois, where she was in charge of a school housing students from many supportive families, and devoted professionals.”

Please download, complete, and submit the application online by visiting www.irtaonline.org and looking under the IRTA Foundation section. All proposals must be submitted by June 1, 2018. A special committee will select the recipients of the grant money over the summer. Grant awards will be presented in the fall.

Many of our school districts and bussing companies are looking to hire bus drivers.

Pass this on!
Historically, students with special needs have struggled to gain meaningful employment. Opportunities to gain employability skills are often limited to on-campus jobs in the cafeteria or assisting custodial staff. Something needed to be done to give these students more opportunities. We needed to raise the bar of expectation. That's why in-school cafés were developed.

Students needed a real-world experience to gain meaningful skills but many were not ready to work in employer paid jobs in the community. In-school cafés are exactly that. Cafés that sell cookies and coffee to students and staff. Students who work in the cafés gain skills that are transferrable to a variety of work environments. Their training goes beyond selling cookies or coffee. They are hands on in every aspect of running a café. Students are assigned to do inventory, ordering, restocking, run the cash register, filling out deposit slips for the day’s take, and food preparation. All students who work in the cafés obtain the food handler safety certificate as well. Customer service skills are not only taught but are learned through the nature of the café itself.

In-school cafés, while fun for everyone, are programmatic and fill a gap in a continuum of services. Most high schools have S.T.E.P. (Secondary Transitional Experience Program) in which students have the opportunity to do job shadowing or work experiences in the community. Many students are not ready to go into the community for employment so the cafés give them the chance to prepare for community-based work experiences.

There are currently three high schools in Madison County with fully operational cafés, three that sell cookies only, and two more are in the planning stages of opening up their own cafés. Each school has very different cultural climates and needs so no two programs are alike. There is, however, one consistent thread that runs through each and every program:

\textbf{The integration of students with disabilities with students without disabilities. It is wonderful to see the interaction between students. When they are in the café, there doesn’t appear to be any difference. Students and staff are interacting with our students instead of doing things for them. This is the important byproduct of these cafés. Not only are students learning valuable work skills, but they are initiating and, in many cases, maintaining, positive peer relationships. This causes a shift in the school climate as well as in individuals’ perceptions.}

Many students pass through these cafés on a daily basis. Many of these students will be future employers. What an opportunity for them to see that individuals with disabilities not only can work, but that they can be their best employees.

For more information regarding cafés or STEP, please contact Micki Watkins of the Madison County Transition Program at 618-296-4643 or mwatkins@roe41.org.

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\textbf{Raising the Bar}

AG Camp focuses on learning about the various aspect of agriculture found in Madison County. Campers will board a bus and visit one to two farms per day to see firsthand how a real cattle farm, dairy farm, pig farm, grain farm, and crop farm runs and operates. After farm visits campers will return to the Farm Bureau for lunch and activities designed to enhance their understanding of the agricultural world around them. Each of these activities is designed to challenge and expand the campers understanding of the various types of agriculture, how it relates to their life, and to help them explore what role they may play in it as they begin thinking about related education and careers.

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\textbf{Dyslexia Research Project}

Teaching students to read is one of the most important things we do in our elementary schools, and school administrators are a vital part of this process. Unfortunately, many children do not learn this essential skill because of dyslexia, and they struggle to complete the most basic academic tasks. This national study will provide information about what makes schools successful in providing services to students with dyslexia. Researcher Missy Schraeder asks school principals to participate in this national study on trends in services provided for students with dyslexia.

This project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, 601-266-5897. If you have questions regarding this project, please contact Missy Schraeder at 601-325-6479 or missy.schraeder@usm.edu.

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\textbf{Cargill Donates to AG Camp}

As part of its long-standing commitment to support the communities in which it does business, Cargill has donated $2,175 to the Madison County ROE AG Camp. The check was presented by Eric Neff.

The Regional Office of Education and the Conservation/AG Resources and Environmental Education (CAREE) are working together to give area students a first-hand look at different types and stages of local agriculture. The donation from Cargill will be used to support this summer’s camp transportation and many supplies.
Pat Devening, a Roxana School Board Member, is being recognized for her wisdom and community activism. She was nominated for the 2018 YWCA of Alton Women of Distinction award. “I just love being around young people. I feel it’s a tremendous responsibility in my life. It just warms my heart to listen to them, and to learn from them as well.”

Devening enjoys being a mentor in the Give 30 mentoring program, launched two years ago by Regional Superintendent of Schools Bob Daiber. Give 30 is a mentoring program designed to provide at risk youth with positive support in their lives. The program places volunteers with a certain designated student for 30 minutes per week. Devening has been mentoring a student at Wood River middle school who she says has really found a special place in her heart. “If I’m having a bad day, just knowing that I’m going to spend half an hour with that little fella, it is so heartwarming,” she said. “It is very near and dear to my heart…You connect with them, you bond with them. I learn from these people. If you just listen, you learn so much from the young. That half an hour goes by too fast.”

Devening is also part of the Reach Out and Read literacy program in Roxana and a member of the Wood River Rotary Club. Devening states she is proud to be a member of the Roxana School Board during a time of great infrastructure improvements and credits the tax payers and Phillips 66 for all Roxana has been able to achieve.
April marked the 15th year of the Resource Education Program’s Trashformations Competition. This year, over 600 Madison County students answered the challenge to create a new object made from materials otherwise headed to the trash or recycling bin. Your inventors used their creativity and critical thinking skills to develop an item that benefits Madison County residents, wildlife, or could be used to create a new business. In addition to Trashformations, the Resource Education Program offers sets of standards-aligned lessons and activity kits that focus on waste reduction and nature education. More can be found at www.madisoncountyplanning.com.

Congratulations Winners!

K-2 Individual
1st Place: Milk Jug Piggy Bank

K-2 Team
1st Place: Run Away Racetrack

3-5 Individual
1st Place: Seed Starter

3-5 Team
1st Place: Gumball Machine

Photo Voice
1st Place: Grow

For 28 years the Madison County of Regional Office of Education has been honoring our county’s student writers. Congratulations to the 305 students who were honored at this year’s Madison County Young Authors Conference. K-8 students competed in their local schools. School winners were then invited to attend the conference on Saturday, April 28, 2018. Each student was presented a certificate by Asst. Regional Superintendent Andrew Reinking. Storyteller Oba William King entertained the students and their families with a dynamic presentation featuring storytelling and drums. Students met in grade level groups to share their books with their peers and do fun activities related to writing and reading.