

Regional Office of Education Committee
Regional Office of Education #11
Charleston, IL 61920

March 2, 2015

Regional Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Bobbi Mattingly, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. ROEC members present were Susan Guinnip, Clark County; Bibby Appleby, Douglas County; Alan Zuber, Edgar County and Kay Kearney, Shelby County. Jan Eads, Coles County; Todd Beard, Cumberland County and Dave McCabe, Moultrie County were absent. Beth Hansel, AIM specialist and Marilyn Purcell, Lerna Bridges principal were also in attendance.

Dr. Mattingly asked for any public comments. None offered. She stated that the ROE is in the process of developing a new website with the help of Area 4 Learning Technology Center (LTC).

The committee members were asked to take a moment to review the minutes from the December 1, 2014 meeting. Alan Zuber made the motion to approve the minutes. Bibby Appleby seconded the motion. Motion carried to approve the December 1, 2014 minutes.

Bobbi moved attention to the Report of Official Acts. She explained that the column headings will change at the next meeting. The report will reflect the ROEC fiscal year, December 1-November 30. Susan Guinnip asked who received a copy of the Report of Official Acts. Dr. Mattingly reported that it is given to county boards, but anyone is welcome to a copy. Mrs. Guinnip inquired about homeless stats being included in the report.

The Quarterly Funds report was issued to the committee.

Marilyn Purcell, Principal of Lerna Bridges, was introduced by Bobbi. Lerna Bridges is one of ROE #11 regional safe schools. Marilyn reported figures that included all three regional safe schools: Lerna Bridges/Beacons, Paris Bridges/Beacons, and Shelbyville Bridges. (Pana sends students to the Shelbyville site, although they are not in ROE #11.) Enrollment during the fall semester was 119 students. Of those 119, there were 107 on free or reduced lunches. 72 students completed their all their first semester classes. 26 students were able to get caught up academically. There were 16 that graduated. (This is the highest number of first semester graduates ever.) Four students were able to go back to their home school. The students tend to struggle academically for different reasons. 29 students have substance abuse issues. There are 12 pregnant or parenting students. Several students are homeless.

Strengths found in the Bridges/Beacons program are low student: teacher ratio and the character education program. Reasons the students enroll at our regional safe school vary. Some have violated school rules, been caught with drugs and /or weapons, insubordination, etc. Many are suspension or expulsion eligible. Susan Guinnip asked how many absences a public school student can have. Dr. Mattingly said a student can miss up to 5% (9 days) before being considered a chronic truant.

Dr. Mattingly introduced Beth Hansel. She is a ROE #11 truancy and homeless specialist. Beth compared fighting truancy to losing weight. Old habits need broken. New and improved habits are established. When she receives a new referral, she makes daily visits for the first 10 days or so. This is to help them learn a new routine. Due to the fact that 50% of kids in her area have no transportation, she helps arrange the use of public transportation. She is a liaison between families and schools. She encourages the families to work with the schools to break the barriers that are keeping the kids out of school. ROE #11 has 2.6 members of the AIM staff for our 7 county area. Of all of the 20,032 students in our region, the truancy/homeless specialists are serving 242 -250 students. The students served miss an average of 60% of the school days.

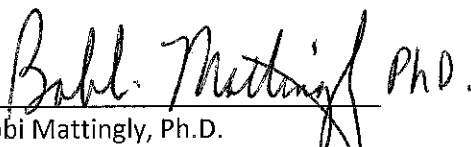
75% of those in the program must reach and maintain 90% attendance for grant to stay in place. Clean clothes, poverty, drugs, lack of a relationship with their teachers are excuses for truancy. Homeless numbers indicate children that lack regular, fixed, and adequate abode. Many teens are couch surfers. Some are doubled up, living with family because of financial strain, the parent(s) kicked them out, house burned, etc. People are offended if asked if they are homeless, so Beth refers to it as "living in transition." There were 376 homeless youth in our region in December. She finds new families weekly. Poverty is everywhere. One of her accomplishments was bringing 6 students into the Beacons classroom from no schooling last year. Of these, 5 graduated. The sixth one is graduating this year. Beth claimed the biggest factor in overcoming truancy is the "adults' will for the student to succeed has to be stronger than the student's will to fail." Susan Guinnip asked for more information on how individuals or community organizations can help. She is a mentor and believes that helps with student relationships.

Dr. Bobbi Mattingly continued the homeless discussion. Homelessness is under-reported in ROE #11. Some don't understand the true definition of homeless, as defined in the McKinney Vento Act. As districts report homeless youth, it brings supplies and resources to the region. Kyle Thompson went to Rantoul on February 20, 2014 to pick up supplies donated by "Feed the Children." The shipment included breakfast food, backpacks, and school supplies. This will be disbursed among our homeless students. Bobbi gives two homeless trainings per year. Dr. Mattingly gave a training to our district superintendents and another one to teachers. On Wednesday, Beth Hansel and Bobbi are attending a state homeless conference in Bloomington. Bibby Appleby asked what will happen if the state cuts homeless funding. Dr. Mattingly advised that most homeless funds are federal.

Assistant Regional Superintendent Kyle Thompson asked the group to refer to the Vision 20/20 handout. It is an evolving plan about our youth. On the back of the pamphlet, there is a listing of the groups initiating Vision 20/20. Dr. Mattingly and Mr. Thompson attended a leadership summit in Springfield. Legislation has and will be introduced supporting the Vision 20/20 four pillars; highly effective educators, 21st century learning, shared accountability, and equitable & dequate funding.

Bobbi noted that RSSP (Regional Safe School Program) line item has been zeroed out in the proposed budget. The RSSP staff from ROE #11 has met and strategized. They are starting a grass roots movement to get it restored and to fix the out dated formula. The previous formula was created in 1996. ROE #11 receives approximately \$83,000 from the RSSP grant. This amount pays a teacher salary and a little more. Most funding for Bridges/Beacons is state aid. Dr. Mattingly presented a chart showing the number of students served and amount of funding received in Illinois ROEs and ISCs. The RSSP staff is working diligently to restore RSSP and fix the formula.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kay Kearney. Susan Guinnip seconded. Motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 7:49 pm.


Bobbi Mattingly, Ph.D.
Regional Superintendent of Schools