

ELEVATE NEWSLETTER

el·e·vate /'elə vāt /

to raise or lift up to a higher position or more important, impressive level

OUR PURPOSE:

- Recruiting & Retaining High Quality Special Educators
- Building Sustainable, Professional Learning Opportunities for Educators
- Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities
- Connecting Families & Educators to Create Powerful Partnerships



ILLINOIS ELEVATING
SPECIAL EDUCATORS
NETWORK

About Us

The Illinois Elevating Special Educators Network (IESE) project is a statewide system of professional learning funded by IDEA Part D State Personnel Development Grant dollars. In order to meet objectives, the IESE Network has divided the State into five areas that cover Northwest, Northeast, West Central, East Central and Southern Illinois. Program Advisors & Regional Specialists in each area collaborate to design and implement professional learning activities within four key areas of focus, which include: **Mentoring, Coaching, Professional Learning & Parent/Family Education.**

Happy
Holidays



CONTACT US: 3358 Big Pine Trail - Champaign, IL 61822 • (217) 893-3219 • www.iesenetwork.org

The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #MY21533. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Jennifer Coffey.

December Featured Staff

Each month, we will feature members of the IESE Network team so you can get to know us and become familiar with our faces! We look forward to working with professionals across the State of Illinois!



- Stephanie Woodley, Regional Specialist
(Area 4 / ROE #11)



- Teresa Kaiser, Regional Specialist
(Area 3 / ROE #26)



- Chrissy Wiggs, Regional Specialist
(Area 5 / ROE #21)

Monthly Sessions:

OCTOBER 12TH

Beginning of the Year: Organization & Setting Up Roles

NOVEMBER 9TH

Co-teaching 101: What They Teach You, and What They Don't

DECEMBER 14TH

Holidays Aren't Happy for All: SEL Lens

JANUARY 11TH

Writing the IEP: A Look at Each Section of the IEP

FEBRUARY 8TH

Partnering with Parents

MARCH 8TH

Assessment, Response to Intervention (RTI) & Progress Monitoring

APRIL 12TH

Mediation: How to Mediate School Conflicts & Keep Students Learning

MAY 10TH

IEPs & the Law

2021 Monthly Remote Mentoring Sessions

December 14th, 2021

"Holidays Aren't Happy for All: SEL Lens"

This session takes a look at students who may have experienced trauma, who may not look at the holidays with the expected happiness that most have. How do we meet the needs of those students? The session will also look at teacher strategies for self-care during the holiday break.

Visit our website at www.iesenetwork.org for more information and to [register](#).



Saturday, December 4th
8:00am - 9:00am

Coffee & Collaboration with ROE #54

Quarterly Meetings on Saturday Mornings

Mission: Exhale frustrations and inhale inspiration through vulnerable conversations and over coffee or your morning adult beverage of choice.

Vision: Supporting one another through REAL relationships, that are solid with others where it becomes easier to positively influence and impact others and doing what is best for the specialized population of students we all work with on a daily basis.

ROE #54 Special Educators PLC: "Math Interventions"

(December 6th / 3:00PM - 4:00PM)

Location: Hybrid Model (In-Person / Remote)

ROE #54

200 College Ave.
Danville, IL 61832

Join Zoom Meeting:

ID: 84792900396
Passcode: mz7NT6q2
(US) +1 253-215-8782
Passcode: 09651153

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Area 1 Cohort: "Discipline & Restorative Practices"

December 8th (3:30pm-4:30pm)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82953978175>

Join us for an open discussion dealing with discipline in the classroom as well as conversations about restorative practices with a focus on children with disabilities.

Tips and tricks of the trade will also be shared in this session! This networking session is open to all special education teachers and those who work with the special education population. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges they are facing in their classrooms.

Contact Kelly Marcum at ROE #47 for Questions/Concerns:

kmarcum@iesenetwork.org

Coordinator's Corner

Happy December, Everyone! I can't believe we are already "half-way" through this school year and getting ready for winter break. Although, when I talk with educators across Illinois, most report that time hasn't gone fast enough. Many of my colleagues are reporting that SY21-22 has been the toughest year of their careers. Teachers and administrators alike are experiencing burn out like never before; some have decided to leave the profession. They talk of increased disciplinary issues with students exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviors more frequently. They talk of a lack of student engagement in the classroom setting and a decline in learning. They talk of increased mandates and initiatives that take up too much of their already stretched time. And, they talk a lot about being tired of the shallow, self-care suggestions from administrators that feel insulting to them at this point. These conversations sadden me. As a 28-year veteran educator who has always been passionate about this work, I cringe at the thought of high-quality educators leaving the profession, of teachers at their breaking point staying in the profession despite feeling hopeless, and of students' educational experiences being less than they deserve.

As the IESE Network is being built, and our team is collaborating with districts to help improve their outcomes for students with disabilities, I feel the weight of contributing to educator stress and burnout. We are a network of resources for educators; however, will our professional development, mentoring and coaching be enough to make a difference? Will educators welcome the support or feel like it's causing more work for them? Our team has had numerous discussions about this amongst ourselves and with districts and special education cooperatives who are partnering with us. Our focus on connecting with our stakeholders and building trusting relationships with them is vital before we begin the collaborative work of improving systems, instructional delivery, and student outcomes. Given the challenges of this school year, how do we build realistic optimism to continue our work?

Please take some time to read this article from Edutopia (accessed through the link). It provides four action steps that might help us all in rejuvenating our optimism and passion for educating our youth.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-school-leaders-can-build-realistic-optimism-year>

With respect and hope,

- Liza Thomas, Grant Coordinator



Professional Learning

Mentoring

Coaching

Parent & Family Education

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