

# A Message from the Regional Superintendent

Hello Friends of Education!

This past year has been one of the most exciting and rewarding years for ROE #21, and I could not be prouder of what we have accomplished together. Every success we've had reflects the hard work, dedication, and heart of the people who make up our educational community.

One of the highlights for me personally was the launch of our Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP). Watching this program come to life—and seeing students who once felt disconnected begin to re-engage in their education—has been nothing short of inspiring. ALOP is more than just academic support; it's personalized guidance, social-emotional care, and hope for students who need a new path to success. The fact that we are already expanding into additional districts is proof that this program is changing lives, and I am so proud of the educators and advocates who are making it happen.

I also loved seeing our students shine in the Spelling Bee and Brain Games. There is something so energizing about watching kids step up to a challenge, show off their creativity and knowledge, and cheer each other on. These events are not just competitions—they are a celebration of the incredible talent, determination, and creativity in our schools. They also reflect the strong support of families, educators, and community members who encourage students to do their best and take pride in representing their schools.

This year also brought incredible growth in professional learning for our educators. Providing more opportunities for teachers and leaders to collaborate, learn, and grow has been a priority for us, and I truly believe that when we invest in educators, we invest directly in students. The excitement I've seen from participants at these sessions tells me we are moving in the right direction.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without you—our staff, educators, administrators, and community partners. Your passion and commitment inspire me every day. Thank you for believing in this work and in the students we serve. I cannot wait to see what we achieve together in the year ahead.

Sorie LeQuatte
Lorie LeQuatte, Regional Superintendent

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### About Us

The Regional Office of Education #21 serves as a key connector across Southern Illinois, working alongside schools, families, and local leaders to make sure students have what they need to succeed. Assistant Superintendent Mandy Horn puts it simply: "We handle the details that help schools run smoothly—so teachers can focus on teaching and students can stay on track."

Led by the Regional Superintendent, our team supports local school districts in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education. We coordinate and deliver state and local services, share critical information, and advocate for educators, students, and school communities across Franklin, Johnson, Massac, and Williamson Counties.

Whether it's helping an educator navigate licensure, supporting school safety efforts, or building new partnerships, ROE #21 is here to serve. Our work extends to families, private schools, community agencies, and anyone invested in the future of education.



#### **Our Mission**

To support and strengthen our districts' students, families, educators, and communities through programs and services that ensure safer schools, well-trained educators, and opportunities for all.



#### **Our Vision**

As the educational leadership hub for Southern Illinois, ROE #21 builds the capacity of learners to grow, educators to teach, leaders to lead, and districts to improve.

## Our Strategic Goals



Increase Awareness Of ROE #21 And Its Programs And Services



Expand Professional Learning Opportunities And District Continuous Improvement Processes



Become A Leading Voice And Advocate For Southern Illinois Schools



Develop Systems And Processes For Evaluating Programs And Services

## **Our Select Grant Programs**

- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Community Prevention Resources (CPR)
- Computer Science Equity Grant
- District Literacy Plan
- Franklin County Regional Delivery System of Support - CTE | Perkins Grants
- Illinois Elevating Special Educators (IESE)
- LEAD | Ed Project Grants Supporting All Principals
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program
- New Principal Mentoring Grant Supporting New Principals
- Partners Against Chronic Truancy (PACT)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Trauma Response Grant
- S.T.A.R. Quest Academy Regional Safe School Program

8

## Who We Serve

25 School Districts & Cooperatives

Public School Buildings

Private School
Buildings

1,300 Professional Educators

2,342

S

19,750+

Enrolled Students

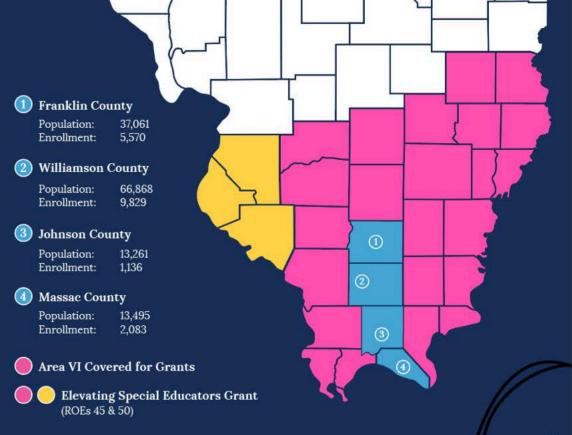
School Administrators

ROE #21 Employees

1,410 Service Area Square Mileage

130,382

Total Population







## **ROE #21 Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP)**

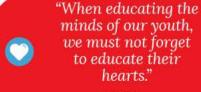
### A Year of Impact

After a full year of implementation, the Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) is making a meaningful difference in the lives of students across our partnering schools. Designed to support those who need additional guidance to thrive, ALOP continues to grow—proving that with the right support system in place, students can overcome barriers and rediscover their path to success.

Through this program, our team of dedicated Student Advocates has worked directly with students to address academic struggles, social-emotional challenges, attendance issues, and more. By providing personalized coaching, family engagement, and day-to-day encouragement, ALOP is helping students feel seen, supported, and capable of reaching their goals.

#### What Do Student Advocates Do?

- Build Relationships and Trust with Students
- Promote Academic and Emotional Growth
- Connect Families to Resources and Support
- Encourage School Engagement and Confidence



- Dalai Lama

#### What is the Profile of an ALOP Student?

ALOP supports students in grades 4–12+ who are facing challenges with academics, attendance, behavior, or mental health. These are students who may feel disconnected from the traditional classroom—but who, with the right guidance, can still reach their full potential.

The success of ALOP this year shows what's possible when schools, families, and advocates work together. As we continue to expand the program, we remain committed to helping every student feel like they belong...and giving them the tools to succeed both in and out of the classroom.

"ALOP workers play a vital role in supporting at-risk students by providing academic, social-emotional, and behavior interventions to meet each student."

- Julie Manley Student Advocate, Vienna High School

"We come together to provide a complete education, both academically and emotionally, in a safe school environment. ALOP has been a great addition to our school community."

- Sally Baker Title 1 Teacher Rtl Coordinator, Washington School

"Our dedicated student advocate plays a vital role in supporting the school's social worker. She bridges the gap between the school, as well as our students and families. She understands the student's needs and challenges faced by their peers."

- Ashley Huey School Social Worker, Washington Middle School in Johnston City "Our Student Advocate is a joy to have in the building. She is a great resource that I didn't realize we were missing. She has become an anchor for several students."

- Mrs. Kimberly Shoemaker Superintendent, Cypress Elementary School

"ALOP provides me the opportunity to serve children and families in the schools as a fantastic combination of both. I now have the chance to be the person that I wish I had as a child in the school system."

- Christie Rodgers Student Advocate, New Simpson Hill

"If the program wasn't sustainable, we would need to find a way to keep her. We depend on her."

- Dr. Greg Frehner Superintendent, Vienna ESD #55

## S.T.A.R. Ouest Academy



### Restoring Hope, Building Futures

S.T.A.R. Quest Academy provides a structured, supportive setting for students facing serious challenges in school. Through personalized behavior plans. social-emotional guidance, and academic coaching, we help students take ownership of their choices and rediscover a sense of purpose. Our teamincluding teachers, social workers, and administrators—builds strong relationships rooted in accountability and care.

This year, we've seen students gain confidence, take on leadership roles, and make progress toward graduation. At S.T.A.R., every student is reminded that their past doesn't define their future-and that with support, they can move forward with strength and clarity.

Students

HS Students Graduated 100%

SQA Students Promoted

## **ECHO Alternative School**



### Where Change Begins

ECHO Alternative School offers structure, connection, and 1:1 support to help students overcome challenges and reengage with learning. Our vision: to ensure every student has a path forward-filled with purpose, promise, and opportunity.

"They start to feel noticed, loved, and heard and once they feel safe here, they can show up, learn, and start to believe in themselves again." - Deanna Morris

Student Services Director

This year, ECHO celebrated the graduation of Adrian Maynor, a long-time student who was awarded the Ambassador Scholarship at John A. Logan College.

"ECHO gave me a second chance and helped me see that I could do something bigger with my life. The staff never gave up on me, and that made all the difference."

- Adrian Maynor ECHO Graduate

Students Promoted



## Partners Against Chronic Truancy (P.A.C.T.)

### Turning Absences Into Opportunities

The P.A.C.T. team works closely with students and families to improve attendance and prevent chronic truancy across our region. In the 2024-25 school year, more than half of all referrals were resolved through early outreach alone-showing the power of connection, consistency, and clear expectations. Whether it's a letter home, a school meeting, or a home visit, our team meets students where they are and helps remove the barriers keeping them from the classroom.

"Every missed school day matters, but we can turn things around together. Most families respond to that first call—it's about showing we care and offering support, not punishment."

- John Cox

ROE #21 Truancy Interventionist

Thanks to strong partnerships with schools, social services, and the State's Attorney's Office, the majority of cases are resolved without legal action. Our shared goal: Help every student stay in school and stay on track to graduate.

955 Student 6,295

Percent of Successful Interventions

Improvement in Student Attendance

Percent of

Percent of Successful Transitions Out of TAOEP

# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program



## Stability Starts with Support

The ROE continues to serve as the Fiscal Agent for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Federal Grant across 27 counties in Southern Illinois, known as Area VI. This vital program ensures that students experiencing homelessness have consistent access to education, no matter their living situation.

Our Lead Area Liaison and support staff provide hands-on training and guidance to over 140 school district liaisons. Together, they work to identify eligible students, remove barriers to enrollment, and connect families with essential community resources. ROE #21's Grant Coordinator helps lead and coordinate efforts across the region to ensure every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed-regardless of their circumstances

### McKinney-Vento Rights

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act ensures the educational rights and protections of homeless children and youth so that they may enroll in school, attend regularly, and be successful. This act guarantees McKinney-Vento eligible children and youth the following rights:

- Immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment.
- Attend school in his/her school of origin (if this is requested by the parent and is reasonable) or in the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing.
- Receive transportation to his/her school of origin, if this is requested by the parent or unaccompanied youth.

Services comparable to those received by housed schoolmates, including transportation and supplemental educational services.

Attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness.

1.611 Children Served (ROE #21) 6,834 (Area VI) **ROE #21** Staff **Trainings ROE #21** Training

HOME



### The K.I.D.S. Foundation

### Continuing Care for At-Risk Children

Since 2002, the K.I.D.S. (Kids In Difficult Situations) Foundation has supported students in Franklin and Williamson Counties by meeting urgent needs beyond the classroom. From school supplies and emergency health care to clothing, field trips, and scholarships, the foundation steps in where it matters most.

**Families** 

Thanks to generous payroll deductions, business donations, and fundraising efforts, 100% of contributions go directly to children in need-because ROE #21 covers all operating costs. Each donation helps ensure no student is left behind due to circumstances beyond their control.

## Coats for Kids

### Keeping Students Warm, One Coat at a Time

The Coats for Kids program is a regional collaboration between Egyptian Building Trades, ROE #20, ROE #21, and ROE #30, working together to provide winter clothing for students across 17 Southern Illinois counties.

The program is powered by community generosity, with the annual Coats for Kids Golf Scramble serving as its primary fundraiser. This effort reflects what's possible when schools and local partners come together-making sure every child has access to warm, weather-appropriate clothing during the coldest months of the year.

Students 12,310

Funds Distributed \$654,897

## Career and Technical Education (CTE)



### **Building Real-World Skills**

The Franklin County Regional CTE Delivery System, coordinated by the FJMW Regional Office of Education, provides hands-on training to prepare students for the workforce or further education. Funded by the CTE Consolidated Grant, the program is a partnership between local high schools, the ROE, and community stakeholders who support career readiness. Students from Benton, Christopher, Frankfort Community, Sesser-Valier, Thompsonville, and Zeigler-Royalton can enroll in two regional programs—Carpentry and EDGE (Entrepreneurial Development, Growth, and Education)—to gain practical skills for careers, the trades, or launching a business.

1,348

Students Who Participated in CTE Programs

CTÉ programs provide hands-on training in high-demand fields like agriculture, construction, healthcare, and IT. Students gain technical skills, certifications, and real-world experience to prepare for college and careers.

875

Unique Marketing Materials

The Sports Marketing class took part in a variety of promotional activities throughout the year, successfully creating approximately 875 items, including branded t-shirts, signage, cups, and other merchandise. These efforts supported school events and athletic programs while giving students real-world experience in product promotion, branding, sales, and event marketing.

13

Students Who Participated in the EDGE Program

Students in the EDGE program gain firsthand insight from local business leaders and entrepreneurs. Students developed their own business ideas while learning key aspects of launching a company, including market research, branding, sales, and financial planning.

5

Major Carpentry Projects Completed

The Carpentry class, made up of 14 students, completed five major projects and built about 70 items, including mock walls, foundations, wiring setups, wooden flags, and storage sheds. These hands-on projects gave students practical experience in construction while strengthening skills in measurement, tool safety, and teamwork.





## Community Prevention Resources (CPR)



### **Promoting Healthy Choices**

Community Prevention Resources (CPR) is a substance use prevention program offered through the Regional Office of Education #21, serving Franklin and Saline counties. The CPR team delivers innovative programming that helps students build decision-making skills, shift perceptions, and create healthier school environments. Funded in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, CPR provides classroom instruction, resources, and outreach to students, families, and school staff.

Use Your Cube encourages middle school students to make healthy, alcohol-free choices by using their voice, their values, and their "cube"-a symbol for the power of personal decision-making. The Elephant in the Room is a campaign that equips parents with tools to start conversations at home about alcohol, helping them stay involved, informed, and connected with their kids.

Substance Use Prevention Materials Distributed 42,000+ Staff Classroom Teaching Minutes 6,160+

Increase in Youth Advisory Committee Membership 51% Miles Traveled 5,775

Reduction in Past 30 Day Alcohol Use from 2018-2024

Students | 1,154 | Parents | 1,688

## Our Programs, Services, & Supported Initiatives

- Youth Prevention Education
- Botvin's Life Skills Training
- Project Alert

- My Generation RX
- Youth Advisory Committee
- Illinois Youth Survey (IYS)
- National Prevention Week
- National Take Back Day
- Southern Illinois Resource Guide





## Licensure

### Helping Educators Stay Classroom-Ready

The Regional Office of Education #21 continues to serve as a trusted local partner for educators and school districts navigating the licensure process. Our Licensure Department assists with everything from initial license applications to renewals and endorsements, offering timely guidance and support every step of the way.

We also host training workshops for individuals with 60 hours of college credit who are pursuing a short-term substitute (STS) teaching license. These sessions cover classroom management, school safety, and professional expectations-ensuring new substitutes feel confident and prepared.

By removing barriers and streamlining the process, we help educators stay focused on what matters most: showing up for their students and making a difference in the classroom.

#### Annual Licenses Issued

Licenses

550

Licenses Registered 1,423

Substitute Licenses Registered

1364

Paraprofessional Licenses Issued 53

Substitute Teacher List

602

Phone Calls 5,300

# **Bus Driver Training**

## Keeping Students Safe, Mile After Mile

The ROE #21 remains committed to student safety through highquality bus driver training programs approved by the Illinois State Board of Education. Each year, our team delivers both "Initial" and "Refresher" training courses that equip drivers with the latest tools, safety protocols, and best practices for student transport.

These annually updated courses prepare drivers to manage their responsibilities with care, confidence, and professionalism. As enrollment in our training continues to rise, we're proud to play a role in helping school districts maintain safe, reliable transportation. Behind every safe ride to school is a trained, trusted driver—and we're proud to help train them.

Initial
Bus Driver
Trainings

Refresher Bus Driver Trainings

EDLT Bus Driver Trainings

2 First Division Bus Driver Trainings

741
Training
Participants

# Fingerprinting

## **Supporting Safe Learning Environments**

We remain committed to creating safe, welcoming environments for both students and educators. Our fingerprinting services are a critical part of this mission, ensuring that all new public school employees meet State and FBI criminal background check requirements outlined by the Illinois School Code.

Each year, our office processes fingerprint submissions quickly and securely through an electronic system that typically returns results within 24 hours. This efficiency allows school districts to onboard staff without delays, helping schools stay fully staffed and students supported. By prioritizing safety and service, we help districts maintain the high standards our school communities expect and deserve.

**Annual Fingerprinting Services by County** 

1,601

Individuals Underwent Fingerprinting

Franklin County	351
Williamson County	797
Johnson County	68
Massac County	385

## Health Life & Safety

### Creating Safe, Functional Learning Spaces

The ROE #21 plays an essential role in maintaining safe, code-compliant school facilities. Through the Health Life Safety program, we review construction documentation, issue building permits, and ensure that all school projects follow state regulations outlined in the Illinois Administrative Code. Our office works closely with architects and school leaders to make sure safety standards are met from the ground up.

Buildings Inspected 57 Building Permits Issued 14 Occupancy Permits Issued 15

Partial Occupancy Permits Issued 2 Maintenance Grants 18

# **Compliance Review**

### **Ensuring Accountability Across Districts**

ROE #21 conducts regular compliance reviews for school districts across Franklin, Johnson, Massac, and Williamson Counties. Every other year, our superintendent team visits each district to review critical areas such as licensure alignment, board policies, curriculum, budgeting, and operational standards. These reviews ensure districts are meeting the requirements of the Illinois Administrative Code while also offering an opportunity for collaboration and support.





# **Professional Development Highlights**



#### Social-Emotional Learning Hub (SEL)

ROE #21 serves as the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Hub for Area VI, supporting a five-county network through coaching, training, and collaborative planning. Over the past four years, the Hub has worked with over 80 SEL leaders across four cohorts, using a train-the-trainer model to help schools develop and implement action plans aligned with mental health and climate goals. SEL Hub staff also provide on-site support, including staff-wide trainings and needs assessments using tools like the Trauma Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment.

"It really is inspiring when you see schools grasping the importance of mental health and trauma, and making intentional decisions to build systems that support students in those areas."

- Crystal Newcomb, MSW

School Social Worker & Professional Learning Specialist

### SEL Highlights (Lifetime)

SEL Leaders 80

School REACH Team Members 350

Educators and Community Members Impacted 430

#### Lead Ed HUBS Collaboration

ROE #21 continues to lead Area VI as a designated Lead Hub, empowering principals to grow as instructional leaders across rural, suburban, and urban schools. Through grants like Learning While Leading, New Principal Mentoring, Partners to Lead, and the Bridge Project, we support mentoring relationships that promote instructional improvement and long-term student success. This year, dozens of administrators and aspiring leaders were supported by multiple coaches across these programs, fostering collaboration, stronger teams, and improved outcomes for students throughout the region.

# Professional Development Highlights (Continued)

### Illinois Empower

II-EMP WER The Regional Office of Education #21 is an approved learning partner for Illinois Empower, allowing it to provide professional learning opportunities both virtually across the state and in person throughout the Southeast Region. Through this partnership, ROE #21 supports school improvement by offering customized systems tailored to each district's needs. This support includes assistance with unpacking summative designations, data analysis, school improvement planning, content area capacity building, evidence-based practices, tiered interventions, and coaching and consulting services.

#### Illinois Elevating Special Educators (IESE)

As one of just five ROEs selected statewide, ROE #21 is proud to support the Illinois Elevating Special Educators project. This initiative strengthens the skills of educators who serve students with disabilities by offering targeted training, mentoring, and coaching. The goal: Build a lasting, supportive system that ensures every student receives the opportunities and support they deserve.

#### **Administrator Academies**

We provide a full calendar of Administrator Academies designed to help school leaders stay sharp, current, and connected. These sessions are facilitated by expert instructors and built around real challenges administrators face every day. Through partnerships with other ROEs, state associations, and school leadership networks, our academies deliver meaningful professional learning that helps leaders create strong, future-ready schools.

10 Total Administrator Academies

**Participants** 



## **Community Partnerships**

































## **Professional Associations**





















# Our Sponsor

This report was made possible with generous support from our partners at Farmers Sate Bank.



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## **ROE #21 Annual High School Career Fair**

The ROE #21 High School Career Fair is a hands-on event designed to connect students with professionals, employers, and career opportunities across Southern Illinois. Hosted at The Pavilion in Marion, the fair features interactive booths, demonstrations, and real-world insights that help students explore future pathways and ask meaningful questions about life after graduation.

Free and open to all high school students within the ROE #21 district, the Career Fair goes beyond passing out brochures - it builds real connections between schools and the regional workforce. By bringing education and employment under one roof, ROE #21 continues its mission to support student readiness and long-term workforce development in Franklin, Johnson, Massac, and Williamson counties.

Event Vendors

Participating **High Schools** 

Participating Students

947

## **Brain Games**

Brain Games is back, and it's sharper than ever. This fast-paced competition challenges students to think critically, collaborate as a team, and flex their problem-solving skills. As we reintroduce Brain Games across Area VI, we're building excitement around academic engagement and offering students a fun way to showcase what they know.

Teams at the ROE #21 Competition

Teams at the Area VI Regionals 120



# **Spelling Bee**

The classic Spelling Bee is making its return across our region, giving students the spotlight to grow their confidence and vocabulary...one word at a time.

With grade-level bees leading to a regional showdown, this competition encourages a love for language and celebrates the joy of learning.

Participating Schools

Students





### Contact Us

### Franklin County

#### 901 Public Square Benton, IL 62812

- 618-438-9711
- 618-435-2861
- Monday-Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

#### Williamson County

- 502 West Jackson Marion, IL 62959
- 618-998-1283
- **618-998-9226**
- Monday-Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

### Johnson County

- 111 S. 5th, PO Box 96 Vienna, IL 62995
- 618-800-3350
- By Appt. Only
- By Appt. Only

#### **Massac County**

- 109 East 5th Street Metropolis, IL 62960
- 618-524-3736
- 618-524-7784
- Tuesday-Thursday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

## Visit Us Online

To learn more about the Regional Office of Education #21 and the services we provide, scan the code with your mobile device or visit us online at: www.roe21.org



## Let's Get Social

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Galety. Gupport. Quccess

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