

## **Superintendent Report 10/4/24**

Updates from around the district and the state.

1. Thursday, October 10, 2024 marks our 41st day of student attendance. The first quarter ends on Oct. 18 and Parent/Teacher conferences are the nights of Oct. 17 and 22 from 4-8 p.m. We will have board members present and available to meet with stakeholders both nights at Millikin, Northside, Southwest, and GMS.
2. I had the opportunity to attend the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) superintendents conference last week in Springfield. There was a good turnout with three dynamic keynote speakers and several beneficial breakout sessions.
3. For the first time since 2017, the last year we were eligible, our Ladders to Learning program earned the distinguished Gold Circle of Quality as a result of our last site visit and program evaluation. More can be learned about it at [GeneseoSchools.org](https://www.geneseoschools.org). Mr. Mowen and staff will be present to tell you more and for you to congratulate them in person.
4. The Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools recently published its first issue of The Prairie Career Advocate, and in it, featured Geneseo High School's Career and Technical Education Center. It's an excellent piece that goes into great detail and I've attached it to this report. It can also be [read on GeneseoSchools.org](https://www.geneseoschools.org).
5. Attached is the annual proclamation from the Illinois Governor acknowledging our principals as a part of Principal Appreciation Week, October 20-26, 2024. Our principals are among the best in the state and we are fortunate to have them in our district.
6. The IL School Report Card should be released November 1st. As a part of Board Goal #3, a subcommittee will perform a deepdive of the data and look for areas of celebration and for improvement.
7. In your packet you will find a draft of the new Vision 2030 plan. The official plan will be released publicly at the Triple I Conference. This was a joint effort between the IASB, IASA, IASBO, and IPA to replace the Vision 2020 plan that helped create the Evidence Based Funding model. I think you will see that it is well put together and encompasses a lot of things that are aligned to what we would like to see happen in Illinois education in the years to come.
8. Mrs. Boone is coordinating a search for new English Language Arts resources for elementary staff as Journeys is no longer being produced by the publisher. Attached is a short report on the work an elementary committee has conducted so far and a tentative timeline for sharing the name of a replacement for 2025-26. Staff will have access to the new resources yet this school year and will receive professional development for successful implementation.
9. For the third straight year, Geneseo High School will host a job fair and career expo for students to explore a variety of careers. This year's event will take place on December 13 at the Geneseo Foundation Activity Center (GFAC). Travis Mackey is again organizing the event, which has seen a rise in the number of participating local businesses and organizations each year. You can [learn more on GeneseoSchools.org](https://www.geneseoschools.org).

10. We announced on Tuesday that Kyle Bess will take over as the head varsity baseball coach, pending the BOE's approval. There is a [story on our website](#) that looks at Coach Bess' coaching roots, his extensive experience, and the program he inherits.
11. Representatives from ISBE and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be in the district October 17 to present Michele Hepner her [School Nutrition Champion award](#).
12. The most recent edition of the Illinois School Code was recently released. You will see from the pictures below how it has grown significantly over the years and now requires two volumes. More state and federal unfunded mandates with less local control. This topic is one of the key components of Vision 2030 and would ask for mandate relief when available.
13. GHS graduation is scheduled for Sunday, May 25, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.





# The Prairie Career **Advocate**

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## Feature Story: Geneseo, IL Page 2

**Additional CTE News  
& Resources** Page 10

*The Prairie Career Advocate is made possible through a partnership between:*



The Association  
of Illinois Rural  
and Small Schools





# Hello, and welcome to the very first issue of the **Prairie Career Advocate!**



**John & Hailey visiting Geneseo**

We are excited to host you in this publication, and we're looking forward to telling the story of one rural Illinois school district with an exemplary career and technical education program. Our hope is that the stories, articles, and resources shared in this digital journal will help inspire your own district to expand and deepen your CTE programming.

We care about rural CTE because, simply put, it contains the key ingredients for student success and community prosperity. There is an immense need in our small towns and rural places for clear, meaningful, and effective pathways for students to explore their personal and professional lives. By the time they graduate high school, our children need to be equipped with the mindsets, behaviors, and skills necessary to thrive in any career field or college program they pursue. Education, and CTE in particular, has the potential to do just that. This is why we, as the only organization in the State of Illinois dedicated to advocating for rural schools, are passionate about ensuring every rural student has equitable access to high-quality CTE programming in their hometown school district.

This publication is a product of the **Rural IL CTE Project**, a state-wide partnership between the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Western Illinois

University Seymour Center for Rural Education.

In addition to the Advocate, the Rural IL CTE Project conducts ongoing research into the particular needs and equity gaps of rural CTE programs. **Growing Rural IL Success through CTE** is the first, comprehensive report of these needs and equity gaps conducted in Illinois, and serves as our North Star. This research is used to inform as well as generate targeted technical assistance to address the specific challenges districts face. The Advocate is one type of technical assistance, offering a narrative explanation of how other rural districts implement innovative CTE programs, but our other technical assistance includes the Rural IL CTE Asset Map and a database of relevant tools, guides, and resources.

The inspiration for creating the Advocate has two sources. First, we heard from rural school administrators, counselors, and CTE educators that being able to see how CTE is understood and implemented in other districts would help strengthen their own efforts. These case studies would serve as living examples of how to navigate rough waters and be an inspiration for previously unthought of innovations. Second, rural education and rural communities suffer from an onslaught of bad publicity, negative narratives, and harmful stereotypes. All of these contribute toward overlooking or even outright ignoring the real and present needs of rural students. We believe that if you don't tell your own story, someone will tell it about you. So, the Advocate is also our earnest and goodwill attempt at elevating these stories of trials and triumphs in rural schools. As shared in the beginning, it is our true hope that each issue of the Advocate informs, inspires, and energizes all readers to pay loving attention to our public rural school districts so that together we may do all we can to support these lifeline institutions in their mission to nurture the next generations of leaders, thinkers, doers, citizens, and neighbors.

Sincerely,

**John Glasgow**

Co-editor & Director of the Rural IL CTE Project

**Hailey Winkleman**

Co-editor & Director of Communications & Design



# Geneseo, IL

## Expanding Pathways and Horizons through Community Collaboration

### Key Takeaways for Your CTE Programming (full playbook on page 9):

1. Figure out how to involve your community, even in unconventional ways.
2. Generate buy-in from school leadership, community players, and the student body.
3. Publicize the program's development, achievements, and impact on students' success.
4. Enhance the program through partnerships with higher ed institutions and other rural schools.

In many ways, Geneseo is a quintessential small town. From wide, shady streets and white picket fences to a lovingly maintained downtown adorned with local art and a mix of new and established businesses. Even the local school district is a hallmark: a K12 unit district of about 2,300 students with a strong community and alumni network and a teaching staff that has generational roots to the place. The tired common narrative about rural places would label Geneseo a sleepy bastion of Americana, more of an idealized dreamscape and patriotic commodity than a vanguard of innovation. However, the Geneseo Community Unit School District #228 has utilized those timeless rural qualities, strong relationships and a respect for place, to continually enrich their educational offerings and allow the district and students to thrive despite facing similar challenges as others.

Importantly, the district and community reaffirmed their deep commitment to the personal and professional success of students by mobilizing resources to establish their own Career and Technical Education Center. At a time when most rural districts in Illinois are struggling to offer more than one or two traditional vocational classes, Geneseo was able to create a coalition of supporters and actors to build a new CTE building, expand CTE participation to 300 students, out of the 800 that attend the high school, and set up nationally recognized apprenticeship programs, to name a few accomplishments. While there are certainly elements of the story in Geneseo that are unique to the people and assets of that place, sharing the journey of how they came to construct this exemplary program will nonetheless prove informative for all small and rural districts.

### Accessing Practical Solutions

The CTE program at Geneseo is directed by Travis Mackey, the former high school principal who had worked in construction prior to joining the education space. Mackey explained that recent investment into the district's CTE efforts have enabled them to enrich some of their current pathways while expanding others. Altogether, Geneseo now supports coursework in agriculture, woods, metals, automotive, education, business, nursing, and family and consumer sciences. The most prominent feature of this progress for the district was the construction of a new CTE Center building across the street from the high school, along with refurbishing old vocational labs and classrooms in the school itself. While the new spaces in the CTE Center are fitted with state-of-the-art equipment for automotive, metals, and woods classes, Mackey stressed that the district purpose-





fully engineered the new building to be adaptive over time, so that different pathways and courses could utilize the facility in response to changing community and labor market needs.

The extent of Geneseo's buildout is impressive, especially so for a small town school district. Typically, rural and small schools in Illinois are heavily reliant on regional assets, like area career centers and the Education for Employment Regional Delivery Systems (EFEs), to sustain an operation such as this. However, when the district decided to expand CTE, they realized their students faced the same steep challenges felt by other rural districts. Adam Brumbaugh, Superintendent for Geneseo, shared that the distance to access quality opportunities became the watershed issue. Many of the resources available to Geneseo students are located in the Quad Cities, he shares, "It's not that far, but yet it is. By the time you get on a bus, the student could be losing 30 minutes there, and 30 minutes back. That's real time. That's a loss of an elective or a course that they have to take for graduation, and that's an added cost. But, our [school] board and community said that if we can do this internally with our staff and facilities, and form our own regional hub, then we would love to do that."

That issue of distance is a major challenge, and Geneseo is not alone. Growing Rural IL Success through CTE Programs, the first research effort of its kind to systematically catalog the needs and equity gaps of rural Illinois CTE programs, found that distance to CTE opportunities was a predominant barrier in every region of the state. Geneseo's actions were a necessary step to ensure their students can receive the training they need when other op-

tions were simply impractical, and how the district went about doing it was what proved to be the most innovative and worthwhile for others to replicate.

### **Student-Focused, Community-Driven**

Rural CTE programs often struggle to receive the funding and dedicated attention needed to thrive. State and federal allotments based on per-student counts are often insufficient for the high costs of CTE equipment and curriculum, and predominantly rural-serving EFEs and career centers have languished under decades of lagging investment into their services. Moreover, rural districts are often the least capable of competing for the limited pool of public and private CTE grants.

Yet, Geneseo was able to buck this trend by ensuring that support for their vision began in the community. "A lot of it was driven first by our school board," Mackey recalled, "Our school board made the commitment and the goal to look at our CTE programs and determine how we can enhance that experience for students." The school board then established a Vocational Committee that consisted of Mackey, Superintendent Brumbaugh, community members, teachers, and local industry representatives. Together, this diverse body of twenty individuals was the primary engine for the effort, leading the way on generating financial and resource support for the work as much as planning.

Once details about the committee and the new focus on students' professional success were announced, Brumbaugh remembers how the committee and the larger Geneseo community rallied behind the effort.





**CTE Students between classes**

“It’s a great community,” he shared, “We’ve just gotten an outpouring of support, and they shared the same vision as we had for wanting to do this: we are an aging population here, we need new trades workers, new self-employed people, someone to hand small businesses off to, skilled laborers, and the next wave of employees.”

Beyond shared visions alone, Adam Fluck, Communications and Digital Content Director for the district, underscored how the school board and the Vocational Committee remained sensitive to the need of strong advertising about the effort. He shared that they “did have a sense that this was going to be a very substantial and meaningful building for the community. We made a point of being communicative and transparent, and letting people know as plans were developed. We did a handful of stories on the project from start to finish, and while it was still under construction we would share posts and you could tell there was a lot of interest, a lot of engagement.” After the Center was complete, Fluck told how the district hosted an open house to great success: “The open house was a big hit too, with people just walking through room to room. You could tell they were really impressed, but also really happy with the direction that this building will take us.”

With intentional inclusion of and outreach to community members, Mackey reports that the district was able to attract over \$600,000 through private donations and grants from local foundations. Even more, Mackey shared that some community members that wanted to contribute, but did not have the funds to do so, donated equipment and offered their willingness to host student apprentices instead.

### **Building Pathways**

As plans got underway, the next task on hand for Geneseo was to build out the actual CTE courses and pathways. Many schools, not just rural districts, default to traditional images of “shop class” for inspiration on which CTE courses to offer. Although the Geneseo program does offer a heavy assortment of these mainstays, it is not without reason. Superintendent Brumbaugh underscored that “We wanted to look at what our community needs.” Mackey agreed, “We wanted to divide [the Center] into three major components: a woods program, a metals program, and then an auto program. Those areas are not only important here in Geneseo, but even in the neighboring Quad City Area.”

Mackey continues by describing how “those are what we had seen were the areas that were in most need and then everything else can build off of that.” Rather than siloed courses, he shares that they designed the three basic disciplines to intersect with each other as students progress. Students advancing through the program could follow a defined path or would be able to effectively craft their own individualized pathway by selecting advanced courses most aligned to their career goals. Throughout this process, students are able to take advantage of a number of dual credit courses offered by Black Hawk College and by the end of their time in high school can potentially earn a College and Career Pathway Endorsement (CCPE). Finally, once students reach their third and fourth years in the program, they are eligible to participate in a number of summer apprenticeship programs with local employers certified through the US Department of Labor.





**John speaks with the Geneseo team**

Here too, the degree of programmatic buildout via dual credits, CCPEs, and apprenticeships Geneseo has achieved is impressive for a rural district. Small and rural districts in all regions of the state frequently struggle to offer one or two of these advanced CTE opportunities, let alone multiple instances of each. While he says that there really is no single perfect explanation for how to successfully bring about each of these CTE components, Mackey emphasizes that collaborating fully and frequently with the right people, and remaining tenacious through failures in the application process will net results. For apprenticeships, Mackey told how working one-on-one with his region's US Department of Labor representative was instrumental for getting his applications approved, and thereby enabling 16- and 17-year-old students to work. With dual credit, Mackey explained that there was constant conversation with his local community college to ensure that his faculty's credentials and course content aligned with the college's requirements, or that misalignments could be negotiated. And as for the CCPEs, he admits that it took him multiple rounds of failed applications to finally understand the precise language and requirements the state board of education was looking for, but he encourages others that once one of the applications stuck, the others quickly followed suit.

Another remarkable piece to Geneseo's program is their four dedicated CTE faculty members. The educator shortage is by far the stiffest barrier to rural districts trying to grow their CTE offerings, and yet Geneseo has been able to hire and retain theirs. Superintendent Brumbaugh affirms that "It is so hard to get CTE instructors that are certified. You either have the traditional route [from college], or you're a jack of all trades, or you come over from the private

sector. We can get people a provisional license, but unfortunately you're limited not by what you can dream, but by who you can get to teach. So we're blessed to have four instructors." Two of these instructors, he continues, were already in the district, but it was building the new CTE Center along with the school board's commitment to CTE that allowed the school to attract and retain the newest two instructors.

A final unique component to the structure of Geneseo's CTE program is that it was designed to provide all students with an entry point, regardless of their trajectory after high school. For one, Brumbaugh details how the counseling staff at the junior high level begin the process by utilizing the career exploration software Xello with students. The district then follows up on this activity by requiring students to continue career exploration activities into high school along with academic and career counseling. Middle school students are also given tours of the CTE Center so they can visualize where and how they can start traversing the careers they have explored. Looking into the future, Mackey is working with his faculty to develop an introductory level



**Kyle Bess Instructs a Welding Student**





**Bird's Eye View of the Auto Shop**

course for all students to learn basic life skills about home and car ownership so that even students pursuing a purely academic pathway can graduate fully capable of independent living.

The result of the intentional investment of the community and school administration, along with meticulous program planning, is a state-of-the-art center complete with new equipment, passionate instructors, and energized students taking confident steps toward a bright future. While Mackey and Brumbaugh stress that these early years of the new Center are geared toward ensuring the concept functions successfully for their students, they are interested in exploring ways to extend opportunities to students in neighboring rural districts.

### **More than Birdhouses**

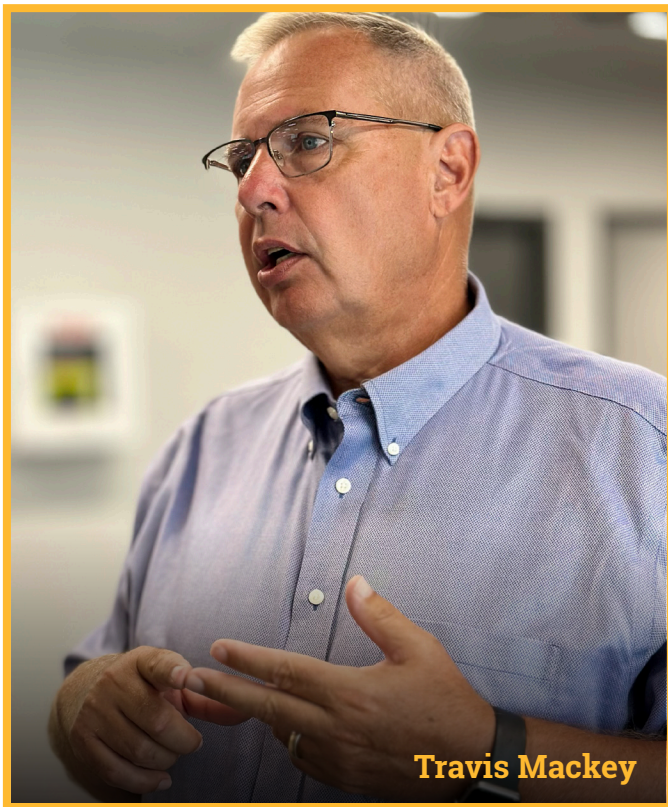
Nick Verbeck and Kyle Bess, two of Geneseo's CTE teachers, offered their reflections on the program. As they saw it, the recent construction of the CTE Center and the expanded curriculum has been a huge benefit to students. Much of this success rests on a solid foundation of programmatic strengths. First and foremost of these strengths, Verbeck shares, is the community itself: "We're a small agricultural-based community, and so there was, along with grants and donations, a lot of people who put a lot of money and time into this building and providing the opportunity for students. With support from [school] administration and counselors, we have been able to figure out the scheduling to make things work great, run a pre-apprenticeship program this summer, and get students exposure through a local community

college." Bess agrees, explaining that the strength of community support they received has come from allowing the community to be a full partner in the development process: "I think honestly we've done a really good job of bringing in stakeholders. One thing we did to make this happen was we put eyes on it. So I think you have to draw attention to the need and help connect those dots that people don't understand. I'm a baseball guy, so this has been like our Field of Dreams—if you build it, they will come. And look, now there's 297 students in the building."

Bess also shares that the success of the Center "speaks for itself in how much kids enjoy being in here, and how much feedback we're getting. I also think one of the biggest things for me is how proud parents are that their child has an opportunity for success after high school because of this program." All of this has led to high student retention in the program, and since many state and federal CTE budgets are tied to student enrollment, this metric is critical. Verbeck enthuses that the Center "is definitely somewhere that the students want to be. Not only do they get to be out here and do all the things they enjoy doing, but it's also just a nice little break from the general building as well."

While they both say that the dual credit and apprenticeship opportunities as well as Geneseo's advanced alumni search website are major assets that enrich the program, Verbeck and Bess feel there remains areas to strengthen rural CTE even further. For Verbeck, "the day to day operations are something that we're really solid at here, but we could use more support in the big scope and sequence of

what a course is or the planning and curriculum. The State of Illinois currently doesn't have standards for CTE. That is something that we're trying to develop so that students and parents aren't confused about what we have out here." One of the major challenges Bess sees is also much larger in scope—the perception of CTE: "I think I've really got to bat for trying to communicate that CTE is the new vocational education, and the first word is 'career,' and everybody's going to need a career. I think [CTE] got pegged as being 'shop class,' and that you're not doing math or science. That's not true at all, and we need to keep connecting those dots for people. I think that's such a powerful thing, changing the stereotype that we're just building birdhouses. We're building actual houses."



**Travis Mackey**

### **Recommendations & Next Steps**

The early success and future potential of the Geneseo Career and Technical Education Center has energized students, parents, and the school community itself. While Mackey and his teaching and administrative teams have accomplished much, they already have their sights set on what comes next. Superintendent Brumbaugh states plainly that they "want it to grow. We want this building to be used all day, every day. We want full capacity. We're excited about the potential of these new spaces. We were intentional with what they are designed for now, but they are also made to be transformative to pivot as

the future changes. We're only limited by what [Mr. Mackey] dreams up. We've got the staff, we've got the community support, and we've got the spaces to just keep dreaming." Mackey hopes to see the overall CTE program expand to include even more career fields. "We have some other work to do," he explains, "When I talk about CTE, it's not only the manufacturing side, but it's agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and business. We'd also love to expand everything down to the middle school side."

Taking stock of what they've accomplished, where they want to go, and how they could share their process for other rural districts to learn from, Mackey puts forward some recommendations: "I think you have to look at needs versus wants. Sometimes people think we want one thing, but once they explore what the needs really are in your community it changes. I would start there and then expand in whatever direction that's going to give the idea momentum. Obviously, that's getting the right stakeholders. It's going to be really critical to get the right people on that stage from the educational side, the community side, and the business side. Once you start doing that, you need to be laser-focused on what you want to do."

He concludes: "There are people out there that like to see this [program]. These [programs] used to be around everywhere, they were a staple for many years in many schools. We're bringing it back and the excitement is really contagious right now."

### **Closing Thoughts**

The Geneseo community has much to offer, and this has been a huge asset to the district's plans of expanding career and technical instruction to all students. However, Mackey and his team did not simply rest on their laurels when it came to building their new CTE Center and developing this innovative curriculum. Rather, they all deftly utilized their unique set of assets (relationships, skills, and dreams) to construct an exemplary program. Importantly, regardless of the specific people and resources Geneseo used to build up their offerings, the essential steps they took to arrive at their present state are easily translated into any rural school's context. As the inaugural feature for the Prairie Career Advocate, the Geneseo Community Unit School District #228 serves as a prime example of the potential all our rural schools possess. When understood and applied locally, this playbook for rural CTE success ensures that students and the communities they graduate on to serve will benefit.



# Geneseo's Rural CTE Success Playbook:

1. **Be community-based in all aspects:** invite community members and business and industry partners to help develop the program and determine "needs versus wants."
2. **Identify key figures:** while working with the community generally, be sure to specifically collaborate with key figures that will directly progress the goals of your program (funding, resources, curriculum, and work-based learning experiences).
3. **Explore all avenues, familiar and new:** the Geneseo school board, school administration, and Mr. Mackey all turned to every lead they had to generate funding and support for their effort. Even if something seems like a long shot, you will always miss 100% of the shots you don't take. CTE is so intertwined with the health of every aspect of rural communities, that the case can be easily made for anyone and any organization to support it out of their own interest.
4. **Receive commitment from school leadership to grow CTE:** have the school board understand the importance of CTE for all students in all careers and lead the charge along with administration and educators.
5. **Share about program development and success:** be intentional about getting the word out to the community on the vision and impact of the CTE program. This will serve to make everyone feel like they are a part of the process, and generate interest in supporting it.
6. **Clearly define next steps for students:** the more students understand how CTE programming benefits them in college, their profession, or even in their daily lives at home, the more they are apt to participate. Student participation drives certain aspects of CTE funding formulas from the state and federal government.
7. **Add complexity and challenge:** just as Kyle Bess emphasizes, CTE is not just 'shop class and building bird houses.' Enhance the program by adding apprenticeships or job-shadowing with community members, dual credit opportunities with cooperative higher education partners, and CCPE certifications. These take a lot of work upfront, but the dividends they pay in terms of student success and parent and community support are clear. Don't forget to partner with another rural district to help with these.



# In Other Words...

## Additional CTE News & Resources

### **'Just Try It Out': What's Behind a Shift Away From 4-Year College**

This article from EdWeek reports on the latest research confirming what we've been seeing in our rural schools: more and more students are interested in growing their professional and employability skills before graduation. Having uncontested data such as this on hand makes a strong, convincing argument to policymakers, philanthropic partners, and local leaders as to the imperative for investing in CTE. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **Tennessee Governor Bill Lee's Rural Opportunity Summit Highlights Continued Investment in Workforce Development**

Illinois needs to be channeling much more funding into career exploration and experiences for students. This recent article from Clarksville Online illustrates the kind of high-level backing that CTE in Illinois needs. It can serve as a guide for crafting our own state commitment to CTE. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **America's Innovative High Schools**

The spirit of the Prairie Career Advocate is to show how other schools are doing CTE. While not all of these schools are rural, this series spotlighting innovative high schools around the US from the 74, a digital education news outlet, offers great inspiration. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **AIRSS Response:**

#### **Rural CTE and the "Great Misalignment"**

Recently, we responded to the publication of a new report investigating the apparent "misalignment" between post-secondary associates degrees and available positions seeking those degrees. Although this finding has strong merit, requiring us to genuinely reflect on whether our CTE offerings are aligned with community needs, the conclusion misses the point. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **IACTE Conference Call for Proposals**

The Illinois Association of CTE has just opened their call for proposals to present at the 95th IACTE State Conference in Springfield. If you'd like to share your own story about developing an innovative CTE program, answer the call. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **Growing Rural IL Success through CTE**

After a year of intensive engagement and research with rural Illinois school districts, the Rural IL CTE Project is proud to announce the publication of Growing Rural IL Success through CTE, the first attempt of its kind in Illinois to systematically document the needs and equity gaps of rural CTE programs, and to offer policy recommendations for addressing them. We encourage you to peruse the report, consider its findings and assertions, and find an avenue for advocating its recommendations be implemented. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **Rural IL CTE Project Portal**

Visit the Rural IL CTE Project Portal for the latest tools, tips, guides, and resources your rural CTE program needs! From research, case studies, an asset map, and more, we're working to provide you with everything you need to grow and sustain an exemplary program for students. The Portal is updated regularly with new content, and any suggestions and criticisms are welcome. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **U.S. Department of Education: Power Your Future Challenge**

This nationwide challenge inspires high school students to envision clean energy careers. Students can explore clean energy and connect CTE programs with a wide variety of clean energy career pathways. Submissions are due by 11/19/24 at 7:00pm CST. [\[Click Here\]](#)

### **Learning Blade**

In support of the Navy's need to build submarines for the future, a collaborative group is providing all the middle schools in Illinois state fully funded access to the Learning Blade's STEM, Computer Science, and CTE career awareness resources. [\[Click Here\]](#)

The links on this page, and throughout the Advocate, are active when viewed in the original PDF format.



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# STATE OF ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

## Proclamation

*WHEREAS, school principals play an integral role in nurturing a positive, student-centered culture in elementary, middle, and high schools across the State of Illinois; and,*

*WHEREAS, school principals are responsible for attracting and retaining the best teachers and support staff to ensure that each child receives equitable educational opportunities and services to reach their potential; and,*

*WHEREAS, it is the primary responsibility of the State of Illinois to provide adequate and equitable resources for schools so that all students have access to a quality education and foundation for a successful future; and,*

*WHEREAS, the Illinois Principals Association, which represents over 6,600 educational leaders statewide, believes that educators' experiences and voices are essential to crafting effective education policy; and,*

*WHEREAS, school leaders face many obstacles in supporting and educating our young people and it is through their perseverance, passion, and hope-filled leadership that Illinois continues to produce quality, career-ready students; and,*

*WHEREAS, we must continue to encourage, support, and recognize our school principals who have a positive impact on Illinois students and the educational system in the Land of Lincoln;*

*THEREFORE, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim the week of October 20-26, 2024, as **Principals Week** and Friday, October 25, 2024, as **Principals Day** in Illinois to recognize principals and the Illinois Principals Association for all that they do to help our children learn and succeed.*

*In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.*



*Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,*  
*this* \_\_\_\_\_ *NINTH* \_\_\_\_\_ *day of* \_\_\_\_\_ *SEPTEMBER* \_\_\_\_\_, *in*  
*the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *TWENTY-FOUR* \_\_\_\_\_, *and of the State of Illinois,*  
*two hundred and* \_\_\_\_\_ *FIFTH* \_\_\_\_\_.

*Alexi Giannoulis*  
SECRETARY OF STATE

*JB Pritzker*  
GOVERNOR



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Illinois Principals Association Encourages Principal Appreciation in October**

**Springfield, IL** – The Illinois Principals Association (IPA) encourages communities to celebrate Principal Appreciation Week October 20-26, 2024, and Principal Appreciation Day on October 25 to highlight the dedication of principals, assistant principals, and deans. This annual recognition has been recognized by Illinois governors since 1990. October is also National Principals Month, supported by the IPA, National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA).

**Cris Edwards, IPA President** and principal of Richland County Elementary School in Olney, shared: “Whether this is a principal’s very first year, last year, or somewhere in the middle, Illinois is celebrating these leaders for all they do for children. As ‘legacy builders’ we are constantly mentoring others; helping students to find their voice or their career path, supporting paraprofessionals who want to return to school to become a teacher, and encouraging teachers that are thinking about becoming an administrator. Thank you to all the leaders across Illinois for your unwavering commitment and for building a legacy that will inspire generations to come. I am excited to thank you and celebrate you during National Principals Month!”

“This year, we celebrate our state’s school leaders for what they do – build a lasting legacy with those they serve,” said **Dr. Jason Leahy, IPA Executive Director**. “These courageous individuals lead their learning organizations with optimism, humility, vision, perseverance, and a deep commitment to do what is best for their students. Both research and common sense tell us how critical these servants are to positively influence young people, teachers, and communities. For this, they deserve our respect and gratitude.”

IPA invites teachers, students, parents, and community members to show appreciation for school leaders on October 25.

*The Illinois Principals Association is a leadership organization which serves over 6,600 educational leaders throughout the state of Illinois and whose mission is to develop, support, and advocate for innovative educational leaders. For more information about the IPA, please visit [www.ilprincipals.org](http://www.ilprincipals.org)*

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# 2024 ILLINOIS REPORT CARD

TELL YOUR STORY OF LEARNING RENEWAL

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Timeline: Know What to Expect

OCT.  
1

### **Educator Preview opens.**

All districts receive access to preview final 2023 Illinois Report Card data, including preliminary annual summative designations, in Educator Preview portal of MyIRC.

OCT.  
3

### **Webinar 10 a.m. Report Card Overview – [Register here.](#)**

ISBE staff will review all new elements on the 2024 Report Card and walk through the Educator Preview tool. Additionally, staff will answer any questions regarding abnormal-looking data and any other questions you may have.

### **Data Review and Verification Tool closes.**

Districts retain access to view Equity Journey Continuum metrics.

OCT.  
24

### **Media Briefing 10 a.m. – [Register here.](#)**

Media and all districts receive preliminary 2024 Illinois Report Card data under embargo (cannot be shared publicly) until 9 a.m. Oct. 30. State Superintendent of Education discusses state-level data under embargo.

OCT.  
18

### **Webinar 11:30 a.m. How to Interpret & Communicate Your Summative Designation – [Register here.](#)**

### **Webinar 3:30 p.m. How to Interpret & Communicate Your Summative Designation – [Register here.](#)**

OCT.  
17

### **Webinar 10 a.m. Open Forum #2 – [Register here.](#)**

ISBE staff will answer questions from districts related to the Illinois Report Card.

OCT.  
28

All districts receive official letter listing 2024 Annual Summative Designation for each school.

OCT.  
30

**9 a.m.** ISBE publishes 2024 Illinois Report Card at [www.IllinoisReportCard.com](http://www.IllinoisReportCard.com). Embargo lifts.

Schools designated as Targeted, Comprehensive, or Intensive receive a letter with information about school improvement status and the statewide system of support.

# ELA Curriculum Resource Updates

## Team Members:



| Millikin  | Northside   | Southwest   |
|---|---|---|
| Christy Sancken (RI)<br>Teresa Raske (2nd)<br>Kinze Swanson (3rd)<br>Nikki Ruthavilavan (IC)<br>*Jenny Snodgrass (SpEd) | Ashley Morey (IC)<br>Maria Gehl (2nd)<br>Carson Dodge (3rd)<br>Janelle Hickey (5th) | Skyler Schneider (K)<br>Ana Gladfelter (1st)<br>Abby Everett (2nd)<br>Michelle Craig (3rd)<br>Paige Panicucci (4th)<br>Ashley Minnaert (4th)<br>Cassandra Smith (5th) |

## What we did last year...

- 6 in-person team meetings; 1 virtual meeting.
- Material review of **16** literacy program resources; in depth review of **6** resources.
- Networking with districts and educators implementing programs of interest.
- Research: [Illinois Literacy Plan](#)
- Professional Development: \*Illinois Reading Council Conference Springfield, \*ROE- Orton Gillingham (Sancken/Schneider), \*Leading the Way-Navigating Important Shifts in Literacy

# ELA Curriculum Resource Updates

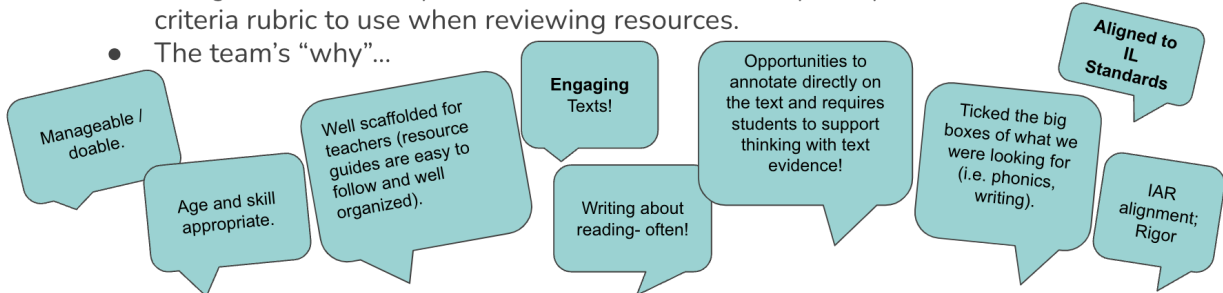
Curriculum Associates | i-Ready

## What are we piloting this year?

- 1st & 2nd: Magnetic Reading Foundations and Ready Reading
- 3rd-5th: Magnetic Reading- Common Core; 3rd & 5th: Ready Writing
- Exploring additional writing resources.

## Why did we select these resources?

- Using feedback from your ELA “needs/wants” survey last year co-created a criteria rubric to use when reviewing resources.
- The team’s “why”...



# ELA Curriculum Resource Updates

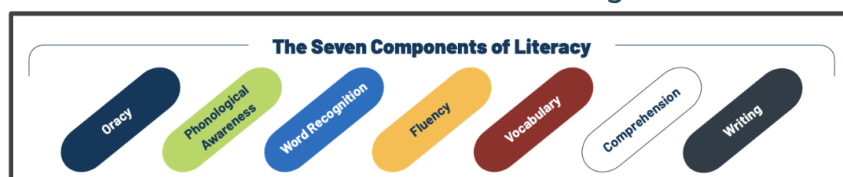
## Timeline

- The team will be piloting the first 2 Units of the resources during 1st semester of this school year.
- We will be holding check-in meetings and updates will be shared periodically.
- Prepare to make recommendations for next steps in January.

## Until then....

Check out what IL says excellent reading includes- *The Seven Components of Literacy* and our ELA Priority Standards will be important discussions for ELA.

## Excellent “At a Glance” 1-Pager







**GENESEO HIGH SCHOOL'S**  
**3RD ANNUAL JOB FAIR**  
**& CAREER EXPO**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2024 | 8-11:30 AM**  
**GENESEO FOUNDATION ACTIVITY CENTER**

**GHS students (9th-12th grades) will be on hand to learn about jobs in our community and the surrounding area, as well as the education and skills needed to qualify for a variety of positions.**

Local businesses and organizations are encouraged to participate. Contact Travis Mackey ([tmackey@genseoschools.org](mailto:tmackey@genseoschools.org)) by Nov. 22 to learn more. Tables, electricity and WiFi will be provided.



**GENESEO**  
COMMUNITY UNIT  
SCHOOL DISTRICT #228

Where the *future* grows.

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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** BOARD PRESIDENT AND SUPERINTENDENT  
**FROM:** KIMBERLY A. SMALL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**SUBJECT:** IASB 2024-2025 DUES  
**DATE:** OCTOBER 2024

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THANK YOU for committing to active membership in the Illinois Association of School Boards for 2024-2025. We have received payment of your board's dues, and a certificate of membership is enclosed.

Please let each board member know how grateful IASB staff members are to be working with the school district in the coming year for the betterment of public education in Illinois. We all recognize the effectiveness of statewide cooperation in solving the challenges that education faces today, the power of platform for a strong collective voice on common issues to present our vision to the legislature, and the importance of maintaining excellence in school board governance.

IASB staff members are evolving to help you perform your duties as school officials as smoothly and effectively as possible. Be assured that all staff members stand ready to assist you and your board in any way they can.

If you have questions about what your Association offers or how the staff might serve you, visit IASB's website at [www.iasb.com](http://www.iasb.com). In addition to a review of programs and activities, you will find information about services available online.

Again, thank you both and your school board for joining in another year of progress toward excellence in local school board governance and improvement in our state's ability to educate tomorrow's citizens.






certifies that

# Geneseo CUSD 228

is an **ACTIVE MEMBER** and is entitled to all the rights, benefits, and services attached thereto.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director



**2024/2025**

Lighting the Way to Excellence in School Governance