



REGIONAL OFFICE *of* EDUCATION

Bi-County Brief

Monroe & Randolph Counties

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SCHOOL FACILITIES SALES TAX ON RANDOLPH COUNTY BALLOT

On April 9, Randolph County voters will have the opportunity to determine if there will be a county-wide sales tax to be used exclusively by schools for facility improvements. If passed, an additional one percent (1%) would be added to sales tax on those items currently taxed under the municipal tax code. The following items are excluded from the tax: cars, boats, recreational vehicles, mobile homes, unprepared food, drugs (including over-the-counter), farm equipment, parts and inputs. Schools may only use the funds on construction-related items such as additions, renovations, repairs, health and life safety projects and security. Schools may not use the funds for salaries, overhead, operating costs, computers, instruction or books. School boards representing more than 50% of the students residing in Randolph County passed resolutions to place the question on the ballot. Schools in counties that have passed facilities sales taxes have used the funding stream to provide a direct funding source for projects, increase the ability for the district to sell bonds for construction by using the sales tax revenue to pay for the bond debt, abate certain property taxes, retire existing debt or a combination of these options. Should the school facilities sales tax be approved by voters, collection of the tax would begin January 1, 2014.

STRIP IT DOWN; PUMP IT UP

Bi-county teachers have learned from experienced classroom teacher leaders how to do just that at Common Core Standards workshops in English language arts and mathematics over the past couple of months. In each workshop, participants spent time identifying how to “pump” up the level of student engagement and critical thinking while “stripping” away unnecessary fluff in actual lesson plans. Teachers especially enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas and discover new resources, as evidenced by these comments: “I loved being able to talk with other teachers about our lessons.” The best features of this activity were “bringing our own units to share and get ideas for” and “listening to other teachers’ ideas.”

Science, social studies and technology teachers can still register for *Strip It Down; Pump It Up* workshops for K-5 on both April 18 and 23 from 4:00–7:00 p.m. in the Sparta High School Forum off the cafeteria and for 6–12 grade on April 30 and May 2 from 4:00–7:00 p.m. at Red Bud Regional Hospital in the basement auditorium. All participants will leave with one lesson that incorporates Common Core Standards fully planned. Then, all teachers who missed the February–April offerings should watch for similar opportunities this summer.

TEACHER PRACTICE AND STUDENT GROWTH WORKSHOPS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE

Teams of district administrators, principals, teacher leaders, union reps and school board members are encouraged to attend the *Teacher Practice Evaluation Model Workshop: Part 1* and the *Student Growth Evaluation Model Workshop: Part 2* at Kaskaskia College in Centralia in June. *Teachers Practice* is a one-time repeat presentation from 9:00–3:00 on June 3, so if you missed the 2012 workshop or want other teachers to attend, sign up for this hands-on event that will have all teams leaving with a copy of a teacher evaluation plan and forms. *Student Growth* will be offered from 9:00–3:00 on June 11, June 12 and June 27 and is based on a Student Learning Objective Framework that will be used for Type 1, 2 and 3 assessments. Register online at www.roe45.org/registration/teacheval, by fax 618-939-5332 or mail.

PLATINUM CHEFS SHOW OFF CULINARY SKILLS

At the seventh annual Platinum Chef Competition at Red Bud High School, teams of chefs from Belleville East, Belleville West, Chester, Columbia, Marissa, Red Bud, Steeleville and Waterloo high schools made an appetizer, salad, entrée and dessert, displayed them on a themed table, took written tests and gave oral presentations and used a “secret ingredient” – kale sprouts – at this highly competitive but fun event. Bi-county schools made an impressive showing with Chester High School’s taking first place and Red Bud High School’s taking third in the Best of Competition Awards. Chester also won the best test scores this year, Waterloo won the best utility support team and Red Bud’s was the best display table with its southern theme. The best salad was Columbia’s traditional Italian-style salad, tossed with blackberries, peaches and oranges, topped with avocado and croutons. The best entrée was Red Bud’s gumbo with smoked sausage, sautéed okra, pan-fried fish with yellow peppers, onions and sweet peas. The Best Presenter Award went to Ian Heizer of Red Bud, and team MVPs were Chester’s Erin Baughman, Columbia’s Mary Rabago, Red Bud’s Ian Heizer, Steeleville’s Derek Stoffel and Waterloo’s Brian Lutman. (Chefs’) hats off to all competitors!

“A GREAT NATION IS A READING NATION.” -FREDERIC G. MELCHER, PUBLISHERS WEEKLY EDITOR

Celebrate Children’s Book Week, May 13–19, 2013, in classrooms and libraries—anywhere students and books connect. Highlights of this longest-running national literacy initiative include a downloadable bookmark by Grace Lin, Newberry Honor winner for *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, and free posters by Brian Selznick, Caldecott winner and creator of *Wonderstruck*, at www.bookweekonline.com. Teachers can plan fun activities such as a Book Character Day, read-ins and poster contests; can have students work on Children’s Book Week puzzles or have them create their own crossword puzzles and word searches; and can get book celebration ideas on Pinterest. Teachers can also have students participate in the Children’s and Teen Choice Book Awards, the only national book awards program where the winning titles are selected by young readers, since voting runs from March 19 through May 3, 2013. This is their opportunity to voice opinions about the books being written for them and to develop a reading list that will motivate them to read more and cultivate a lifelong love of reading. Young readers can make their voices heard with just the click of a button!

WATCH FOR OFFERINGS FROM THE TRAIL

Have you heard about The Trail? Seen it on flyers? But not been too sure what it is? The Trail is a professional learning collaborative by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools whose goal is to provide relevant, timely and cost-effective professional development for Illinois educators. Current offerings include Todd Whitaker’s *Leading School Change: 9 Strategies to Bring Everybody On Board*, which provides a step-by-step approach to successfully implement change, ideal for school leadership teams; Cathy Vatterott’s *Not Your Mother’s Grade Book: Transitioning to Standards-Based Grading*, which will provide tools to begin the transition to Common Core Standards-based grading; Jim Knight’s *High Impact Instruction: A Framework for Great Teaching*, which provides an overview of high-yield teaching strategies; and school board member training in response to Illinois’ Performance Evaluation Reform Act. Go to www.thetrailedu.org for information and to register for workshops in our area.

IMPORTANT: As of July 1, 2013 correspondence from ISBE, such as deficiency letters and renewal reminders, will no longer be printed and mailed but will be sent electronically to your **current e-mail address**. Please review and update your current e-mail address by accessing your ECS account at <https://sec1.isbe.net/ecs>.

YOUNG AUTHORS ENJOY ALL THE WRITE MOVES

Kindergarten through eighth-grade authors from twenty bi-county schools enjoyed an event-filled morning at the Eighteenth Annual Young Authors’ Conference at Sparta Lincoln Middle School on March 9. Children’s author Sindy Smith from Belleville discussed with participants her experiences as a writer and answered questions during one session with the young authors. During a second session these same young authors attended a grade appropriate workshop led by various local volunteers. Special thanks go to Sparta Lincoln Middle School Principal Laura Woodworth for hosting a memorable activity, to fifth-grade language arts teacher Charlene Stewart for chairing this year’s well-organized event and to Samantha McManus, a Sparta Lincoln eighth-grader, for designing the very creative *All the Write Moves* logo.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 4, 2013	Principals’ Meeting	SWIC-Red Bud Room 152	8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
April 4, 2013	ELL Meeting	SWIC-Red Bud Room 152	10:00 a.m. – noon
April 4, 2013	Art Festival	Valmeyer Elementary	5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
April 9, 2013	Danielson Framework-Structure & Content	Steeleville Amer. Legion	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
April 10, 2013	Perandoe Transition Fair	SWIC-Red Bud	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
April 11, 2013	Continuous & Systemic Improvement	Sparta Holiday Inn Express	8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
April 16, 2013	Math Connections	St. Patrick’s-Ruma	8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
April 16, 2013	Spelling Contest	Coulterville Elementary	5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
April 17, 2013	Danielson Framework-Teacher Implement.	Mon. Co. Annex-Waterloo	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
April 18, 2013	Sci., SS, & Technical K-5 Common Core	Sparta High School-Forum	4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
April 23, 2013	RtI Networking Session	SWIC-Red Bud Room 123	9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
April 23, 2013	Sci., SS, & Technical K-5 Common Core	Sparta High School-Forum	4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
April 24, 2013	Danielson Framework-Coll. Conversations	Mon. Co. Annex-Waterloo	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
April 30, 2013	Sci., SS, & Technical 6-12 Common Core	Red Bud Regional-Red Bud	4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
May 1, 2013	Math Common Core K-5 (SS0S Area V)	Mon. Co. Annex-Waterloo	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
May 2, 2013	Math Common Core 6-12 (SS0S Area V)	Mon. Co. Annex-Waterloo	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
May 2, 2013	Sci., SS, & Technical 6-12 Common Core	Red Bud Regional-Red Bud	4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

RETIRED TEACHERS

Monroe County Retired Teachers: Monday, April 15 Monroe County Annex, Waterloo 11:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Randolph County Retired Teachers: Tuesday, April 9 Tammie’s Grape & Grill, Sparta noon