Dr Robert A. Daiber, Regional Superintendent congratulates Susan Converse, 2019 Illinois Teacher of the Year

The Regional Office of Education is proud to share the accomplishment of Susan Converse, an Edwardsville High School special education teacher, who has been named the 2019 Illinois Teacher of the Year. Congratulations Susan! She is the second Madison County teacher this decade to receive this distinguished honor. Annice Brave, an Alton High School teacher, received this award in 2010. In Madison County, there are over 3,500 practicing licensed teachers and over 161,000 statewide. An overview of Susan’s recognition is featured in this issue of Educational Benchmark.

The ROE staff would like to thank all educators who participated and assisted to make the fall Madison County Educator’s Institute a success. Several key features of this institute were a discussion of mindfulness/social-emotional learning, preparedness for crisis management, first aid to stop bleeding, and trauma informed classrooms. While these sessions were highlights to the institute, the many other breakout sessions added value to the best practices displayed in our schools today. The institute staff was pleased with the feedback that was received regarding the educational tours and the administrator academy provided at the institute.

This fall, the ROE hosted Fred Gray, a civil rights attorney, who served as legal counsel for both Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Gray’s lecture, “Bus Ride to Justice—The Montgomery Bus Boycott” was part of the Arts and Issues series. His presentation provided a personal view of the civil rights movement in the deep South. For educators who attended the session, they were privileged with hearing a primary source unfold how history really occurred. I encourage educators to take advantage of the Arts & Issues series when free tickets are available.

During my visit to Edwardsville High School, I had the opportunity to engage in a discussion with two students who are part of the EHS-CEO program. The students were very articulate explaining to me what they were learning in the program. I was most impressed with their positive attitude toward school and their ambition to be business entrepreneurs.

My best wishes to the staffs of our thirteen districts as we prepare to celebrate this holiday season and begin the last year of this decade.

Bill Gushleff provided twenty-four years of service to the Regional Office of Education as a building compliance inspector. Bill retired from teaching in 1994 and joined the ROE staff. He and his wife, JoAnn, reside in Granite City. Bill was known in the administration building as one of the ROE wall guys. His cordial reputation gained him many friends in Madison County government. Bill officially retired from the ROE on November 30, 2018. Please join us in wishing Bill a long and happy retirement.
Entrepreneurship Program Prepares Students through Real Life Experiences

Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people, especially youth, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. The CEO program is much more than a textbook course. Rather, students are immersed in real life learning experiences with the opportunity to take risks, manage the results, and learn from the outcomes.

Right: Dr. Daiber meets with two CEO students at Edwardsville High School.
Fred Gray: Bus Ride to Justice – The Montgomery Bus Boycott
Sponsored by the Madison County Regional Office of Education, SIUE Office of the Provost and SIUE Department of Political Science

Fred David Gray is a nationally recognized civil rights attorney who helped change history. After earning his law degree in 1954, the young attorney was thrust into the national spotlight in 1955 when he represented Rosa Parks after her arrest for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus. The incident sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which is considered the beginning of the civil rights movement. Despite the danger in fighting segregation in the Deep South, Gray helped organize the boycott that brought a young unknown minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the attention of the world. Gray went on to serve as King’s first civil rights attorney. With a legal career that has spanned more than half a century, Gray has won multiple landmark civil rights cases. Fred Gray shared the riveting story of this important chapter in American history and his fight to destroy segregation as part of this year’s Arts and Issues series.

State Board to Host Q&A Events

SPRINGFIELD – School districts in Illinois now have maximum flexibility to define instructional days based on what will improve outcomes for students. The Illinois State Board of Education will host a series of public Q&A events for educators, parents, families, and school and district leaders to ask questions and share successes and challenges in using this flexibility afforded in state law.

Public Act 100-0465, also known as the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act, made sweeping changes to education funding in Illinois when it became law on Aug. 31, 2017. The law changed the basis of state funding to student enrollment, rather than attendance. The act resulted in sunsetting of Section 18-8-.05 of the School Code, which had defined a day of attendance as a minimum of five instructional hours. Funding schools based on enrollment provides school districts the resources and flexibility to support all students, especially those most in need of support to access educational opportunities.

Students learn in a variety of ways and settings. ISBE encourages districts, school boards, and collective bargaining units to work together to innovate new ways of teaching and learning that center on competencies and mastery of subject matter – anywhere and anytime.

ISBE released guidance, available at http://www.isbe.net/Documents/Instructional-Day-Memorandum.pdf, on Nov. 9 to assist school districts in using this flexibility.

Member Questions About New Pension Laws

It will be some time before TRS will be able to answer specific questions from members about the three changes to the Illinois Pension Code enacted on June 4, or provide estimates on the financial implications of the new laws.

TRS will keep members informed on our progress implementing the new laws:

•  The 3 percent salary increase threshold that triggers added pension contributions from school districts
•  The accelerated benefit payment for eligible inactive members
•  The accelerated benefit payment in return for a reduced automatic annual increase for Tier 1 members.

As of the deadline for this issue of Topics & Report, no money has been allocated for the accelerated benefit payments. The law requires the funding for the accelerated payments to come from the sale of $1 billion in state bonds.

Do You “Believe?”

Tis the season when schools engage in decorating contests to entice the spirit of the holiday season. Miss Katie Lingle, a special education teacher in Wood River-Hartford #15 school district has always eagerly participated. This year, Miss Lingle decided the theme for her classroom door would be “Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.” She even reached out to John Harper, C.E.O. of Macy’s of New York, for support to make this season bright. Macy’s thought the idea was so good that they sent Lewis & Clark Elementary an official Macy’s red mailbox and “Believe Meter”.

Teachers and staff have been actively involved in getting students to write letters to Santa and drop them in the mailbox. For every letter that is submitted, Macy’s will donate $1 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation to grant wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions. The letters have been pouring in. If you would like to submit a letter, please do so prior to December 21st.

SAVE THE DATE

Southern Illinois University Carbondale Science in the South
Taking deeper into Science
January 25, 2019
Conference and registration information available online at conference.meramecsc.edu/sis-science-in-the-south/