



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



DuPage Regional Office of  
**EDUCATION**

Excellence in Education



# LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



**Dear DuPage County Education Stakeholders,**

I'm pleased to present the 2021-22 DuPage County Regional Office of Education's Annual Report, which details how the Regional Office of Education (ROE) has supported education stakeholders.

## **Choosing Grace**

Our staff at the ROE comes from a variety of cultural backgrounds and belief systems, as do the administrators, educators, and students whom we serve. In some circles, those differences would be a catalyst for chaos. But we have chosen to embrace diversity and hold it in tension with grace. Demonstrating graciousness outside our comfort zones may not seem earth shattering, but it's one way we create an educational environment that is rich for growth and learning ... and it makes me proud to be part of this organization!

## **Staff Shortages**

In the past few years our nation's schools have been experiencing widespread employment deficits. Accordingly, we have been working alongside high schools and universities to address policies that will increase interest in the education profession. We have also focused on the need for substitute teachers and bus drivers by working with our partners and communication venues to train, recruit, and support these important sectors. You can read more [here](#).

## **School Safety**

The tragic school shooting in Uvalde, Texas in May 2022 pushed school safety back into the media spotlight, but it's something DuPage County has been proactively working on behind the scenes for many years. There are no quick solutions to a problem this complex, but I am proud of the steps we've taken to ensure safety at our schools. In fact, our work has been lauded and duplicated by other counties in Illinois. I hope you will read more about our efforts on [Page 4](#).

## **Work-Based Learning**

Last year I told you about a new program for high school students in DuPage County. Now in its second year, the Work-Based Learning and Youth Apprenticeship Collaborative helps students access employment, education, and training to succeed in high-demand, high-need careers. With the goal of reaching every high school in the County and expanding to other high-demand pathways, the ROE worked to secure the necessary seed funding to build and sustain this regional model. Based on the success of the initial year, the DuPage County Board allocated federal dollars to this work, and Rep. Sean Casten (IL 6th District) helped us secure \$250,000 from federal Community Project Funding to expand the program to additional career pathways. We are grateful for their support! Read more about this program on [Page 5](#).

## **Trending Topics & Culture Conflict**

As you know, the COVID-19 virus has continued to affect our county. While the virus has mutated, so has our schools'

response. The ROE, in collaboration with the DuPage County Health Department and local officials, has guided our schools in appropriate responses and protocols using the best, science-backed information available.

Our nation is also facing more and more culture clashes in regard to issues such as race and gender conversations, and whether certain books should be allowed in school libraries. In response, the DuPage ROE offered a "lunch-and-learn" opportunity in April to provide school administrators an overview of Illinois law pertaining to parents' rights to opt-out or make modifications to required curricula. Now more than ever, "choosing grace" for all is so needed. An environment of trust and respect is foundational to effectively doing our most important job: working together on behalf of the children in DuPage County.

The ROE also knows that responsible civic engagement is critical to this process, and so we're training our youngest citizens for civic responsibility. The ROE is proud to serve as the home of the [Illinois Civics Hub](#) and the Illinois Democracy Schools Network, which serve as national models of how to prepare our students to practice democracy. We are committed to ensuring *all* students are ready for college, career, and civic life with non-partisan, evidence-based professional development. These resources will promote dialogue and understanding across our deepest differences in order to create "a more perfect union."

## **Looking Ahead**

As we look forward to the 2022-23 school year, I am encouraged by the perseverance of our administrators, the creativity of our educators, and the resiliency of our students. We will continue partnering with DuPage County schools and stakeholders so every child is successful academically, socially, and emotionally—while respecting the rich diversity of cultures and viewpoints that our democracy affords us.

Warm regards,

*Dr. Darlene Ruscitti*

Dr. Darlene Ruscitti  
Regional Superintendent of Schools



DuPage Regional Office of  
**EDUCATION**  
Excellence in Education

# WHAT'S NEW AT THE ROE



The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) has seen many new developments during the 2021-22 school year. Below we have highlighted some of our accomplishments.

## Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Hub

The SEL Hub launched this past year, and the DuPage ROE was selected by the Illinois State Board of Education to host this project for all of Area 1. The SEL Hub allows the ROE to expand its capacity to identify and respond to trauma in our schools and to strengthen SEL programming. Read more about this important work on [page 11](#).

## Micro-Endorsements

[Micro-endorsements](#) consist of multiple, individualized micro-credentials representing a set of competencies needed for certification in a given topic. The DuPage ROE has taken the lead in Illinois to introduce and provide professional development in a rigorous and on-demand platform in the areas of Social-Emotional Learning, Equity, and English Learners. We are honored to meet the needs of educators in a way that is totally different than anything we've done before.

## New Principal Induction and Mentoring Program

The DuPage ROE is thrilled to be a statewide provider for Illinois' New Principal Induction and Mentoring Program. This program enables first-year principals to grow and learn from one-on-one mentorship, receive professional development, and discover proven strategies for improving the lives of students and teachers.

## EIR Grant

On September 30, 2022, the ROE will complete its fifth and final year of participation in the federally funded early phase LEAD grants, EIR (Education Innovation and Research) and SEED (Supporting Effective Educator Development) research study. Our results will be published in 2023. However, in December of

2021, we were notified that the DuPage ROE was the recipient of a five-year, mid-phase EIR grant in the amount of \$8 million! This will allow us to continue providing principal professional development and coaching at no cost to the districts while contributing to the research on school improvement and principal efficacy. We endeavor to use this money wisely and effectively, as we have done with previous grants. Read more on [page 14](#).

## School Safety Summit/Threat Assessment Training

In January 2022, the ROE hosted a School Safety Summit with premier safety specialist, Peter Langman, PhD. Hired by the Department of Homeland Security to provide training on school shootings, Dr. Langman identified and described three psychological types of school shooters and discussed threat assessment using case histories of actual perpetrators. Many attended including local officials, school superintendents, safety task forces, representatives from College of DuPage and private schools in DuPage, and employees from the DuPage Sheriff's office and States' Attorney.

On June 8, 2022, the ROE held a one-day training for school threat assessment teams with Safety Specialist John Heiderscheidt and School Psychologist Lisa Aguilar. These teams evaluated their current threat assessment procedures through practical role-play scenarios, and they left with action plans for improvement. You can read more about School Safety on [page 4](#).

## Inclusive Schooling

This past year the ROE offered an Inclusive Schooling Initiative for our early childhood educators. This initiative empowered them with new tools, research-based practices, and practical assistance. The goal is to meet the needs of the youngest and most vulnerable citizens of DuPage County, preparing them so they will hit the ground running when they start kindergarten!

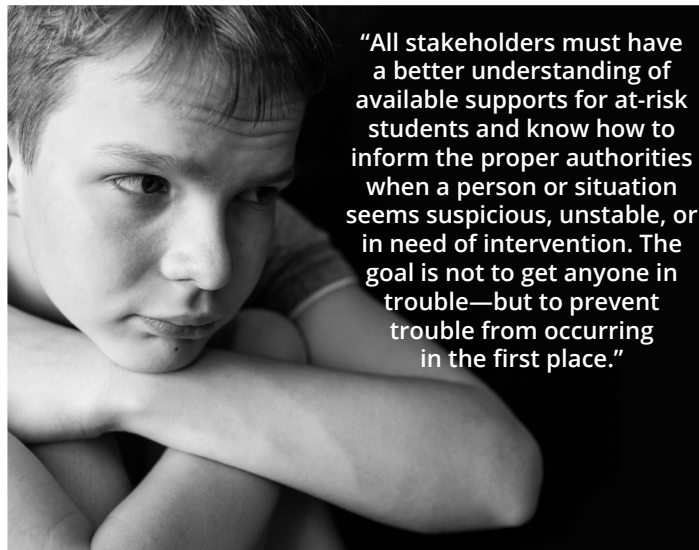
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Letter from the Superintendent.....</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Science, Tech, Engineering &amp; Math.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>What's New at the ROE .....</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Gifted Services .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>School Safety.....</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Licensure, Relicensure &amp; Certification.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Work-Based Learning.....</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Social &amp; Emotional Learning .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Equity.....</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Health/Life, Safety &amp; Compliance.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Center for Student Success.....</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>TIDE.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>-Partners for Success .....</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Administrator Academies.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>-ALOP .....</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Approved PD Provider Audit Process .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>-Rebound Program .....</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Instructional Technology Team .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>-Transition Services.....</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Bus Driver Training .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Parents as Teachers Program.....</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Grants - EIR &amp; Seed .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Substitute Teacher Training .....</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Leadership .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Homeless Student Advocacy.....</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Regional Board of School Trustees.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Truancy Services.....</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Fiscal Responsibility .....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>High School Equivalency.....</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Directory.....</i>	<i>16</i>



# SCHOOL SAFETY

Because of its foundational position to every other aspect of education, school safety is something the DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) takes very seriously. After numerous mass shootings this past year, and in particular the shooting that took place at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, it is important for all DuPage County stakeholders to know what the ROE has done—and is doing—to ensure our students are protected from violent acts.



**"All stakeholders must have a better understanding of available supports for at-risk students and know how to inform the proper authorities when a person or situation seems suspicious, unstable, or in need of intervention. The goal is not to get anyone in trouble—but to prevent trouble from occurring in the first place."**

The DuPage ROE spearheaded Illinois' first school safety task force after the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. Back then it was controversial to even consider locking school doors! Twenty-three years later, the school safety task force is still intact and is stronger and better. It now includes experts in safety, homeland security, police and fire professionals, mental health providers, community experts, and educators. DuPage County's progress in the area of school safety has been lauded and duplicated by other counties in Illinois.

**DuPage County's State's Attorney Robert Berlin wrote to the ROE after the tragedy in Uvalde, thanking the ROE and Dr. Ruscitti for their leadership on the school safety task force. "It's because of your commitment that we are so far ahead when it comes to keeping schools safe," he said. He added that while we cannot let our guard down, he is "proud to be a part of this incredibly talented group of individuals."**

This is indeed ongoing work for the DuPage ROE, as detailed below.

- The ROE has provided numerous hands-on trainings in the areas of mental health, threat assessment, trauma, and preparedness.
- The ROE has written grants to fund school safety measures, has published policies for emergency planning, and has implemented countless programs designed to protect and nurture our #1 resource: our children.

- The ROE has held a School Safety conference every September for school safety teams that features presentations from our police and fire departments.
- The ROE has helped develop a common vocabulary for school safety to improve efficiency and communication between the various stakeholders.
- The ROE continually shares best practices with other counties throughout the state and country and learns from what others are doing.
- The ROE offers professional development for administrators and educators on the topic of threat assessment, one of which was held on June 8, 2022. At this training, school threat assessment teams evaluated their current threat assessment procedures through practical roleplay scenarios with police, fire, and SRO personnel. Teams practiced scenarios using their current procedures and left with an action plan to improve their processes.
- The ROE hosted a free school safety summit titled "Preventing School Shootings" in January of 2022. The event was led by Dr. Peter Langman, a psychologist whose research on school shooters has received international recognition. During the training, Dr. Langman explained three psychological profiles of school shooters and discussed threat assessment using case histories of actual perpetrators. Participants evaluated actual student writings for evidence of a risk of violence and learned what actions to take.

From the top-down, the DuPage ROE is using evidence-based findings to ensure schools are safe. However, it is necessary to continually improve threat assessment training, find new avenues for funding, develop information-sharing agreements with local law enforcement, and utilize existing technology for communication—as well as creating new technology. It also must be acknowledged that this is an equity issue, and to be effective, a "team marathon" approach must be used.

The "team" must include civic and political leaders, administrators, educators, para-professionals, community members, workplace employers, parents, and even students. All stakeholders must have a better understanding of available supports for at-risk students and know how to inform the proper authorities when a person or situation seems suspicious, unstable, or in need of intervention. The goal is not to get anyone in trouble—but to prevent trouble from occurring in the first place.

The "marathon" aspect means this is not a one-and-done project but a commitment for the long haul. These tragedies must be stopped from occurring, but it's going to take a lot of time, energy, and commitment from all residents of DuPage County.

Read more about school safety at [dupageroe.org/services/school-safety](https://dupageroe.org/services/school-safety).



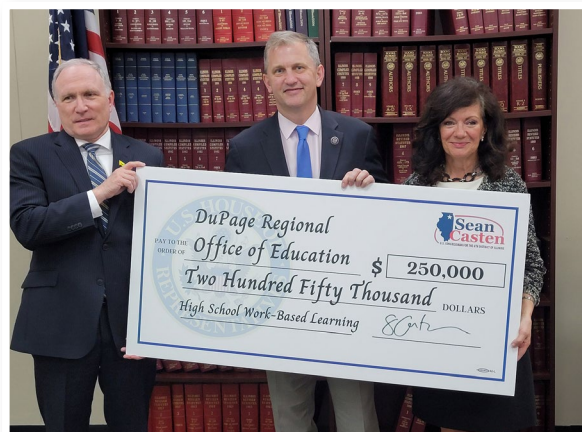
# WORK-BASED LEARNING

This is the second year of the DuPage Work-Based Learning and Youth Apprenticeship Collaborative, which is designed to help junior and senior year high school students access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in high-demand, high-need careers in DuPage County. This year, 27 students from ten area high schools were involved in paid student apprenticeships/internships during their school day at local business partners. The advanced manufacturing career pathway had a full year of implementation, and a second pathway in the area of information technology (IT) was piloted in January 2022.

The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) worked to secure the necessary seed funding to build and sustain this regional model. Based on the success of the initial year, the DuPage County Board allocated federal dollars to address some of the county's economic development needs. The ROE also received one-time federal Community Project Funding to expand the program to other pathways such as healthcare and supply chain logistics.

The ROE will continue to work with its partners, including Project Hire-Ed (College of DuPage), WorkNet DuPage, Choose DuPage, and GPS Education Partners, to build this program throughout DuPage County so students have access to industry credentials, post-secondary education, and employment opportunities.

In June, Work-Based Learning was featured on the Getting Smart podcast, with Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, Superintendent of DuPage County Schools, contributing to the conversation. You can listen to the podcast on [Spotify](#) or on [Apple Podcasts](#). To learn more about Work-Based Learning, visit [dupageroe.org/dupage-youth-apprenticeship-program](https://dupageroe.org/dupage-youth-apprenticeship-program).



*Dr. Brian Caputo, President of College of DuPage; Sean Casten, U.S. representative for Illinois' 6th Congressional District; and Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, Regional Superintendent of DuPage County Schools, display funding provided through a federal grant.*

# EQUITY

The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) believes 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. The ROE is committed to supporting educational and administrative leaders in DuPage County schools and has been since 2009 when the Equity and Excellence Committee (EEC) was formed.

The 2021-22 goals of the committee were to coordinate efforts with DuPage County school districts to build awareness and support school initiatives by providing opportunities for districts to share how they are implementing practices within the five Equity strands: Systemic Equity; Employment and Retention; CIPA (Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development, and Assessments); Student Voice, Climate and Culture; and Family & Community Engagement.

During the 2021-22 school year, the EEC held multiple collaborative meetings. Schools were asked to share where they are at in their equity journey, talk about connections to the equity strands, and discuss future considerations for implementing specific equity measures within their schools or districts.

In December 2021, Mike Berago from Fenton High School District 100 shared the school's journey from their Equal Opportunity Schools initiative to the development of their Equity Action Plan. In February 2022, Kristine Campbell from Naperville SD203 (Mill Street Elementary School) shared how her school has put equity in the forefront through literature and protocols used to promote engagement and participation. And in April of 2022, Dr. Rakeda Leaks and Shelly Nelson from Naperville SD203 shared their current recruitment and hiring process and how they support and retain BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and historically underrepresented staff.

In December of 2021, the ECC had students from four school districts participate in a panel where they shared their perspectives on student voice, climate, and culture at their schools.

The ROE has continued to facilitate numerous trainings and workshops throughout the past school year and will continue to work toward full equity in DuPage County schools. In the upcoming year, the EEC will place a huge emphasis on the Equity Journey Continuum and how it aligns with the EEN Framework Strands. You can learn more about the efforts of the ROE at: [dupageroe.org/professional-development/equity](https://dupageroe.org/professional-development/equity).



# CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The Center for Student Success, which houses Partners for Success (PfS), the Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP), and the Rebound program, renewed their focus and prioritized building relationships with the 42 school districts represented in DuPage County during the 2021-22 school year.

The Center for Student Success (CSS) offers a continuum of programming for middle and high school students at risk of academic failure due to academic, behavioral, or emotional concerns. Each student enrolled in the CSS programs has an individually-tailored plan to meet their academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs. These plans ensure students experience continued growth with the goal of completing middle school or high school, and post high school, are ready for college or a career. During 2021-22, students and families also had access to an in-house trauma therapist to provide additional support.

CSS's goals throughout 2021-22 focused on continual improvement and a renewed commitment in the following areas:

- Engaging students in academically rigorous coursework that result in completion of middle or high school, and for high school students, readiness for college or career
- Strengthening students' social-emotional learning skills
- Providing staff with ongoing professional learning to further implement restorative practices
- Ensuring classrooms are trauma-informed to meet the diverse needs of students



*Staff at the Center for Student Success welcome back students for the 2021-22 school year. The CSS houses Partners for Success, the Alternative Learning Opportunities Program, and Rebound.*

We value the partnership we have with our DuPage school districts, and we have welcomed feedback so we can continually improve our programs of support. We are committed to refining our programs to best meet the diverse needs of CSS students, whether it's through PfS, ALOP, or Rebound.

## PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

[Partners for Success](#), the Regional Safe School of DuPage County, was established in 1997 in response to Illinois legislation enacted to reduce school expulsions and provide alternative schooling and restorative supports for students facing expulsion or out-of-school suspensions longer than three days.

PfS serves as the alternative school for member districts in DuPage County at the middle and high school levels. PfS offers academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports for students who struggle behaviorally in a traditional school setting.

The PfS team partners with student service teams at each student's school of origin to create an Alternative Education Plan that sets goals focused on academic performance, attendance, behavior, and social-emotional learning. Students spend between one and four semesters working on these goals and have regular evaluations. Based on students' progress, staff determines readiness for return to their respective schools.

During the 2021-22 school year, PfS collaborated with the ALOP staff to implement trauma-informed practices in the classroom. PfS staff also focused on a curriculum taught through an advisory elective course, which focused on social-emotional learning competencies with students. On School Improvement Days, the CSS staff researched and discussed social-emotional competencies, what trauma-informed practices look like in the school setting, and best practices for implementation to better respond to the needs of students and their families.

Over the course of the 2021-22 school year, PfS:

- had more than 400 contacts with local school personnel to discuss and support students' needs
- served 42 high school students and 9 middle school students
- celebrated the graduation of 6 seniors from their home high schools

PfS looks forward to continuing to build relationships with member school districts and serving and supporting students across DuPage County in the 2022-23 school year.



## ALOP

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 and student relationships are the foundation of the program, which provides instruction from certified teachers and support from a full-time school social worker.

This past school year, the program served 53 students from across DuPage County and assisted them with the academic preparation needed to obtain their High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma. Many of the students enrolled identified feeling disengaged from school and noted struggling with consistent attendance. Students entering the program were provided with an array of both academic and support services designed to reconnect students with their education goals. The program offered relationship-based instruction focused in the core content areas of math, language arts, social studies, and science. Instruction was offered in a variety of modalities designed to meet student needs, with many students benefiting from individual and small group lessons.

Staff worked with students to create individualized, strength-based plans that focused on academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary planning. Of the 53 students enrolled, 37 students successfully completed all program requirements and earned HSE diplomas. Congratulations to all the ALOP graduates on achieving this educational milestone that allows them to move forward with their post-secondary journey.

## REBOUND PROGRAM

The [Rebound](#) program was designed in response to Senate Bill 100, with the input of DuPage County school districts. Serving both middle and high school districts, the program offers an alternative to the traditional out-of-school suspension. Students attend Rebound in place of their suspension, providing them with access to both academic and social work support. Certified teachers assist students with maintaining academic continuity through individualized tutoring and communications with home district teachers. Students participate in daily social work lessons to learn strategies for a successful transition back to their home school. The Rebound program served 50 students during the 2021-2022 school year.

## TRANSITION SERVICES

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 eleven virtual and in-person career speakers, as well as five in-person experiential events.

Speakers included individuals from DuPage County Farm Bureau, WorkNet DuPage, Giving DuPage, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and more. Students heard presentations on careers in sports, video game development, and agriculture. They also learned how to strengthen their resume by doing volunteer work and how to take advantage of opportunities.

Field trips included a culinary career experience at Marcel's Culinary Kitchen, a visit to College of DuPage to explore admissions and programs, and graphic arts experience at DIT Workshops.



*Students learned about culinary careers at Marcel's Culinary Kitchen.*

Statistics for the 2021-2022 school year are as follows:

- Number of employment applications completed with RSSCEP assistance: 27
- Number of on-site interviews as a result: 9
- Number of students who gained employment and were supported with RSSCEP assistance: 8

In addition to the RSSCEP services, CSS students that met enrollment criteria were also supported through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities grant, which provided individualized case management, financial literacy, career counseling access to paid post-secondary training programs, and follow-up services.

Looking ahead to the 2022-2023 school year, CSS is pleased to announce the ROE will employ a full-time transition coordinator to work with all students on their individual transition goals. Students returning to home districts will receive enhanced support designed to ensure student success. For those students completing their secondary school journey, the transition coordinator will work closely with them to develop goals, provide resources, and offer follow-up services.





# PARENTS AS TEACHERS PROGRAM

The [Parents as Teachers](#) (PAT) program is an internationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting program designed to support parents and caregivers as their child's first and most influential teacher. Parents as Teachers builds strong communities, thriving families, and children who are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. They do this by matching parents and caregivers with trained professionals who make regular personal home visits during a child's earliest years in life, from prenatal to preschool. During visits, parent educators partner with families and caregivers to provide support, community resources, and developmental screenings to their children.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, we made visits in the 11 school districts we serve in DuPage County. These visits included:

- 137 telecommunication visits
- 1,190 virtual visits
- 1,225 in-person home visits (for a total of 2,552 visits)

These visits were provided to:

- 177 families
- 211 children
- 40 pregnant women

Group Connections and Parent Cafes are another highlight of the program. They are designed to provide educational information, socialization for families and children, and introductions to new activities and experiences with other

families in the program. We held 27 Group Connections and 10 Parent Cafes during the 2021-22 school year. Some of the richest experiences came from our Pizza in the Park, Mother's Day Brunch, our evening "Bugs" event held at Partners For Success, and our first annual graduation, which was held at the Wheaton Public Library. The graduation was attended by more than 100 parents and family members, with 51 three-year-olds graduating from the program!

PAT continues to partner with the community and other early childhood programs to ensure we are reaching the most at-risk families and children in the county. Our collaboration with the DuPage County Health Department and IRIS (Integrated Referral and Intake System) ensures there is no duplication of services and families are being connected to the program best suited for them.

In November, we again partnered with Toys for Tots to ensure all children in our program, as well as their siblings, received toys for the holiday. Some of our newest community partners include Mary's Closet and Chicago Furniture Bank.

Parent educators are required to maintain continuing education units and they receive professional development in various areas. All parent educators received training and certification in child and adult CPR and First Aid through



*Mayra Garcia, parent educator, presents a Certificate of Completion to Diana Ortiz at the first annual Parents as Teachers graduation ceremony. Diana has been in the program for three years and will be attending preschool in the fall.*

the Addison Fire Department. Staff also attended workshops on Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) to be able to provide our families with additional support.

We are looking forward to the upcoming school year and continuing to provide at-risk families and children with all the benefits and resources we have to offer.



# 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 virtually 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 grateful for the opportunity to learn more about substitute teaching, and many left positive comments about the effectiveness of the training. "The presentation was great, very educational and friendly," said one attendee. "I thought the presentation was very well done—clear, efficient and easy to follow," said another.



# HOMELESS STUDENT ADVOCACY



During the 2021-22 school year, there were 1,932 identified homeless students in DuPage County. The [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children experiencing homelessness. The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) employs a McKinney-Vento Student Advocate who is funded by the grant and 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.

DuPage Pads recently purchased and operates a 130-unit Interim Housing Center (IHC) using a repurposed hotel in Downers Grove where emergency housing has been provided since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The IHC is dedicated to providing a safe space for families with children. Approximately 33 percent of DuPage County's homeless population are children. The McKinney-Vento Student Advocate is excited to be a partner in this endeavor by dedicating funds for an "Education Liaison" who will serve students who are staying at the IHC. Funding was also granted to purchase supplies and equipment for a dedicated homework space in the IHC.

## TRUANCY SERVICES



The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) [Truancy and School Attendance Department](#) blends preventive programs with intervention services. The Department serves schools, parents, and students to promote positive school attendance and student/parent engagement.

During the 2021-22 school year, there was a 48 percent increase in referrals. This was most likely due to the effects of the pandemic. The Truancy Department served 461 chronically truant and truant students countywide. Of the closed cases this year, 74 percent either returned to school or moved/withdrew from their homeschool. The team will begin the 2022-2023 school year with 278 active or pending cases.

Some highlights from this past year include:

- Truancy Team Behavior Interventionists completed 127 outreach meetings to inform schools about our support, 345 school support meetings, and 635 home visits. Referrals for social services were given to 268 families, and trained behavior interventionists provided personal counseling 186 times.
- The Department co-hosted two parent education nights with Ascension Health titled "School Anxiety and School Refusal."

### 2021-2022 Truancy Data

Total Students Served: .....	461
New Referrals for 2020-2021: .....	184
Total Active Students: .....	278
Elementary referrals: .....	78
Middle School Referrals: .....	94
High School Referrals: .....	106

- The Department presented at the Truancy and School Attendance Networks regarding processes and supports.
- The team created a "Train the Trainer" model for Attendance Improvement Mentoring (AIM), with the Why Try curriculum enhanced by executive functioning and a trauma-informed lens.
- The DuPage ROE partnered with Dr. Patricia Graczyk, who facilitated three 90-minute Truancy & School Attendance Network sessions during the 2021-2022 school year. A total of 132 educators attended and focused on creating tiered support systems. Dr. Graczyk also presented an overview of attendance practices related to MTSS (multi-tiered system of supports) to the Middle School Principal Collaborative, Elementary Principal Collaborative, and High School Social Work Network.
- The ROE also offered additional professional development to 171 educators from across the state related to truancy and school attendance. Topics included Interventions to Support Students with Significant School Absences, How to Promote a Culture of Attendance, Addressing the Early Signs of School Refusal, and more.

## HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY



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.

During the time period of July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022:

- 471 individuals participated in HSE testing
- 724 HSE documents were issued (in-house only)
- 626 HSE verifications were processed

Visit [dupageroe.org/services/ged-hse](https://dupageroe.org/services/ged-hse) for more information.



# SCIENCE, TECH, ENGINEERING & MATH

STEM is the integrated application of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. First introduced in 2001, the four subject areas are combined into a single, interconnected discipline. In 2019-2020, the DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) [STEM Team](#) provided a wide variety of programming for students, parents, and teachers.

- The STEM Squad facilitated one Professional Development session that involved 35 educators. This event took place as part of the Countywide Institute Day Program.
- The STEM Squad facilitated 19 after-school workshops for students. Twenty-five teachers assisted, and the sessions engaged a total of 266 students.
- The STEM website continues to be maintained as an informational resource for educators, students, and parents.
- Eight newsletters were published, each with a circulation of more than 630 recipients. The newsletters are also accessible via the STEM website.
- The STEM Squad facilitated 4 STEM activities for students in a variety of grade levels. Eight teachers and more than 950 students engaged in the activities offered.
- Twenty-five teams from three DuPage schools (for a total of 85 students) were entered into a STEM Showcase. Students developed and presented, in video format, creative solutions to contemporary problems or issues. The top videos are published on the STEM website.
- A total of 28 STEM Trunks were loaned to area schools. While on loan, 61 teachers introduced STEM activities to more than 1,400 students.



*Children create structures at an "ArtKEVActure" STEM Workshop facilitated by the ROE STEM Squad. ArtKEVActure is a play on the words architecture and KEVA planks, the wooden pieces used to build.*



## GIFTED SERVICES

[Gifted Services](#) are in place to guide area educators in best supporting advanced learners. These services include scheduled professional learning opportunities, resources for alignment to evidence-based practices and ISBE guidelines, consultation services, and networking events.

Several virtual gifted network meetings were held during the 2021-2022 school year that addressed the topics of Teaching

Conceptual Math, Collaboration and Co-Teaching, and Talent Development.

A Gifted Coordinator Roundtable was also held to collaboratively share practices for equitable identification and programming practices. Since meetings were held virtually, educators from DuPage County and other regional areas were able to participate in these events.



## 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, 2021 and June 30, 2022, the licensure staff:

- Aided educators in renewing and obtaining 9,492 credentials
- Fingerprinted and ran background checks on 1,444 individuals
- Assisted 2,446 people in person at the Licensure Counter
- Responded to 13,148 licensure telephone calls
- Responded to 18,335 licensure emails

# SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING



Social-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 as a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Hub that supports the social and emotional needs of our students and educators. Through the SEL Hub, schools in DuPage County had the opportunity to work in partnership with an ROE team member to assess their trauma and SEL needs and create action plans based on the results. We were also able to offer various SEL related workshops throughout the 2021-2022 school year at no cost to participants. The SEL Hub grant has been extended for another year, so this work will continue in the 2022-2023 school year.



*During the 2021-22 school year, the DuPage ROE was honored to be selected by the Illinois State Board of Education to be a Social-Emotional Learning Hub. The SEL Hub supports the social-emotional needs of DuPage County students by training educators to assess trauma and SEL needs and create action plans based on the results.*

# 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. We are leaders for the state, particularly in the ROE-developed Emergency Operations Protocols, Threat Assessment, Common Language, Reunification Plans, and Merit initiatives.

## School Construction

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 2021-2022 school year, the ROE reviewed and issued:

- 7 building addition permits
- 1 new building construction permit
- 170 major and miscellaneous renovation permits
- 178 total building permits

During the 2021-2022 school year:

- 292 buildings were inspected and benchmarked against OSHA standards, local fire codes, municipal codes, and ISBE protocols
- 721 violations were observed and corrected

## Compliance Review

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 2021-2022 school year, 11 reviews were completed:

- 7 elementary/middle school districts,
- 3 high school districts
- 1 unit school district

In addition, the ROE reviewed 44 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, as well as sharing Health Department updates regarding safety protocols due to the pandemic. Ongoing communication and support have also been provided for private schools in DuPage County.

For more information, visit [dupageroe.org/services/health-life-safety](https://dupageroe.org/services/health-life-safety).





## TIDE

Teacher In-Service for DuPage Educators ([TIDE](#)) provides quality university coursework at below-market costs to licensed DuPage County educators. During the 2021-22 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 73 courses, serving 825 teachers from July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022
- 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 special education, instructional technology, ESL, and a new cohort this year, English Dual Credit courses for our high school teachers.



## ADMINISTRATORS' ACADEMIES

[Administrators' Academies](#) conducted by the DuPage Regional Office of Education were delivered in three formats during the 2021-22 school year. Due to the pandemic, most of the academies were delivered virtually, while a smaller number of courses followed the traditional in-person method of delivery. The ROE also conducted “third-party” academies in schools/districts in both face-to-face and virtual formats.

A sampling of subject matters offered included:

- Teacher and Principal Initial Evaluator
- Retraining academies in the teacher evaluator area
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Crisis Decision Making
- Equity
- Culturally Responsive Leadership
- Homelessness
- Illinois Social Science Standards
- Microcredentials in EL, SEL and Culture

Many other topics were also covered, and many new subject matters were developed throughout the year.

For the 2021-22 school year, approximately 610 individuals participated in 43 academies. The ROE also offered 20



*Due to the pandemic, most of the academies were delivered virtually, while a smaller number of courses followed the traditional in-person method of delivery.*

third-party academies in schools/districts with 1,060 participants. Looking ahead, the course catalog for 2022-23 will include a combination of in-person and virtually formatted classes.



## APPROVED PD PROVIDER AUDIT PROCESS

The Illinois State Board of Education requires each Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Center to complete reviews of the documentation for professional development (PD) activities that are maintained by each approved PD provider within its area. In DuPage County, each approved PD provider is audited every four years and as part of that review process must submit documentation related to selected PD activities that they offered during the designated audit year.

In FY22, 14 districts and entities were notified of their participation in the Approved PD Provider Audits for PD activities completed from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. Two additional districts/entities were notified that they had been placed on Action Plans due to deficits noted in their FY21 Approved PD Provider Audits. All but one entity have satisfactorily completed the process. The one remaining entity will be placed on an Action Plan for FY23.

# INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY TEAM

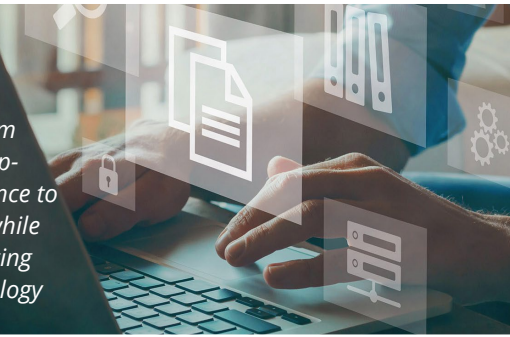


The DuPage ROE [Instructional Technology \(IT\) Team](#) provides support and guidance to the Regional Office of Education (ROE) operations and professional development staff while also implementing the Illinois State Board of Education K-12 technology initiatives. The goal of the IT Team is to provide support and resources to aid school districts in the planning and implementing 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. These meetings focus on providing a shared learning environment as an opportunity to network.

*The goal of the DuPage Instructional Technology team is to provide support and guidance to the ROE staff, while also implementing the ISBE technology initiatives.*



## Technology Facilitators Group

The DuPage ROE also coordinates four sessions for DuPage technology facilitators/coaches each year. These sessions focus on sharing strategies and tools with district staff who support learning technologies in the classroom. Meetings this year were hosted by Downers Grove School District 99, Indian Prairie School District 204, DuPage High School District 88, and Naperville Community Unit School District 203. Topics included implementation strategies, professional development, coaching strategies, digital literacy/citizenship, social-emotional

learning, computer competencies, robotics, and STEAM.

## Technology Steering Committee

The DuPage ROE IT Team, in collaboration with Network and IT Coaches, met to design a blueprint for the 2022-23 meeting schedule that will support the needs of DuPage Technology Leaders. The future focus will be on using ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Standards for Students and Educators to support continual growth and professional development of our technology leadership in DuPage County.

## Updated Illinois Computer Science State Standards

The DuPage ROE provided guidance and support on current changes to the Illinois Computer Science Standards and Illinois Student Expectations. The updated Illinois Computer Science Standards will go into effect beginning with the 2022-23 school year.

## Listservs, File Sharing, and Informational Websites

The DuPage ROE IT Team continued to host online communication and sharing of services for educators, allowing them to collaborate and share resources beyond their meetings. The listservs are updated each fall to reflect changes in district personnel. This year the DuPage ROE also provided access to an informational website for state updates and shared information for our county's technology and curriculum leaders.

## Collaborations with the Illinois Learning Technology Center

The ROE collaborated with the Illinois Learning Technology Center (LTC) to offer several online professional development sessions. This year the LTC, along with the DuPage ROE, provided courses on the following topics: Decluttering your Digital Life, Hey Google, What's New?, An Introduction to Google Sheets, Google Level 1 Certification, and Aligning Teaching to the New IL Computer Science Standards. The ROE and the LTC will continue collaborating to offer future educational technology opportunities.

# BUS DRIVER TRAINING



The DuPage Regional Office of Education offers the [bus driver training](#) courses required by the Illinois State Board of Education. While delivering the "Initial" and "Refresher" training courses, bus safety is emphasized. The modules for the courses are updated annually as we prepare drivers to transport our students. Interest in bus driver training continues to grow rapidly in DuPage County.

A total of 198 bus classes were offered from July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022:

- Initial Bus Driver attendees – 852
- Refresher Bus Driver attendees – 1,992





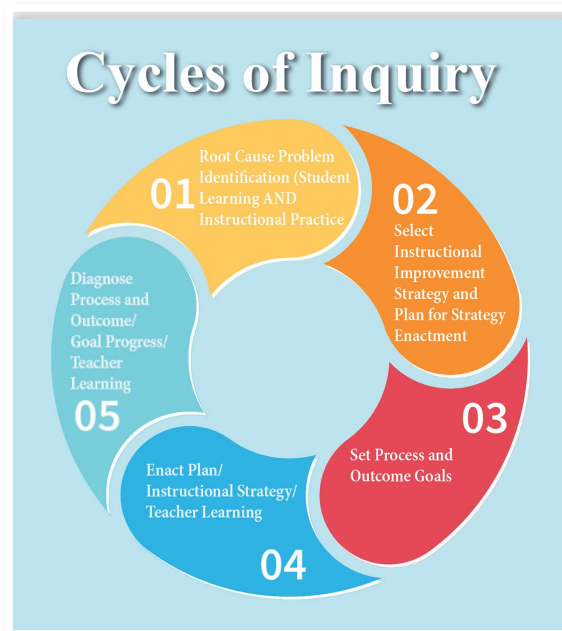
## GRANTS - EIR & SEED

The DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) will complete its fifth and final year of participation in the federally funded early phase LEAD grants EIR (Education Innovation and Research) and SEED (Supporting Effective Educator Development) research study, as of September 30, 2022. In December 2021 we were notified that the DuPage ROE was the recipient of a five-year mid-phase EIR grant that will allow us to continue to provide principal professional development and coaching at no cost to the districts while contributing to the research on school improvement and principal efficacy.

Nine school districts representing 38 schools participate in this grant during the 2021-22 school year. The nine school districts are SD10, SD11, 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 federal research study 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 which in turn suggests the necessary changes to teachers' instructional practices.

The DuPage ROE serves as the fiscal agent for the EIR grant and works in collaboration with five other ROE's covering the entire state through the ROE Leadership Hubs. Our participation in this federal project allows us to provide



*The Cycles of Inquiry process, which participating principals take part in, focuses on root cause problem identification, beginning with digging deep for the student learning problem and its relationship to instructional practices.*

professional learning options to school leaders that can be built upon to be delivered sustainably in the future once the grant has ended.



## LEADERSHIP

### Superintendent Collaborative

The Superintendent Collaborative met eight times throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Meeting topics were generated by the group to provide “just in time” support and to harness the collective efficacy of the participants. Topics included the impact of school mandates, navigating community and board relations, strategic planning for student outcomes, addressing the teacher shortage, and social/emotional issues for students and staff. 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.

### Women In Leadership Network

The 2021-2022 school year was the second year for the Women in Leadership Network. The group's purpose is to empower and equip female leaders by supporting those in

their current roles and lifting others to higher levels of leadership. This group continues to be a collaborative venture of the DuPage ROE, DuPage IASA, and ROE 4, who looked for ways to bring women superintendents together for networking and support.

The group met five times during the year. One of the meetings included other invited female leaders and focused on the book *How Women Rise*.





# 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 on 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



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

<b>BEGINNING FUND BALANCE</b>	
July 1, 2021	\$4,024,317
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Certification	\$364,249
Interest	<u>\$9,787</u>
Total Revenue (+)	\$374,036
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
Purchased Services	\$37,510
Supplies and Materials	\$675
Capital Outlay	\$0
Non-Capitalized Outlay / Transfers	\$0
FY20 Prior Period CPA Review and Accounting Adjustment	<u>\$17,655</u>
Total Expenditures (-)	\$55,840
<b>ENDING FUND BALANCE (UNAUDITED)</b>	
June 30, 2022	\$4,342,513
Note: All numbers are rounded to nearest dollar.	



# DIRECTORY

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

Dr. Darlene J. Ruscitti, Regional Superintendent .....druscitti@dupageroe.org  
Dr. Jeremy Dotson, Assistant Regional Superintendent of Business/CSBO .....jdotson@dupageroe.org  
Amber Quirk, Assistant Regional Superintendent .....aquirk@dupageroe.org

## **Administrative Assistants Team**

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

## **Educator Licensure Team**

Liz Bryers, Licensure Specialist Leader.....ebryers@dupageroe.org

## **Finance Team**

Dr. Jeremy Dotson, Assistant Regional Superintendent of Business/CSBO .....jdotson@dupageroe.org  
Anna Wieczorek, Accounts Payable ..... awieczorek@dupageroe.org  
Cecilia Stroe, Accounts Receivable..... cstroe@dupageroe.org

## **Homeless Liaison**

Heather Britton, Homeless Liaison .....hbritton@dupageroe.org

## **Parents as Teachers Team**

Rhonda Eubanks, Program Director .....reubanks@dupageroe.org

## **Truancy Prevention Team**

Amber Quirk, Assistant Regional Superintendent .....aquirk@dupageroe.org  
Angie Tijerina, Senior Staff Assistant .....atijerina@dupageroe.org

## **Bus Driver Training, Work Permits**

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

## **High School Equivalency**

Amy Asta .....aasta@dupageroe.org

## **Health/Life Safety & Compliance**

Kelly Kozerka ..... kkozerka@dupageroe.org

## **Other**

Lori Ladesic ..... lladesic@dupageroe.org

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

Kathy Ekstrand, Program Coordinator .....kekstrand@dupageroe.org

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

Matt Jeffrey, Principal ..... mjeffrey@dupageroe.org  
Jennifer Johnson, School Secretary .....jjohnson@dupageroe.org

## **Professional Development ..... (630)407-6080**

Dr. Vickie Trotter, Executive Director of Professional Learning .....vtrotter@dupageroe.org  
Anissa Ramos, Administrative Assistant .....aramos@dupageroe.org

## **TIDE (Teacher Inservice for DuPage Educators)**

Kelley Zerfahs, Coordinator ..... kzerfahs@dupageroe.org  
Sarah Johnson, Division Assistant .....sjohnson@dupageroe.org

