



DuPage Regional Office of
EDUCATION

Excellence in Education

Letter from the Superintendent



Dear DuPage County Education Stakeholders,

WOW. What a year! After nearly twenty years in this position, and an additional twenty years serving in other areas of education, I thought I had seen just about everything. But life had more to teach me. This past year has been a year of growth for all of us at the Regional Office of Education (ROE).

The 2020-2021 school year has proven that the content and process and “look” of education can be turned on its head, but the ROE’s goal is still the same: to provide supports to educators and school administrators so every child in DuPage County receives the best possible education, using every possible resource, format, and method that we have in our academic toolkit.

Some students thrived with online education while others needed in-person instruction. We were reminded again and again that social-emotional health is vital to the well-being of our kids. The pandemic and resulting quarantine amplified the need for connection, demonstrating more than ever that relationships matter!

During much of the 2020-2021 school year, I was meeting with school superintendents virtually twice a week. We brainstormed ways to reach students creatively and effectively while keeping them safe from the COVID-19 virus. We discussed ways of normalizing conversations about race and mental health in our schools—while strengthening our ability to respond effectively and compassionately to these issues. We learned from one another, listened to one another, and tapped into each other’s resources and experiences in order to promote equity and excellence in our classrooms for ALL our students.

At the ROE, our directors, educators, and trainers were busy developing new strategies to honor the diverse needs of our students. I am so proud of the work they have done. Some of their accomplishments will be highlighted in the following pages, but I want to make mention of a few here. During the past year, we:

- Established DuPage as the statewide micro-credential hub for educators
- Used the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Program to help eligible youth job seekers access employment
- Developed supports and lesson plans for Illinois Learning Priority Standards
- Created and implemented an Accelerated Learning Program for the summer of 2021
- Shared vital information on vaccination sites
- Partnered with immunization providers to offer COVID-19 vaccinations at 13 DuPage County high schools

- Distributed grief journals to every district in DuPage County
- Supplied food and books to families in need through our Parents as Teachers program
- Became the new home of the Illinois Civics Hub and Democracy Schools Initiative
- Used the CARES ACT 2 dollars from the County Board to distribute personal protective equipment, safety kits, student workbooks, Chromebooks, and other technological equipment to students in need during the pandemic

The ROE has also continued to participate in cost-sharing efforts to bring the necessary resources to DuPage County while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Our focus reduces redundancies, shares resources, and increases resources through grant writing. We recently completed the third year of implementation of the following grants: Education, Innovation and Research (\$4.1 million), Supporting Effective Educator Development (\$12 million), Preschool Parents as Teachers (\$360,000) and a Bureau of Justice Violence Prevention Grant (\$600,000).

In addition, I am honored to share that the Illinois State Board of Education has recently selected the DuPage ROE to be a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Hub and awarded a \$900,000 grant to support the social and emotional needs of our educators and students!

As we look forward to the 2021-2022 school year, we will continue partnering with DuPage County schools so every child in DuPage County schools is successful academically, socially, and emotionally. We will also continue the high level of professional services that the ROE is known for. Below you will find some comments that are reflective of many notes we’ve received during the past year that encourage us to keep striving for excellence as we serve all DuPage County stakeholders.

Until next year~

Dr. Darlene Ruscitti

Dr. Darlene Ruscitti
Regional Superintendent of Schools

“The DuPage ROE, under Dr. Ruscitti’s leadership, has been the greatest advocate for families and young children across our county for decades!”

-Rosary Horne, Principal, Early Childhood Center, CCSD93

“Thank you to all of the wonderful people who comprise the ROE family! Every time I have called or come to your office for assistance, I have *always* left with answers to my questions, solutions to my problems, and encouragement for the journey.”

-J. Dominguez, Wheaton resident

What's New at the ROE

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting quarantine, the DuPage ROE was hard at work this past year developing and creating many initiatives to benefit educators, administrators, and students.

Micro-Credentials

Sixty DuPage educators took part in a new initiative created by the DuPage ROE, in partnership with Bloomboard, to earn micro-credentials. Micro-credentials are a form of certification earned by demonstrating competency in new skills development. This rigorous training is currently available in the areas of Coaching, Early Childhood Education, English Language Learning, and Equity; Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) will be offered in the near future. We are currently working with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to provide a designation on educators' licenses that would indicate these credentials have been earned.

Accelerated Summer Learning Program

In December of 2020, educators at the ROE and various school districts identified essential skills needed by students in each grade level in order to be successful in the next grade—along with the SEL skills to support the academics. Based on this information, instructional coaches and curriculum leaders created 12 lesson plans per grade for a Summer Acceleration Learning Program to take place in the summer of 2021. The goal for this program was to assist districts by providing a summer curriculum for students who experienced a learning gap during the quarantine and ensure these students hit the ground running when the 2021-2022 school year began.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Hub

The DuPage ROE has been selected by ISBE to be an SEL Hub that supports the social and emotional needs of both our students and educators. We are fortunate to have already started this work with a Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP

(Students-Teachers-Officers Preventing) School Violence Grant. The ROE has implemented trainers to educate school staff in restorative practices, trauma-informed care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), and mental health. Our goal is to identify staff members in each school who can serve as SEL Coaches. Monitoring progress in the successful implementation of SEL skills must be a top priority. Never has this type of program been needed more!

Civics Hub

In the spring of 2021, the ROE was honored to be chosen by the McCormick Foundation to be the new home for the Illinois Civics Hub and Democracy Schools. The Hub is the leading resource for information on the required implementation of civics classes in Illinois and offers numerous professional development courses to Illinois educators through the DuPage ROE.

CARES ACT 2 Dollars

Thanks to generous funding by the DuPage County Board using CARES ACT 2 dollars, the ROE was able to provide personal protective equipment for at-risk students, safety kits for families in our Parents as Teachers program; remote learning workbooks; and Chromebooks for each student in the ROE Alternative School Program. For many students in this program, this was their first computer!

Equity and Excellence Strategic Plan

Every three to five years, district representatives and the ROE update the county-wide Equity and Excellence Strategic Plan. The focus remains on meeting the needs of all children in DuPage County in a culturally responsive way. In addition, we want to increase our recruitment efforts and hiring practices to better reflect the dynamic demographic changes in our county and provide better support to all families as they partner with their respective school districts on behalf of their children.

Table of Contents

Letter from the Superintendent.....	2	Licensure, Relicensure & Certification.....	10
What's New at the ROE.....	3	Health/Life Safety & Compliance	10
Work-Based Learning & Youth Apprenticeship	4	Instructional Technology Team.....	11
High School Equivalency Certification	4	Bus Driver Training.....	11
Equity.....	5	Teacher In-Service for DuPage Educators	12
Social & Emotional Learning.....	5	Gifted Services.....	12
Partners For Success	6	Administrator Academies	12
Cooperative Education Program Grant.....	6	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	13
Alternative Learning Opportunities Program.....	7	Title II Grant.....	13
BJA STOP Grant	7	Grants/EIR SEED	14
Parents as Teachers	8	Leadership	14
Substitute Teacher Training	8	Regional Board of School Trustees.....	15
Homeless Student Advocacy	9	Fiscal Responsibility Teacher Institute Fund.....	15
Rebound Program	9	Directory	Back Cover
Truancy Services	9		

Work-Based Learning & Youth Apprenticeship

The DuPage Work-based Learning and Youth Apprenticeship program is designed to help high school students aged 16 and older access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market—and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.



Students enrolled in the DuPage Work-based Learning and Youth Apprenticeship program are paid student apprentices with local business partners. As student apprentices, they work towards 450 hours of work-based learning during the year-long course.

Students enrolled in this course are paid student apprentices with local business partners. As student apprentices, they work towards 450 hours of work-based learning during the year-long course.

The DuPage ROE has been securing funding for this pilot program through the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Working alongside Project Hire-Ed (College of DuPage), WorkNet DuPage, and GPS Education Partners, they have also been finalizing marketing tools and a website where students, parents, schools, and businesses can get more information on the program.

In May of 2021, the ROE, in collaboration with WorkNet DuPage, hosted an event for business leaders to showcase the program. More than one hundred people attended the evening.

Currently eight DuPage high schools are participating in this program, and there are plans to add several more in the coming year. The benefits to schools are numerous. Schools can:

- Align work-based learning opportunities to the ISBE School Report Card and other measures of accountability
- Advance postsecondary programming for all students including dual credit and pre-apprenticeships
- Develop multiple career pathways in high-demand industry sectors like manufacturing, cybersecurity, information technology, health services, and logistics
- Inspire students to explore their college and career aspirations

There are also many benefits to students including:

- Earning high school credits and industry-recognized certifications and credentials
- Experiencing a variety of work-based learning opportunities (tours, job shadowing, internships, and paid pre-apprenticeships)
- Exploring college and career options and receiving valuable hands-on experience
- Developing valuable professional workplace skills and technical competencies while still in high school
- Building a resume that reflects relevant on-the-job training and pre-apprenticeship experiences

The ROE is excited to see how the Work-based Learning and Youth Apprenticeship program will inspire students in DuPage County by giving them access to resources and services to aid them in attaining successful employment post-graduation. In addition, the ROE is hopeful the DuPage County workforce will be strengthened by the addition of these skilled workers.

High School Equivalency Certification

The DuPage Regional Office of Education is available to assist those who have not graduated from high school and are interested in the opportunity to earn the High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate. During the pandemic, our HSE team kept apprised of all changes/exemptions put in place by the state and continued to process document requests and counsel test-takers, even as testing centers were closed.

During the time period of July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021:

- 397 individuals participated in HSE testing
- 55 COVID Exemption Constitution Test Waivers were issued
- 601 HSE documents were issued (in-house only)
- 490 HSE verifications were processed

At the DuPage Regional Office of Education, we believe equity is the cornerstone of a more just and humane society. All students, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, ethnicity, language, religion, family background, or family income, should have access to the right resources they need at the right moment in their education. We are committed to supporting the educational and administrative leaders in DuPage County schools in this journey and have been since 2009, when under the direction of Regional Superintendent, Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, the Equity and Excellence Committee (EEC) was formed. The goals of that committee were to coordinate efforts with DuPage County school districts to:

- Increase the number of minority teachers and administrators
- Build capacity among mainstream teachers and administrators to successfully increase the academic achievement of students from diverse backgrounds

“
Equality is leaving the door open for anyone who has the means to approach it; equity is ensuring there is a pathway to that door for those who need it.
”

—Caroline Belden

- Provide students and parents from diverse backgrounds the knowledge and skills to successfully navigate the American Educational System
- Support school systems confronting resistance to equity work

From 2015-2019, the EEC participated in multiple meetings, expert facilitations, detailed research, administrator focus

groups, and in-depth considerations. The initial goals and themes were further developed into the following five different strands:

- Systemic Equity
- Employment and Retention
- CIPA (Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development and Assessments)
- Student Voice, Climate and Culture
- Family and Community Engagement

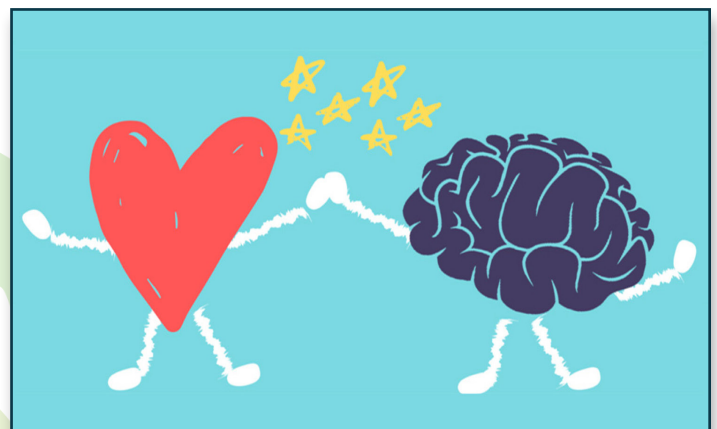
This framework champions an equity lens that mitigates opportunity gaps while naming the historical practices that support marginalization in school organizations. The goal is for schools to examine every facet of their organization through an equity lens in order to reduce and remove historically marginalizing practices. To this end, the ROE has facilitated numerous trainings and workshops throughout the past school year and will continue to work toward full equity in DuPage County schools.

Social & Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate care and concern for others, establish healthy relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), quality SEL instruction in conjunction with a safe, caring, and participatory school and responsive school climate can result in positive outcomes such as promotion of mental wellness; prevention of mental health issues; reduction in student absenteeism and suspensions; and improved academic outcomes.

The DuPage ROE was honored to be selected by ISBE this past school year to be a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Hub that supports the social and emotional needs of both our students and educators. The ROE had already started this work with a Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP (Students-Teachers-Officers Preventing) School Violence Grant. The ROE has implemented trainers to educate school staff in restorative practices, trauma-informed care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), and



In 2020, the DuPage ROE was selected by ISBE to be a Social and Emotional Learning Hub that supports students and educators.

mental health. Our goal is to identify staff members in each school who can serve as SEL Coaches. Monitoring progress in the successful implementation of SEL skills is a top priority.

Partners for Success

The Regional Safe School of DuPage County, Partners for Success (PFS), was created in 1997 in response to Illinois legislation enacted to reduce school expulsions.

During the pause of in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year, the staff and administration of PFS successfully guided and supported ten high school seniors toward graduation from the program. This included two students who were first-generation high school graduates!

In addition, the staff at PFS developed a set of core values and collective agreements guiding how they make decisions and operate on a daily basis. This work began by staff identifying what they valued, how these values translated to daily actions, and how they impact each other, students, and families. The staff formed values that focused on collaboration, student growth, the building of relationships, and ensuring a culturally inclusive environment.

Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, PFS participated in professional development with an intentional focus on creating a trauma-sensitive school environment. This work

led to identifying triggers within the school environment and developing a school-wide plan for reducing the identified triggers. A committee was formed to remediate the triggers, identifying short, medium, and long-term goals to ensure PFS is a welcoming, trauma-responsive environment.

PFS's focus is based on the following seven pillars:

1. Understand trauma and its impact
2. Believe that healing happens in relationships
3. Ensure emotional/physical safety
4. View students holistically
5. Support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families
6. Strive for cultural competence
7. Use a collaborative approach

One outcome of this work has been a focused understanding of self-care for staff.

The collaborative was also able to provide staff with professional development that included best practices, tools, interventions, resources, and real-life scenarios practices.

Although their work is not completed, many short-term and intermediate goals were accomplished, accompanied by learning opportunities. The staff looks forward to continuing their own education in how best to be a trauma-sensitive school for our students, families, and staff.

“With the help and support of Partners, and your ability to pivot the focus towards individualized support, we were able to provide a Tier III level of intervention unlike any other to seven of our seniors. All seven were able to graduate on time with their high school diploma! Thank you for going above and beyond to care for our students!”

—Kelly Zuerner, Associate Principal for Staff & Students, Downers Grove North High School

Cooperative Education Program Grant

The Regional Safe Schools Cooperative Education Program (RSSCEP) grant provides career-related classroom education and cooperative workplace experience for students. RSSCEP primarily supports students 16 years and older. This past year, in addition to the career and technical education coursework, there were 22 virtual career speakers.

Speakers included Giving DuPage (promoting volunteerism); College of DuPage (with lecturers from different career areas such as cosmetology, the auto technical program, photography, computer information technology and systems, as well as the Admissions department); Addison Public Library (highlighting job search methods); Therapy Dog services; DuPage Farm Bureau (regarding agricultural careers); the Conservation Foundation (promoting conservation and land planning); Kloudscript, Inc. (talking about pharmaceutical careers);

WorkNet DuPage; Windward Roofing and Construction; District Council Training Center (highlighting masonry and bricklaying education and careers); the US Navy; DuPage Pads; Symbol Institute CNC Machining School; IL Welding School; Addison Police Department (regarding digital footprint and internet safety); Edwards-Naperville Hospital (promoting nursing careers); Base Camp Web Design; and REP Photography/REP Photography School.

Statistics for 2020-2021 are as follows:

- Number of employment applications completed with RSSCEP assistance: 24
- Number of on-site interviews as a result: 12
- Number of students who gained employment and were supported with RSSCEP assistance: 17

Alternative Learning Opportunities Program

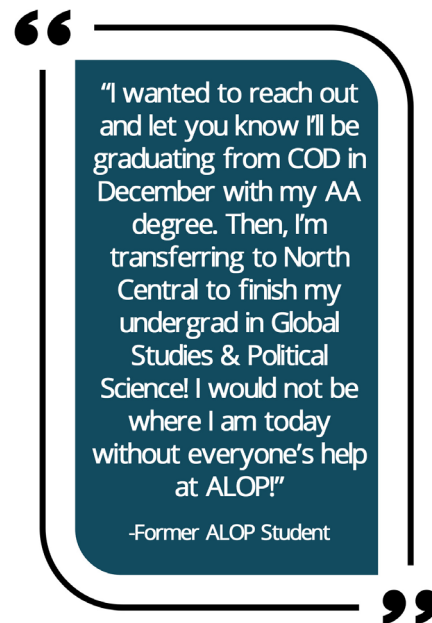
The Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) serves DuPage County high schools and offers academic, social-emotional, and transition services to students who are unable to meet traditional credit requirements. Staff work with students to create individualized, strength-based plans with a focus on completion of a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma.

Although the 2020-2021 school year brought many challenges, it also provided many new opportunities. The ALOP program offered in-person, remote, and hybrid learning options as needed, and the ROE provided technology to assist with remote options. Staff found new and creative ways to connect with students virtually and offered not only academic instruction, but also much-needed connection during difficult times. In response to test center closures, onsite HSE testing was implemented, which resulted in a more comfortable and supported testing environment for students.

In addition to the instructional adaptations, ALOP students were offered the opportunity to receive transition services through the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant, reinforcing a focus on post-secondary training and employment.

To better serve the emotional needs of students, the ALOP staff, along with staff at Partners for Success and WIOA, worked on a year-long curriculum focused on trauma-sensitive schools. The group work focused on ensuring practices are in alignment with current research and responsive to the needs of students and families.

Despite the many obstacles faced by both students and staff, there was much to celebrate. The ALOP program served 41 DuPage County students throughout the school year, resulting in 16 HSE diplomas and 83 subject level exams passed!



BJA STOP Grant

The DuPage Regional Office of Education was awarded a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) STOP (Students-Teachers-Officers Preventing) School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program grant with a budget of \$525,225 over three years. The 2020-21 school year was the final year of the grant and included the following:

- Ongoing support and technical assistance for addressing trauma during a crisis was presented at our Attachment and Trauma Network (ATN) Train the Trainer workshop. The goal is to have one Trauma Trainer in every school district in DuPage. Currently, 60 percent of that goal has been achieved.
- International Institute of Restorative Practices Train the Trainer was a three-day training in October of 2020 for Introduction to Restorative Practices Using Circles. A three-day training in February was held for Facilitating Restorative Conferences.
- A Youth Mental Health First Aid certification course was offered in November and December of 2020.
- Washington Aggression Interruption Training was a four-day training held in November of 2020. Additionally, two informational webinars were held in June of 2021.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness "Ending the Silence," a presentation to inform students about mental health and reduce stigma, was presented to 1,876 middle school students and 530 high school students.



Parents as Teachers

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an internationally recognized, evidence- and research-based, home visiting program designed to support parents as their child's first and best teacher. The goal of the program is to support families and improve kindergarten readiness in young children. During visits, Parent Educators assess family needs and partner with parents to set family goals. Parent Educators provide necessary information and resources to help parents support the emotional, behavioral, and physical development of their children.

In October of 2020, DuPage County Regional Office of Education PAT program earned the Parents as Teachers Quality Endorsement (Blue Ribbon) by meeting or exceeding minimum levels for all the essential requirements in the initial Essential Requirements Review and meeting 95 percent of the Quality Standards.

Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, the DuPage ROE PAT program continued to meet the home visiting needs of at-risk families in DuPage County by providing virtual home visits. The program provided home visiting services to 161 families and 171 children. Parent Educators engaged families in 1,692 virtual visits and 686 phone visits.

Parent Educators delivered supplies, materials, and books to families and then engaged them in virtual parent-child



During the COVID-19 Pandemic, parent educators delivered books to families and engaged them in virtual activities to strengthen family bonds.

activities to strengthen family bonds. These activities affect the development of children's fine motor skills and their kindergarten readiness.

PAT also continued to partner with Books by the Bushel to deliver books to families so they can read to their children and foster a love for reading. Each family who remained in the program for the full year received 30 additional books to add to their home library.

In April, PAT partnered with FORWARD DuPage to conduct family group connections with a focus on living a healthy lifestyle by eating healthy. Each family received a bag of fruits and vegetables and learned how to prepare fun and healthy snacks.

To help combat isolation, PAT—with the help of our Infant Mental Health Consultant—provided families with the opportunity to have conversations with other families through monthly "Parent Cafes." Parents discussed self-care, effective discipline, communication with toddlers, and nutrition.

In May, Parent Educators delivered planting supplies so families could engage in our Parents "Grow with Us" family group connection that guided parents and their children in decorating flowerpots and planting flowers. These activities promote muscle movement and sensory experiences and offered 20 group connections throughout the year.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Parent Educators provided families with diapers, face masks, and hand sanitizer. PAT also provided some participating families with gasoline gift cards to help decrease the financial burden many DuPage families were experiencing.

Substitute Teacher Training

Illinois House Bill 5627, which became law in 2018, allows for individuals with 60 hours of college credit to apply for a short-term substitute (STS) teaching license. These STS license holders are required to complete training before working in the public schools. As a service to DuPage County school districts, the DuPage ROE offers substitute teaching training workshops that satisfy this requirement.

The workshops, held regularly throughout the year, lead participants through the steps required to become a substitute teacher and cover topics such as expectations, classroom management techniques, and school safety.

During the pandemic, the DuPage ROE held trainings via video conference and included information about substitute teaching during COVID-19.

Participants were thankful for the opportunity to learn more about substitute teaching. One attendee said, "I now have additional resources to take the next step in my career development." Another thanked the presenters, saying, "This workshop gave me more tools to use in my career in education."

Homeless Student Advocacy

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) employs a McKinney-Vento Student Liaison who is funded by the grant. The Liaison serves as a resource to homeless families as they navigate the law; to the schools as they strive to provide the best education for students; and to community service providers as they work together to help families in need.

The State of Illinois began tracking the number of homeless students in 2005. At that time there were 269 homeless

students identified and served in the county. In the 2020-2021 school year, there were 1,910 identified McKinney-Vento eligible students in DuPage County in grades pre-K through 12th grade. This number is down from last year's, which was 2,101. The decrease was seen across the nation, as remote learning and the COVID-19 pandemic affected homeless programming.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the ROE's goal was to support DuPage County Schools in every way possible by training them on how to serve and educate the homeless population and assist with material needs, as both schools and families navigated an unprecedented year.

Rebound

The DuPage Regional Office of Education offers a suspension intervention program, Rebound, to middle and high school students in DuPage County.

Rebound provides short-term services in lieu of out-of-school suspension. Students who attend the program work alongside licensed teachers to complete coursework as well as participate in reflective conversations regarding behavior.

Upon completing the program, transition meetings are held with students, families, and district staff to review the placement, identify concerns regarding re-entry, and plan for support services if needed.

Truancy Services

The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) Truancy Department focuses on preventative programs and intervention services. The department offers services to schools, parents, and students to promote positive school attendance and student/parent engagement.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and school schedule fluctuations during the 2020-21 school year, delivery of services was atypical, creative, and evolving. Not surprisingly, there was an uptick in the number of truancy referrals. As schools struggled to engage students remotely, some students failed to attend their virtual classrooms. The ROE Truancy Behavior Interventionists worked diligently to find causes and solutions that included virtual family supports. The CARES Act 2 Dollars provided safety kits for at-risk students that included face masks, disinfectants, and gloves.

The ROE Truancy Behavior Interventionists attended a national three-part training sponsored by Attendance Works. As an outgrowth of identifying systems, resources, and strategies, the DuPage ROE organized an Attendance Works webinar for interested DuPage school personnel with two optional follow-up sessions led by the Behavior Interventionists.

Work is scheduled for the 2021-22 school year to build on proactively setting up multi-tiered systems of support.

Students served by the Truancy Department in the 2020-21 school year included:

- Total active students: 240
- New referrals for 2020-2021: 90
- Elementary school students (grades 1-5): 59
- Middle school students (grades 6-8): 98
- High school students (grades 9-12): 83
- Male students: 136
- Female students: 104

During Remote Learning, the Truancy Team Behavior Interventionists:

- Completed 642 outreach efforts: social and emotional, connection to community resources, and academic
- Hosted the Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Anxiety Center presentation of "Real Tools and Strategies for Dealing with School Anxiety"
- Presented county-wide "Truancy Processes and Supports"
- Updated Attendance Improvement Mentoring (AIM) to expand the "Why Try" curriculum with executive functioning and a trauma-informed lens

Licensure, Relicensure & Certification

The Regional Office of Education (ROE) Licensure Department answers inquiries and researches licensure issues for educators and school districts. We also assist educators with initial licensure applications, subsequent endorsement applications, and renewal/registration of licenses.

Our Licensure Specialists have direct access to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in Springfield and use that access to facilitate resolution of licensure issues for educators/districts and to cut through any bureaucratic red tape. The DuPage ROE is the contracted provider of fingerprint-based background checks for many of the districts—and also provides this service for educators wishing to serve as substitute teachers.

During the pandemic, licensure staff continued to provide all services, adhering to implemented safety guidelines regarding social distancing, masking, and limited contact.

Between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, the licensure staff:

- Aided educators in renewing and obtaining 9,034 credentials
- Fingerprinted and ran background checks on 1,210 individuals
- Assisted 1,922 people in person at the Licensure Counter
- Responded to 11,372 licensure telephone calls
- Responded to 15,386 licensure emails



Health/Life Safety & Compliance

The Regional Superintendent serves as a member of the Governor’s Illinois School Safety Task Force. As a result, the DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) has been influential in providing much-needed school safety protocols that have been distributed statewide. Our ongoing work in DuPage positions us as leaders in the state, particularly in the ROE-developed Emergency Operations Protocols, Threat Assessment, and Common Language Initiative.

The ROE issues building permits for all school building projects subject to the requirements of 23 IL Administrative Code Part 180 and the International Building Code. ROE staff review the documentation submitted to verify proper procedure is followed by the architect and the school district. During the 2020–2021 school year, the ROE reviewed and issued:

- 7 building addition permits
- 2 new building construction permits
- 102 major and miscellaneous renovation permits
- 111 total building permits

During the 2020–2021 school year:

- 291 buildings were inspected and benchmarked against OSHA Standards, local fire codes, municipal codes, and ISBE protocols
- 758 violations were observed and corrected

Each of DuPage County’s 42 school districts is visited every four years on a rotating schedule by ROE staff to verify they are compliant with the 23 IL Administrative Code Part 1, Operational Requirements. Licensed personnel files are reviewed to verify that assignment requirements are being met. School board responsibilities, policies and procedures, budget records, curriculum, and other mandates are also reviewed for compliance. During the 2020–2021 school year, 12 reviews were completed—seven elementary/middle school districts, two high school districts, one unit school district, and two special education co-ops.

In addition, the ROE reviewed 46 Non-Public School Recognition applications and submitted them to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The ROE team also reviews ten-year Health/Life Safety Surveys and submits them to ISBE.

Other ROE safety initiatives included the continued work of cyber security education and facilitating weekly meetings with school districts and health departments on safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ongoing communication and supports have also been provided for private schools in DuPage County.

Instructional Technology Team

The DuPage ROE Instructional Technology Team provides support and guidance to the Regional Office of Education (ROE) operations and professional development staff, while also implementing the Illinois State Board of Education K-12 technology initiatives. The goal of the Instructional Technology Team is to provide support and resources to aid school districts in the planning and implementation of technology initiatives to improve academic achievement and provide all learners with technology-rich learning opportunities.

EdTech Network

The ROE conducts meetings of the EdTech Network for all DuPage County school districts and other learning agencies five times per year. Based on input from district staff, the format of these meetings is designed to focus on providing a shared learning environment as an opportunity for them to network regarding various issues of current and future interest.

Technology Facilitators Group

The DuPage ROE also coordinates four sessions for DuPage technology facilitators/coaches each year. These sessions focus on learning with technology by sharing strategies and tools with district staff who support learning technologies in the classroom. Each of these sessions is hosted by a DuPage school district whose staff leads discussion on strategies, tools, and implementations relative to their district experiences.

SMART MAP-E

The ROE coordinates the SMART Major Account Program for DuPage County. This program provides reduced pricing on interactive whiteboards, interactive flat panels, and other products from SMART Technologies. It is open to all public school districts in the county. On October 28, 2020, the ROE hosted "Beyond Blended: Connected with SMART Technologies" to demonstrate the use of their products in virtual applications.

Preparing for SOPPA! Webinar

On December 2, 2020, the ROE hosted a "Preparing for SOPPA! Webinar." The Student Online Personal Protection Act, or SOPPA, is the student data privacy law that regulates



students' covered information by schools, the Illinois State Board of Education, and education technology vendors. Staff members from Franczek P.C., Wood Dale School District 7, and Community High School District 99 shared their expertise and experiences in meeting the requirements for this law.

Hybrid Learning Panel Discussion

On March 3, 2021, the ROE hosted a "Hybrid-Blended Learning Panel Discussion." Staff members from various DuPage school districts shared their experiences and plans for these learning approaches.

Collaborations with the Illinois Learning Technology Center

The ROE collaborated with the Illinois Learning Technology Center (LTC) to offer a Level 1 Google Certification workshop on March 17, 2021. The ROE and the LTC will continue to collaborate to offer future educational technology opportunities.

Other Professional Development

The ROE also offered internal support to individuals and groups to assist them in accommodating the need for virtual professional development, webinars, and network meetings. Throughout the year, a total of 27 technology-related professional development sessions were offered or supported, serving over 650 participants.

Bus Driver Training

When the Governor's order regarding the pandemic required the Regional Office of Education (ROE) to close its physical doors, the ROE converted its bus driver training to online training in a matter of weeks. This was essential for bus drivers who needed to be re-licensed. The ROE also:

- Provided Active Shooter Bus Driver Training to Area 1 (1,012 attendees)
- Held the initial all-day required course for 816 bus drivers
- Held a refresher two-hour required course to 2,836 bus drivers
- Recruited 21 new bus drivers

- Provided a new, on-line platform to train bus drivers: Currently in process—360 attendees



Teacher In-Service for DuPage Educators

Teacher In-Service for DuPage Educators (TIDE) provides quality university coursework at below-market costs to licensed DuPage County educators. During the 2020-21 school year, the DuPage Regional Office of Education's TIDE program:

- Continued its focus on expanding teacher skills and qualifications by offering a variety of graduate courses—all via a virtual format due to the pandemic—leading to additional teaching endorsements
- Operated as a financially self-sustaining program while presenting 65 courses, serving 890 teachers from July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021

- Collaborated with multiple DuPage County school districts to offer their staffs on-site endorsement-linked courses
- Partnered with four local universities to deliver a selection of cost-effective endorsement programs

TIDE and its university partners offered courses required for popular endorsement areas such as reading, special education, and instructional technology. In addition, TIDE was very excited to partner with Queen Bee School District 16.

Gifted Services

Gifted Services support educators in a variety of ways related to advanced learners. These include scheduled professional learning opportunities, alignment to evidence-based practices and ISBE guidelines, consultation services, and networking events.

The required shift to virtual meeting formats allowed for greater flexibility in attendance while directing focus to specific needs during remote learning. This year, Gifted Coordinator Roundtable meetings were also held to address identification and programming during remote and hybrid learning. Gifted Network meetings explored the topics of trauma, equity and access to advanced programming, psychosocial skills development, communities of inquiry, and talent development in the primary grades.

Educators from DuPage County and surrounding areas participated in a virtual County-wide Institute Day session entitled "Purpose, Priorities, and Passion: Exploring and Enhancing the Educational Experience of Advanced Learners." To the right are some feedback educators gave on the session.

“

"Yes . . . gifted kids do think differently!"

"I was reminded that highly gifted students can have trouble in school until they find the right program and/or group of peers."

"Identifying students who are gifted and talented requires observation, work samples, and not just looking at test scores."

"I really enjoyed the grade level breakout sessions; it was neat to see what other middle school educators are doing."

"So many amazing resources to explore in the future. Thank you!"

”

Administrator Academies

Administrator Academies conducted by the DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) during the 2020-2021 school year were primarily held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the topics covered were social and emotional learning, staff communication, school finance, initial teacher and principal evaluator training, school climate and culture, technology and social networks, equity, Title IX, culturally responsive leadership, and school leadership. Additionally, superintendents, principals and assistant principals met collaboratively throughout the year with academy credit available to all participants.

Approximately 50 courses were conducted, with about 725 participants. The ROE also facilitated courses in schools, school districts, and other entities throughout the state. Twenty-five courses, known as third-party academies, were held in this manner. There were approximately 1,250 participants.

Academies will continue to be delivered at the Center for Professional Learning and in the virtual format over the course of the next school year.

Science, Tech, Engineering, & Mathematics

The DuPage ROE STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Team has been busy providing resources and services to DuPage schools. Below are some highlights from the 2020-2021 school year.

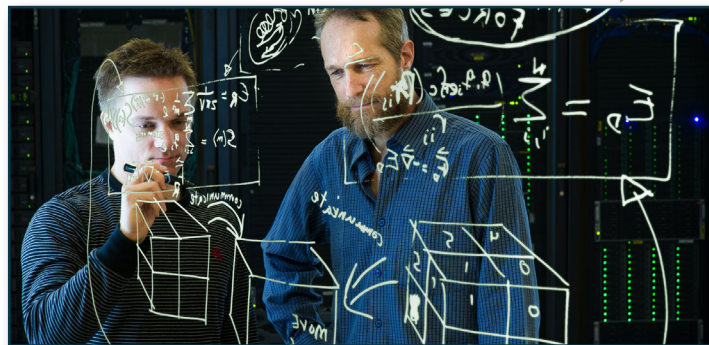
The DuPage ROE STEM Team sponsored a STEM mini grant program. DuPage teachers were invited to apply for funding to support STEM programs in their public middle schools. Twenty-five teachers received awards that totaled close to \$25,000 after a review and approval of an application requiring them to demonstrate the potential and real impact of the requested program additions. Among the items awarded were 3D printers, virtual reality headsets, KEVA planks, robots and robotic components, doodle pens, snap circuit sets, LEGO's, geometric and algebraic models, STEM exploration kits, calculators, and more.

DuPage public school districts received nearly \$40,000 in grant funds to offset costs related to the purchase and implementation of career exploration software used or to be used at the middle school level.

Thirteen STEM Trunks were loaned to area schools to support classroom, after school, and summer STEM learning. STEM trunks are classroom sets of items loaned to schools for a period of two to three weeks. Most often the Trunks are accompanied by teacher guides that include learning standard alignment, STEM career connections, and implementation ideas. The Trunks loaned this year related to earthquake technology, robotics, electricity, logic, problem solving, and coding.

The STEM Team continued to expand the inventory of STEM Trunks available for loan to DuPage schools. In addition to acquiring additional items for current trunks to be able to widen availability, new supplies were purchased based on teacher suggestions and current trends and topics. Additional teacher guides were also created to assist teachers when borrowing the new trunks.

A focus group conversation was held with area teachers to identify ways in which the STEM Team could most effectively



assist teachers during the pandemic. Among the suggestions offered were sponsoring a county-wide challenge and development of several short STEM lessons (30 minutes or less) that could be done remotely with students at school or by students at home and with minimal supplies. These brief lessons have been added to the STEM website under the 30-minute STEMtastic Activities section. The county-wide challenge became known as the Solutions Showcase, which is highlighted below.

The DuPage ROE STEM Team sponsored its first county-wide STEM challenge, Solutions Showcase, inviting middle school students to consider possible solutions to three different issues and to submit a short video highlighting proposed solutions to their chosen topic. Eight teams submitted entries, which can be viewed at stemdupage.com. Entries were also highlighted in the Tuesday Times, the biweekly newsletter distributed throughout the County by Dr. Ruscitti, DuPage County Regional Superintendent.

The STEM Team published nine newsletters and continued to expand and update the STEM website. New to the website are "STEM Starters" and "STEMtastic Activities." Both components invite students to engage in STEM learning activities and exploration as part of their classroom learning experience, just for fun, and to include friends and family.

Title II Grant

The Title II Grant's purpose is to increase the academic achievement of all students by assisting schools and school districts to prepare, train, and recruit high-quality teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Funding from this federally-funded grant was used in DuPage County to support registration fees associated with completion of initial principal evaluator and initial teacher evaluator academies. These academies are required for an individual to initially qualify to conduct performance evaluations of teachers or principals. Applicants must meet designated criteria to be considered.

As a result of the four FY2021 email notifications sent to PACT and DCCD members regarding availability of grant funding, 35 applications were received. Registration fees for 22 educators were approved for funds that fully or partially covered the registrations fees for the designated academies. Of the 22 approved applicants, 20 completed the required teacher evaluator academy, and 2 completed the required principal evaluation academy.

Grants—EIR & SEED

The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) completed its third year of participation in the federally-funded lead grants EIR (Education Innovation and Research) and SEED (Supporting Effective Educator Development) research study, as of September 30, 2020.

Ten school districts representing 46 schools participate in this grant. The 10 school districts are SD10, SD11, SD15, SD20, SD41, SD88, SD93, SD100, SD200, and SD205.

Participating principals work with a coach who assists them in working with their instructional leadership teams to strengthen current processes for finding and solving problems. The Cycles of Inquiry process focuses on root cause problem identification, beginning with digging deep for the student learning problem and its relationship to instructional practices. The theory of change for this groundbreaking research study, for which the Department of Education allocated \$17 million over five years, examines the interdependency of the principal's time utilization, distributed leadership practices, and the thorough analysis of all types of data to determine the root causes of student learning problems.

The DuPage ROE serves as the fiscal agent for the EIR grant, and Illinois State University is the fiscal agent for the SEED grant. The four participating ROEs represent the north, south, east, and west sections of the state. The university partners are



North Central College, Illinois State University, Western Illinois University, and Loyola University.

The DuPage ROE anticipates and is planning for the eventual funding that will be needed to maintain the level of services the grant paid for. The ROE vision is that the grant deliverables described above remain a sustainable, workable part of the professional learning options the ROE provides to principals for many years to come.

Leadership

The Superintendent Collaborative met virtually throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as tense race relations in our country, the meetings were pertinent and timely. School attendance, social-emotional learning, remote learning, and school safety were all discussed. Cycles of Inquiry were incorporated at each meeting. This method typically incorporates four steps: analysis of evidence, determination of a focus, implementation and support, and analysis of impact.

The Principal Collaborative also met regularly in 2020-2021. The Cycles of Inquiry model served as their focal point throughout the year as they shared best practices and learned from the experiences of one another via a virtual format.

We were pleased to continue a collaborative group this year for assistant principals that met regularly throughout the school year via virtual platforms. The participants of the Assistant Principal Collaborative received formal professional development on the Cycles of Inquiry and shared ideas and practices.

The Elementary Principal Network also met regularly this year. This group is an important network for elementary principals throughout DuPage County. Meetings provided opportunities for sharing of best practices, troubleshooting issues, and networking. This group will continue to meet and evolve next year to continue meeting the needs of elementary principals.



DuPage County educational leaders meet regularly to share best practices and learn from one another. During the 2020-2021 school year, most meetings were held virtually.

Regional Board of School Trustees

The Regional Board of School Trustees is an elected board comprised of seven members. This elected board hears petitions for annexations, detachments, and changes in school district boundaries. The Regional Superintendent acts as Ex-Officio Secretary to the Board. The Regional Office maintains all records of petitions filed in the region.

The main responsibilities of the Regional Board of School Trustees are:

- The hearing and disposal of petitions for change of school district boundaries
- The hearing and disposal of petitions by school districts to withdraw from Joint Agreements/ Cooperatives
- Appointment of appraisers and approval of final settlements in the division of assets when new districts are formed

Regional Board of School Trustees meetings are held the first Monday of each quarter. Special meetings are scheduled as necessary.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mary Aherne Young (Addison Township)
Dr. Sally Beatty (York Township)
John Gardner Huff (Lisle Township)
Mary Ann Manna, President (Winfield Township)
Paula McGowen (Milton Township)
Marilyn Menconi (Bloomingdale Township)
Jaye Wang, Vice President (Downers Grove Township)
Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, Ex-Officio Secretary

Fiscal Responsibility

The Teacher Institute Fund is a restricted fund to support educator licensure and professional development opportunities for the purpose of increasing student academic achievement. (Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/3 -12).

BEGINNING FUND BALANCE (UNAUDITED)	
<i>July 1, 2020</i>	\$3,722,725.49
Revenue	
Certification	\$ 413,622.40
Interest	\$3,581.28
Total Revenue (+)	\$417,203.68
Expenditures	
Purchased Services	\$112,571.16
Supplies and Materials	\$1,441.74
Capital Outlay	\$1,599.60
Non-Capitalized Outlay / Transfers	\$0.00
Total Expenditures (-)	\$115,612.50
ENDING FUND BALANCE (UNAUDITED)	
<i>June 30, 2021</i>	\$4,024,316.67

DIRECTORY

Administrative Team..... (630) 407-5800

Dr. Darlene J. Ruscitti, Regional Superintendentdruscitti@dupageroe.org
Dr. Jeremy Dotson, Assistant Regional Superintendent of Business/CSBOjdotson@dupageroe.org
Amber Quirk, Assistant Regional Superintendentaquirk@dupageroe.org

Administrative Assistants Team

Kelly Kozerka, Administrative Assistant, Compliance & Health Life Safety..... kkozerka@dupageroe.org
Lori Ladesic, Administrative Assistant, Human Resources/FOIAlladesic@dupageroe.org
Raquel Wadsworth, Division Assistant, Bus/PAT/Work Permits..... rwadsworth@dupageroe.org

Educator Licensure Team

Liz Bryers, Licensure Leaderebryers@dupageroe.org

Finance Team

Dr. Jeremy Dotson, Assistant Regional Superintendent of Business/CSBOjdotson@dupageroe.org
Bopha Loera, Accounts Receivable/Payable.....bloera@dupageroe.org

Homeless Liaison

Heather Britton, Homeless Liaisonhbritton@dupageroe.org

Parents as Teachers Team

Rhonda Eubanks, Program Directorreubanks@dupageroe.org

Truancy Prevention Team

Amber Quirk, Assistant Regional Superintendentaquirk@dupageroe.org
Angie Tijerina, Senior Staff Assistantatijerina@dupageroe.org

Bus Driver Training, Work Permits

Raquel Wadsworth..... rwadsworth@dupageroe.org

High School Equivalency

Amy Astaaasta@dupageroe.org

Health/Life Safety & Compliance

Kelly Kozerka kkozerka@dupageroe.org

Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP)/Rebound Team..... (630) 386-6781

Kathy Ekstrand, Program Coordinatorkekstrand@dupageroe.org

Safe Schools: Partners for Success Team..... (630) 543-4222

Matt Jeffrey, Principalmjeffrey@dupageroe.org
Jennifer Johnson, School Secretaryjjohnson@dupageroe.org

Professional Development /Equity Team (630)407-6080

Dr. Vickie Trotter, Executive Director of Professional Learningvtrotter@dupageroe.org
Lori Broncato, Administrative Assistantlbroncato@dupageroe.org

TIDE (Teacher Inservice for DuPage Educators)

Kelley Zerfahs, Coordinatorkzerfahs@dupageroe.org
Sarah Johnson, Division Assistantsjohnson@dupageroe.org



DuPage Regional Office of
EDUCATION
Excellence in Education