



REGIONAL OFFICE of EDUCATION

Bi-County Brief

Monroe & Randolph Counties

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STRAIGHT TALK ON SCHOOL FUNDING

I was recently asked by a non-educator if state funding is *really* an issue impacting schools. For years the public has heard our cries about financial struggles in education, yet schools have miraculously kept doors open and provided exceptional services in spite of these doom-and-gloom predictions. I have even heard from an educator outside our region, "Don't worry, they will figure it out and everything will be fine." So what is going on? Are we really in dire straits?

The short answer is yes, Illinois is in serious trouble, and solutions are allusive. Politicians always acknowledge education as a critical service. This has helped reduce the magnitude of our financial shortfalls but has not eliminated them altogether. The fact is that our reliance on local funding of schools has increased while state support has decreased. Inversely proportional to state funding has been mandates by the state and feds. During the past six years federal funds temporarily supported our state budget under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, we received significantly reduced funding for mandated transportation and special education and General State Aid was prorated below the foundation level of calculated per-student education costs. Statewide, agencies, including schools, are being asked to cut an additional 2.25% from this year's budget. Our schools are preparing for cuts beginning July 1 in addition to dealing with state money due this year that will not be sent at all.

For the past six years schools have quietly worked hard to reduce costs, increase efficiencies and rethink class size, course offerings, extracurricular activities, salary freezes and professional development. School boards and district leaders are reaching the point where minor savings will no longer compensate for dwindling fund balances in school treasuries. Schools have been addressing these shortfalls with local support and difficult decisions, but they cannot continue to stave off the repercussions.

I am sure as you read this you are thinking, "Why are you telling me this depressing information, and what do you want me to do about it?" There is an old Springfield saying, "Show them death and they will take pain." We are at the brink of the death of many services in Illinois, and I believe that we will be given an ultimatum soon to drop services or support increases in Illinois' revenue through taxes. Polls are starting to show public support for changes to taxes, and I believe we will see proposals to increase income taxes, implement graduated taxes and/or expand the tax base to include services. We all need to know the issues and what experts say on the topic. I encourage you to educate yourselves on these issues and to not assume that there will be a quick fix for Illinois. In the meantime, know that we are dealing with this crisis together and remain assured that what we do for our students and community is critically important; we do make a difference in the lives of others.

RENEWING YOUR LICENSE THIS YEAR

If your educator license is due for renewal and registration this year, the Educator Licensure Information System opened this feature on April 1. There are several updates to the process since last year. There is a one-step process for submitting renewal activities and registration. Educators will no longer have to wait for an approval of professional development activities by the ROE and ISBE before paying registration fees. ROEs no longer review activities during the renewal process or for audits. Keep evidence of completion for all professional development. ISBE anticipates audits during the fall and winter of the next school year. Unlike previous years, activities completed after April 1 may not be counted on the next renewal cycle. An educator will not be able to claim new credit until the license cycle begins July 1. Also, beginning July 1 educators must enter activities within 60 days of being issued PD hours. Furthermore, CPDUs became PD hours beginning July 1, 2014. The old CPDU chart is not applicable after that date. Any provider that issued PD hours will need to use new evidence forms. CPDUs earned before July 1, 2014 are still valid. Finally, the renewal requirements for educators mid-cycle in the license change (those renewing between 2015 and 2018) may renew based on the requirements at the beginning of the cycle (reduced CPDUs, college coursework and uniquely qualifying activities). Learn more at <http://www.isbe.net/licensure/requirements/prof-dev-requirements140701.pdf>.

TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS LEARN BY HELPING

Annette Rau's new technology class at Waterloo Junior High School learned and helped at the same time. Using Google Sketch Up, her eighth graders designed milk carton holders and zipper pulls for 3-year-old Jeremiah Williams, a student with cerebral palsy in Traci Biffar's early childhood class at W. J. Zahnow. Using a 3D printer that was obtained through a Monroe County Electric Cooperative classroom empowerment grant, Rau's students came up with multiple options for Jeremiah, who seemed to love them all. Jeremiah wears a leg brace and a hand brace on his right side to help him with everyday activities and is excited about his new aids, which he uses every day in the classroom. Rau says, "As a teacher the biggest reward was to see my students taking great interest and putting forth such effort for someone they didn't even know." Cylinda Williams, Jeremiah's mother, added, "All of the love and hard work that each one of them poured into this project brings me to tears . . . I cannot wait to see what else can be made to help others in the community!"

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CORNER

GEAR UP FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

This is an exciting time of the year – sunny days, energetic students, lessons still to be taught, time for professional development approaching. Instead of our usual list of upcoming workshops, since our calendar is so full and we want you educators and administrators to take advantage of the summer offerings, we are highlighting the June workshops and reminding you how to get information and register. On the ROE website www.roe45.net, under the *Professional Learning (PD)* tab at the top, click on *Workshops and Events*. A list of workshops by date, time and title will appear. Then to get more details, click on the title of the workshop that interests you, then on *more details*. Next to *Attachment* will be a pdf of the workshop flyer, which will have all the information you need.

The 4-day Equip Rubric workshop at SWIC on June 4, 9, 16 and 23 is a repeat performance by well-respected presenters Rosie Gardner and Deb Greaney. Back by popular demand, these two ask that participants bring a unit of study they currently teach for analysis and modification. Rosie and Deb also present the PARCC workshop on June 11. Sign up for this practical workshop if you want to learn what assessments are appropriate and how to use the data gathered by them. Develop the skills needed to identify, review and select quality assessments in the Trail-sponsored PERA workshop at the World Shooting Complex on June 15. Join Rosie and Deb again on June 18 at SWIC to learn how to develop students' close reading abilities. Participants at the two-day *Youth Mental Health First Aid* public education program on June 23 & 24 will learn a core 5-step action plan to support an adolescent (age 12-18) developing signs and symptoms of mental illness or in emotional crisis. Help students develop their ability to ask and answer all levels of questions on June 25 and explore the writing requirements of Common Core on June 30.

*** Register for all ROE workshops at www.educationregistration.org/roe45 by one week prior to the event.**

There is no charge for Foundational Services workshops. *

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 14, 2015	CCSI/OKAW Board of Control	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	9:00 am – 11:00 am
April 16, 2015	Spelling Bee	St. Mark's, Steeleville	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
April 16, 2015	TAOEP Mentor Training-Chris Kearney	World Shooting Complex-Sparta	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
April 17, 2015	TAOEP Mentor Training-Chris Kearney	World Shooting Complex-Sparta	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
April 20, 2015	Art Festival	SS. Peter & Paul-Waterloo	5:00 pm – 7:30 pm
April 21, 2015	The Student Learning Objective Process	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
April 23, 2015	Principals' Meeting	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:30 am – 11:30 am
April 27, 2015	Building Trusting Relationships with At-Risk Students	World Shooting Complex-Sparta	9:30 am – 3:30 pm
April 29, 2015	RtI Networking Meeting	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	9:00 am – 12:00 pm
May 5, 2015	Curriculum Advisory Committee	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	Noon – 3:30 pm
May 5, 2015	TAOEP Mentor Training	World Shooting Complex-Sparta	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
May 12, 2015	CCSI/OKAW Board of Control	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	9:00 am – 11:00 am
June 4, 9, 16, 23, 2015	Unit Eval. and Modif. for ELA CC Shifts Using the EQuIP Rubric	SWIC Room 114, Red Bud	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
June 9 & 10, 2015	Student Assistance Program Team Training	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
June 11, 2015	Aligning Local Assessments to the PARCC Evidence Tables	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
June 15, 2015	Designing Quality PERA Aligned Assessments Investigating Types I, II, III	World Shooting Complex-Sparta	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
June 16, 2015	CCSI/OKAW Board of Control	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	9:00 am – 11:00 am
June 18, 2015	Close Reading & Text Complexity	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
June 23 & 24, 2015	Youth Mental Health First Aid USA	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:00 am – 12:00 pm
June 25, 2015	Classroom Questioning for the CC	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
June 30, 2015	Text-Based Writing for the PARCC	SWIC Room 123, Red Bud	8:30 am – 3:30 pm

RETIRED TEACHERS' MEETINGS

Monroe County: April 20, 2015

Randolph County: April 14, 2015

Monroe County Annex 11:00 am

World Shooting Complex-Sparta noon

THE MONROE-RANDOLPH ROE IS HERE TO SERVE YOU. CONTACT THE WATERLOO OFFICE AT 618-939-5650 OR THE CHESTER OFFICE AT 618-826-5471.