



The Mid-State Messenger

May 2022

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month



Each May, Better Hearing & Speech Month (BHSM) provides an opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and the role of ASHA members in providing life-altering

treatment. As you see the Speech Language Pathologist and Hearing Itinerants, please be sure to thank them for all that they do! Our Speech Pathologists are: **Velvet Balmer, Kelly Behme, Ali Beyers, Kacy Dunham, Mickey Emerson, Lorinda Jennings, Tammie Siebert, Lynette Milner, Debbie Musgrave, Crystal Schmidt, Chris Harms, Kelli Stewart, Briana Herschelman, Stacy Gibson, Kim Pepler, Elizabeth Mascote, Barbara Goodson, Emilee Niemeier, Natasha Stellhorn, Anita Lidy, Meredith Gardner**, Our Hearing Itinerants are: **Michaela Hartley and Maddie Williams-Kane**

May 1-8 is Teacher Appreciation Week



National Teacher Appreciation week is May 1-May 8th this school year. Teachers play such an important role in the success of our students so please join us in celebrating and thanking all teachers!

Nea.com suggests you show your appreciation by using

#thankateacher on social media to celebrate those teachers that have impacted your life. You can also text CELEBRATE to 48744 to learn other ways you can help celebrate teachers!

Happy Retirement to Joan Saatkamp



Joan started her career in education by working as a para pro in a TLC/TMH elementary setting in Pana. She then went to the first Self-Contained LD elementary classroom in Pana, working with Patti Hamlin, her inspiration. Joan shares, “Patti was a wonderful role model.”

Patti inspired Joan to continue her education and become a Special Education Teacher. After earning her degree in 1992, she was hired as a Junior High Self-Contained Special Education Teacher in Pana while also coaching volleyball and track. She enjoyed the junior high age students, especially those that needed behavioral supports. This led her to the Christian/Montgomery ED Junior High position. Every day was a new day. The staff were very supportive of her students, giving them the chances they needed to be successful. Joan soon moved up to Pana High School. There, she taught Math and English in a self-contained setting, and co-taught Biology. Joan says that Transition was her calling. She helped the students get a job, take the classes that would help them with their career, get involved in community activities, learn about their IEP's, and use the new technology that was growing fast. In the last few years, she has been the Transition Specialist for the Bond/Fayette schools. Joan says she has learned many things along the way and met many great staff members, students, and families. Joan believes, “if a student needs support, I will find the resources to get them what they need to be successful. Whether they are going into the workforce or continuing their education. I will continue to be a supporter for my students, families, and staff.” Please join us in wishing Joan a

very happy retirement. A Retirement Open House will be held for Joan on May 12th from 3:30 - 4:30 at Vandalia High School Cafeteria. All are welcome!



Autism Awareness in Action



Emma Reichert, in honor of Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month, visited dozens of Hillsboro, Carlinville, and Brownstown classrooms to teach a lesson about Autism Acceptance and Awareness. She taught the students characteristics about Autism and how their brains are just different. She encouraged students to be good friends.

MTSS Success: Teacher Perspectives

Katelyn Hoerchler, 3rd grade teacher at Litchfield CUSD #12: This year, my building has started a data team. The committee works together to try and guide struggling students in the best way possible. This committee has been able to help about 15 of our students who struggle most, academically and behaviorally, in the 2nd and 3rd grades. As a classroom teacher, I have learned so much about the importance of data, various interventions, RTI, and small group instruction. The data team ensures that we are implementing every possible strategy to help our students and we are seeing great success! This year, I have had three of my students in my classroom alone graduate from RTI, which is a huge accomplishment! The data team provided more meaningful interventions for struggling students and has increased classroom teacher knowledge about data and interventions.

Stephanie Luttrell, 3rd grade teacher at Litchfield CUSD #12: I was apprehensive about implementing data teams this year, as was my grade level team. However, throughout completing the steps required by the data team, I felt confident with the process. In my direct

experience with the data team, I brought a student forward as someone I had worked with in the classroom using various interventions and one on one help. I felt that my student was still struggling in both reading and math and felt that further intervention was needed. The data team made recommendations and different interventions were put in place. As a teacher, I feel very confident that after this process is done, I have exhausted every last strategy and intervention that is available to help my student to be successful before referring the student for a special education evaluation. I like knowing that I have data to prove that I have put in all the extra work to help my student and that if special education testing is decided by the team, it is because that is what is best for that student. Although I started with an attitude that was less than positive, I feel really good about my first experience using the data team to support my student in the most effective ways.

Bond/Fayette Senior Conference



The Bond/Fayette seniors attended their Senior Conference held at Kaskaskia College in Vandalia on April 8th. They learned important information regarding banking, savings, investments, insurances, purchasing a vehicle, housing costs, information from the Disabilities Coordinator from KC College as well as Lake Land College, and DHS shared information on planning for their future after high school. Students asked great questions and participated in conversation with each speaker. Thank you to Joan Saatkamp for organizing another successful senior conference!

Brownstown Art Fair



Dakota Rutherford (left) and Justine Ward (right), 2 Brownstown High School students, displayed their art at the Brownstown High School Art Fair on April 20th. Dakota's future plans are to become a baker and utilize her Art talents. Justine is taking the Art class at OKAW next school year and her future plan is to go on to college and study Art.

Administrative Assistant Day



On April 27th & 28th we honored our amazing MSSE office staff for all of their hard work and dedication. These ladies are what keep MSSE running smoothly. When you see them please let them know how much they are appreciated. Pictured above from left to right is Tammy Burney, Shera Hunt, Liz Holcomb, and Vickie Throne.

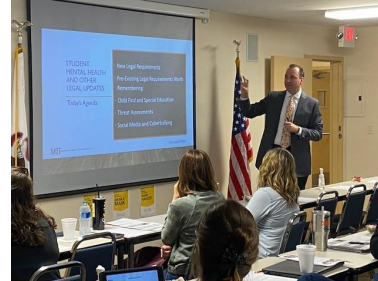
Brownstown Talent Show

Brownstown Jr/Sr High had their first talent show and what a success it was! Students performed comedy acts, they had musicians, dancers, singers, and so much more. What a joy this show brought to the entire school. Pictured below to the left is Layton Yokley mystifying students and staff with his magic act! Pictured below on the right is Trey Gannon who roasted students and staff with his comedy act!



Professional Development with Brandon Wright

On May 6, 2022 MSSE welcomed Brandon Wright for a two hour discussion on student mental health and other legal updates. As always, Brandon shared some very important information and MSSE professional staff had the opportunity to ask questions and collaborate. This was a great learning experience for us all.



Making s Difference

Dawn Theivagt, PProgram Coordinator serving Litchfield, was presented the You Make a Difference Award at the MSSE staff meeting on May 6, 2022. Nominated by Nancy Roasio and Lucas Altenberger, Dawn was given this award for her outstanding listening skills,

ability to facilitate positive change and effectively supporting staff. Congratulations!

MSSE Years of Service Awards



Tammy Burney, Joan Saatkamp, Angie Armour & Meg Marquardt (30), Lynnette Milner (25), Jessica Ryan (20), Amanda Cunningham, Amy Ashmore, & Lisa Murphy (15)