



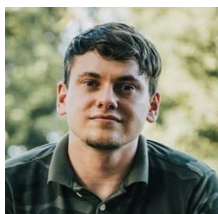
# The Mid-State Messenger

December 2020

## Honoring Our School Psychologists

During the week of November 9-13, 2020 schools throughout the United States celebrated National School Psychology Week (NSPW) to highlight the important work school psychologists and other educators do to help all students thrive.

## Congratulations Lucas Altenberger



Lucas Altenberger, first year school psychologist serving Litchfield School District, has recently become a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP). Lucas completed a 60 hours graduate program

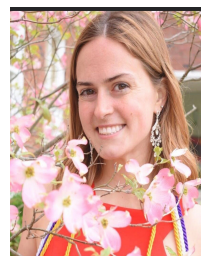
in the field of school psychology, participated in a sequence of supervised experiences, fulfilled a 1,200 hour school internship, and most recently, passed the Praxis School Psychologist exam. This is a wonderful accomplishment for Lucas, Litchfield School District and MSSE. Take time to congratulate Lucas for completing the steps necessary to become a Nationally Certified School Psychologist.

## Congratulations Madi Whittington

Madi Whittington, SLP serving Litchfield, has worked with her ASHA certified mentor, Lynnette Milner, to complete her CFY (Clinical Fellowship Year). In order to complete this impressive certification, Madi had to devote at least 80% of her time to direct service to students, met informally with her mentor over the course of 36 weeks, and complete 3 formal meetings with her mentor. Madi was rated in 3 main areas; assessments, therapy, and formal IEP meetings. Madi earned the highest rating in all 3 areas. Once Madi and Lynnette completed all of the necessary service and documentation, it was submitted to ASHA for review and approval.



## Employee Spotlight:



Michaela Pattie, Hearing Itinerant for all MSSE districts, started a weekly newsletter called, DHH T&T (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Tips and Tricks). Anyone can sign up to receive weekly newsletters by contacting Michaela Pattie at [michaela.pattie@midstatespec.org](mailto:michaela.pattie@midstatespec.org). The November 29th DHH T&T focused on the importance of using good lighting so students can see your face to read lips. October 4th's tip was to speak one at a time. Michaela explained the importance of this tip by saying, "Practice speaking one at a time during lessons, questions, discussions, etc. This creates clarity for the student to focus on what is being said by the teacher and peers. Over talking or more than one person talking makes the sounds run together and overlap, making it very difficult for the student to understand." In addition, begin the habit of repeating what someone said before addressing the question/comment. This will give students a chance to hear again and clarify the topic before listening to the answer or following comment.

## We Are Grateful

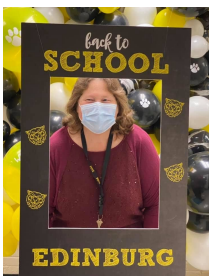
Everyone is facing a lot of uncertainty this year. I believe it is more important than ever to recognize and celebrate our blessings. I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to be working in the Raymond-Lincolnwood school district with such a dedicated group of educators. I asked the Panhandle staff to share something they are grateful for. Becky Rands

wrote, "I am very grateful for parents sharing their students with me. I am also very grateful to still be teaching and in the most wonderful district filled with caring administrators." Lexi Emerson responded with "I am thankful to have all the support I have had at Lincolnwood as a first year teacher. Everyone has been so helpful and encouraging." Skylar Krager, said "I am thankful for my family, my friends, my work family, & my students!" Skylar is pictured with her family.



## Welcome Back!

This year has been a wild ride for all of us with students attending in-person, hybrid, and remote and blends of all three as needed. Edinburg School District began the year fully remote, but was eventually able to bring students back for full in-person learning. Students were greeted at the door with this wonderful photo opportunity and had fun popping in for pictures to document such a memorable start to this school year. Pictured are just a few of our wonderful Special Education providers at Edinburg Juanita Tomlin, Mickey Emerson, and David Clevenger.



## Veteran's Day Assembly

Ramsey continued their annual Veteran's Day assembly this year. The crowd attended remotely and the band socially distanced, but the message and value of honoring our veterans was felt. Ramsey community members, staff and students honored veterans by asking them to remotely stand up to be recognized. Students and staff also shared the history of Veteran's Day and explained how monumental of a day Veteran's Day is to all Americans.

## IPA Outstanding Superintendent



Mr. Aaron Hopper, Superintendent of Panhandle Community Unit School District, was awarded with the "Outstanding Superintendent" award from the Illinois Principals Association. Mrs. Angie Armour (Director of MSSE) wrote, "All educational leaders have the opportunity to serve through the good times and the bad. The Panhandle community has certainly seen more than its share of tragedy and loss. Although no superintendent should ever have the experience that Mr. Hopper does, these are the times that he channels his strong and unwavering faith as well as his positive relationships with students, families, staff, and

communities, leading through unimaginable times while caring for and supporting others. Mr. Hopper is an extremely hard-working, passionate, thoughtful, and sincere servant leader who is committed to the improvement of education. He is well respected by colleagues, community members, families, staff, and students. Over and over again, I have seen him do what many others find difficult. He simply does what is right and necessary for all children. Due to his dedication and example, Aaron Hopper has created a true “Panhandle family where all are welcome and valued.” Jana Masten (Principal) shared, “He has shown us what a leader is and should be. Definitely a great role model and someone all of us can look up to. He is so deserving of this award, although if you asked him, he would never want the credit because that’s the type of person he is. I have a feeling if you asked the staff, they would say they are the lucky ones for having such a caring and compassionate boss.” In the many nomination letters board members, teachers, and administrators told of Mr. Hopper’s integrity and commitment to the Panhandle School District’ students and staff. Mr. Hopper is an extraordinary leader who has and will continue to make a difference in the lives of others by demonstrating service and the practice of patience and grace.

### Shout Out to St Elmo Staff

Rhiannon Durbin and Mindy Healy, individual assistants to two students at St. Elmo Elementary, have gone above and beyond this school year. They helped to create a transitional learning environment for their students. They have learned and embraced so much about the techniques of structured teaching. They support their students to transition through several stations throughout the day including: individual work systems, a recreational play area, work and discrete trial spaces, and a sensory or



break area. Both ladies have shown initiative in their actions and a true passion for what they do. Their hard work has not gone unnoticed. The students at St. Elmo are lucky to have these hard working ladies in their corner.

### Giving Back to the Community

Litchfield High School work study students made and donated fleece blankets and inspirational pictures for the residents at Timber Creek Assisted Living and Heritage Health in Litchfield. The students wanted to keep busy during the COVID restrictions and find a way to give back to these local businesses that have supported the work study program in past years. Pictured is the Heritage Health activity director, Cassie Wyatt, with items donated by the Litchfield High School work study program.



### Happy Holidays!

Half of the school year is nearly over and what a year it has been! The innovation, perseverance, and patience we have seen in our 13 member districts has amazed us. We want to take this opportunity to thank all educators for their hard work and dedication during this unique time. We hope you have a wonderful and safe holiday break. Fill your cup and reward yourself for a job well done.

