

Sumner County Schools News **Committed and Focused on Growing Learners** School Year 2017-18, September Issue

## Sumner County Schools and Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence



In July 2017, teachers and administrators of Sumner County Schools (SCS) heard keynote speaker Dr. Jenny Severson share strategies from Quantum Learning Education, Eight Keys of Excellence, and Blue Box Skills/Keys. For some, this was a refresher of the high-quality practices offered through Quantum Learning Education presented several years ago. For others, it was an exciting look at effective classroom tools for learning. For all, it was an educational "call to arms."

Quantum Learning Education is a powerful, research-based, educational methodology that increases teacher effectiveness and improves student performance through the orchestration of four core components: Foundation, Atmosphere, Environment, and Design and Delivery. It is a simple, yet effective model for creating an all-encompassing culture of academic and personal excellence.

Quantum Learning is built on guiding tenets throughout the learning model to improve classroom practices and provide teachers and students with a direct focus. The tenets are Everything Speaks, Everything is On Purpose, Experience Before Label, Acknowledge Every Effort, and If It's Worth Learning, It's Worth Celebrating.

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The Eight Keys of Excellence are principles that strengthen the foundation of a school's climate and culture to allow mutual respect and unimpeded learning. The following Eight Keys will continue to mold the learning environment in all schools in the SCS district:

Integrity 0

INTEGRITY – Match behavior with values.

FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS – Learn from mistakes.

Speak with Good Purpose 0

THIS IS IT!

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SPEAK WITH GOOD PURPOSE – Speak honestly and kindly.

THIS IS IT! - Make the most of every moment.

Ocommitment

COMMITMENT – Make your dreams happen.

OWNERSHIP – Take responsibility for actions.

O Flexibility

Balance

O ownership

FLEXIBILITY – Be willing to do things differently.

BALANCE – Live your best life.

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### Exhibiting Keys of Excellence in an English Class at Station Camp High

At **Station Camp High School (SCHS)**, teachers guide students to achieve excellence in their academic and personal lives. Teaching and supporting core character principles are the focus alongside curriculum standards. Some prime examples of character development evidenced in Kyle Gilliland's (Coach G) classroom are:

**Failure Leads to Success:** Coach G's students do paraphrasing, summarization, and analyzing of assignments to begin each class. The SCHS students take a literary, historical, or philosophical quote and use it to perform these three tasks in writing. Then, Coach G reads aloud their work.

This activity prompts an in-depth, analytical discussion of the material and allows Coach G and SCHS peers to provide immediate feedback to one another. After the class discussion, each student receives a writing rubric for assessment of his/her academic performance with the quote assignments for the week. The rubric also offers an opportunity for students to reflect on their writing and set goals for future learning. **Speak with Good Purpose:** Furthermore, Coach G's students engage in partnered, small group, and Paideia-style dialogues that emphasize honest speech and respectful listening. SCHS students participate in these interchanges approximately once a month. The assignments, along with courteous, informal talks regarding the daily quotes, focus on questions of morality, discipline, self-control, humanity and human nature, psychology, love, and other character-driven concepts. When remarking about Coach G's class later in life, students often say they sorely miss those discussions because they gave students a chance to examine their lives with meaning and purpose.

Coach Gilliland and all SCHS teachers embrace every opportunity to help motivate and shape the moral compasses of the students of SCHS.

#### Coach G—Mr. Kyle Gilliland



#### Madison Creek Elementary has PRIDE

Each stakeholder at **Madison Creek Elementary School (MCE)** believes in the power of the Eight Keys of Excellence. They are confident these keys provide the life principles that will lead students to success. Perhaps more important than IQ, family background, or financial status, a student's attitude of mind is likely to be the determining indicator of a successful life.

To promote a mindset of achievement, a group of teachers at MCE collaborated to develop a behavior plan, complete with rewards and consequences, known as the PRIDE rules. The plan lays a practical framework for integrating the Eight Keys of Excellence with MCE expectations for student conduct. The rules are as follows:



\***P**erform my best and be accountable for my actions.

- \*Responsibility is what I show.
- \*I keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself.
  - \*Directions are followed always.
- \*Every day I show respect.



To introduce the PRIDE rules, third grade teachers encouraged their students to consider what PRIDE would look like in various places in the school. Students also discussed what the rules would NOT look like! Students were divided into teams to create a visual representation of their conclusions. Ownership of the rules was firmly established as each team chatted, debated, brainstormed, and modeled the PRIDE rules. MCE students are off to a great start as they establish what is required for a successful year and a successful life!



#### White Middle – A New School Year Ahead

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#### New Year- Fresh Start!!

White House Middle School (WHMS) had a great start to school year 2017-18. There are lots of new faces throughout the school!! WHMS is unique regarding other SCS middle schools because it houses fifth grade students. The fifth grade teachers work hard to successfully transition students to WHMS.

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Teachers use character education, such as the Eight Keys of Excellence, to accomplish the transitions. Mr. Brown, a WHMS fifth grade ELA teacher, focused on Integrity during homeroom time. Integrity is a key that emphasizes students being sincere and real. Class groups discussed the key and then created a word wall consisting of terms the students felt best represented the meaning of integrity.



In addition, classes discussed the importance of family honor. A representation of this was found in a coat of arms bearing the family name. The coat of arms is a symbol to denote the family's authenticity and legitimacy.



One way WHMS faculty works to bring students together is through team-building activities. Ms. Bynum, a seventh grade science teacher, had students work in small groups to manipulate cups into different formations using only a grabber tool made of four pieces of string and a rubber band. Another challenge for students was they could not touch the cups with their hands.

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**Team Building Activity** 



Each group had four different formations to create. It took lots of communication and coordination from each member to make it successful.





Along with the challenges, the student found time for some laughter too!



#### J. W. Wiseman Elementary Follows the Path to Character Excellence



**J.W. Wiseman Elementary School (JWW)** is excited to model positive character traits for students using the Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence program. JWW begins each school day with a quote related to the JWW Key of the Month. This month the school's focus is Ownership.

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A mural of the Eight Keys of Excellence painted by Ms. Davison, JWW art teacher, is on display in the school's lobby. In addition, student portraits to represent characteristics of the keys hang there. Visual representations of the keys are in classrooms and hallways as well.

Furthermore, JWW includes the Eight Keys of Excellence in daily instruction. As examples, first grade teachers use the book *Leo, the Late Bloomer* to initiate discussions on Failure Leads to Success. Fourth grade teachers use the Ownership Key to address student accountability in academics and behavior.

JWW faculty and staff want students to recognize the Eight Keys of Excellence and to apply these principles in their daily lives.



#### The Key of Flexibility Guides Bethpage Elementary Students

In **Bethpage Elementary School's (BPE)** guidance class, third grade students learn to demonstrate Flexibility, one of the Eight Keys of Excellence. The Flexibility Key represents a willingness to do things differently. To help understand this key's purpose, BPE students were instructed to weave through an obstacle course of cones while other students, labeled "cone movers," rearranged the cones in different formations. This activity helped students learn to be flexible and keep moving through the course even though the path continuously changed. BPE's counselor, Ms. Brummett, hopes students will discover the importance of examining life's challenges, recognizing what isn't working, and be willing to change what they are doing to achieve life goals.





#### Clyde Riggs Elementary is Unlocking the Future

The scholars of **Clyde Riggs Elementary School (CRE)** are utilizing the Eight Keys of Excellence to unlock success as they journey full "STEM" ahead this year! School year 2017-18 began with a focus on all Eight Keys of Excellence in guidance and general education classes. As the year progresses, CRE scholars will study each key in detail. The time spent will assist them in learning to apply the keys to their lives and to make top-quality, informed choices that will lead to successful decisions.

By utilizing repetitive reinforcement, CRE faculty and staff model teamwork, foster confidence and creativity, and lead by example. Consequently, CRE scholars plan to learn the Keys of Excellence song and hand motions taught by Ms. White, CRE's guidance counselor. Weekly practice and sharing with family members will make the keys procedural in students' lives. Scholars enjoy the movement, and a "catchy tune" always helps in retaining information!

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The teacher-created display shown above is a constant reinforcement of the Eight Keys of Excellence for scholars when visiting the CRE Panther Café.

Kimberly Gann, SCS Title 1 Coordinator, serves as a Quantum Learning Facilitator at CRE. She makes monthly visits to share effective Quantum Learning instructional strategies with teachers and staff. CRE is fortunate to have Ms. Gann and her expertise in Quantum Learning to assist CRE teachers with implementing brain-based approaches to lesson plans and classroom instruction. To ensure best practices, collaboration among teachers occurs during "Brain Bites" sessions, mirroring the information Dr. Jenny Severson shared with schools during the SCS Learning Summit in July. CRE is committed to fully implementing Quantum Learning and the Eight Keys of Excellence as benchmarks for scholars, faculty, and staff.

#### Positivity and T. W. Hunter Middle

**T. W. Hunter Middle School (TWH)** teachers and staff embrace the Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence daily while communicating with students, parents, and peers. As a school, TWH teaches the Eight Keys of Excellence twice a month in its bully prevention program. In addition, teachers are encouraged to incorporate the keys in classroom instruction and to use them as they apply to classroom environment, subject matter, and student struggles. Teachers and staff at TWH believe the keys effectually connect high-quality character building to the enrichment of experiences in conflict resolution. Students learn conflict comes in many forms such as bullying, internal decisions, peer conversations, and struggling with academics. The Eight Keys of Excellence guide students to search for positive ways and outlooks in decision making and skill building.

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TWH stakeholders trust that good character leads to wise choices that may influence students as well as others around them. Therefore, each person at TWH, whether student, teacher, staff, or administrator, strives to reach his or her fullest potential by exemplifying the Quantum Learning Keys of Excellence. TWH embraces the positivity!



"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit." —Aristotle

Faculty and staff at **R.T. Fisher Alternative School (RTF)** utilize the Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence. RTF teacher Mrs. Joan Whitted leads a classroom in which the Eight Keys and their meanings are evident daily. Mrs. Whitted has used Quantum Learning strategies with students for the past eight years and is a strong believer in the keys' applicability in every subject area.

During the first weeks of school year 2017-18, Mrs. Whitted introduced the Eight Keys of Excellence in her classes. She utilized the resources provided at the County Sumner Schools Learning Summit to develop effective lessons for the keys. Mrs. Whitted defined each key and led a discussion regarding its relationship to students' lives. RTF the students were very engaged and quick to give feedback on which keys were strengths and which were areas to improve in their lives. Many students shared personal examples. The students also determined keys they valued most and keys least important to them. Finally, Mrs. Whitted and students evaluated themselves on accountability with each key. Mrs. Whitted found the



students to be very open and honest during the experience. She was impressed by their maturity and reflection.

RTF holds its students to a high standard of expectations around behavior. The faculty and staff understand the principles for the Eight Keys of Excellence allow the students to hold each other and themselves accountable for their actions and behavior. Student goals for the RTF program and future life experiences are written and developed using the skills learned through the Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence.



Benny Bills Elementary First Graders show motions for the Eight Keys of Excellence!

Benny Bills Elementary School (BBE) kicked off the school year with an intentional focus on the Eight Keys of Excellence. Information on the keys was included in the BBE Student Handbook and will be reinforced through monthly newsletters. BBE students learned the lyrics and motions for the Eight Keys of Excellence chant during music class and morning assemblies. In addition, several sets of the Keys of Excellence are visible throughout the school hallways and classrooms.

The focus on the Eight Keys of Excellence continues with all teachers working to reinforce the character principles in class by sharing examples of the keys during instructional time. Furthermore, BBE teachers will be participating in professional learning opportunities after school to increase understanding and use of the Eight Keys of Excellence during the school year. BBE students believe "This is It!" and will show commitment to being excellent!

When we live in the NOW we have power! With a This Is It! attitude we make the present "it" and find joyful moments that we might otherwise have missed!







These are the Eight Keys of Excellence as developed by Quantum Learning for "strengthening the character of your students and the atmosphere and productivity in your classroom, school, or district."

**Portland High School (PHS)** not only agrees with the purpose of the Eight Keys of Excellence, but it also believes the keys will have an effect on students' futures and the community. This is why PHS focuses on the Eight Keys as teaching tools as well as a way of life for its staffulty. PHS principal, Mr. David Woods, holds the staffulty to a high standard and expects them to live out the Eight Keys of Excellence every day with students.

One productive way PHS teaches the Eight Keys of Excellence is with the Renaissance program. This year, the entire staffulty was asked to take part in helping this program flourish. With Renaissance, PHS exemplifies the Flexibility Key – Willing to do things differently!



He said he feels that the value of the program designed by Jostens is to promote a positive school climate, a sense of belonging, and pride in the school. The mission of the program is to recognize and reward positive behavior with positive reinforcement. Students will continue to have the annual bonfire and earn the right to paint a ceiling tile to leave their marks on the school. Graduation is the goal. Each year, they can paint tiles if they meet the requirements.

The first Renaissance event of the school year was held in the PHS gym, and the energy was electric. After the singing of the National Anthem by Spanish teacher Jill Spears, the lights went out and glow necklaces lit up the gym. ~Fussell, Bonnie (2017, August 17). This Is Our House. The Portland Sun. Retrieved from http://www.theportlandsun.com/news.php?viewStory=3826



The PHS Renaissance program also promotes the keys of Commitment, Ownership, and Integrity by rewarding students for good grades and good behavior. PHS students receive discounts to home ballgames, and local businesses provide discounts to students based on the Renaissance level a

student has achieved. A positive aspect of Renaissance is if a student does not make it to the top Purple level one semester, he or she can improve and raise the level next semester.





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Example of discounts available

#### Union Elementary Commits to Eight Keys of Excellence

**Union STEM Elementary School (UES)** makes a commitment to embed Quantum Learning and the Eight Keys of Excellence into its climate and culture in the following ways:

- 1. The guidance counselor at UES will implement class lessons on character while tying in each key for eight lessons. After the initial introductory lessons, the counselor will continue to incorporate the Eight Keys of Excellence into various character education lessons.
- 2. UES guidance counselor will tie in Quantum Learning strategies with test-taking skills and results, especially as they near TNReady/TCAP for third to fifth grades.
- 3. UES will start each day with quotes of the day related to the Eight Keys.
- 4. The librarian at UES will offer books on various Quantum Learning character ideas for check out by students.
- 5. UES guidance counselor will promote career activities by asking parents, guardians, and community members to speak to students on alignment of the Eight Keys with their chosen professions.
- 6. Quarterly, a UES employee will be chosen and awarded for her or his fulfillment of two Keys of Excellence as follows: first nine weeks = Flexibility/This is It!; second nine weeks = Ownership/Failure Leads to Success; third nine weeks = Speak with Good Purpose/Integrity; and fourth nine weeks = Balance/Commitment.

7. UES will blend Quantum Learning with the new HOUSE system, by which teachers focus on the positive behaviors of students while students focus on exhibiting the positive behaviors and soft skills essential to success. UES students receive HOUSE points for exhibiting these positive behaviors.

- 8. UES will align Quantum Learning strategies to STEM education, noting how scientists, mathematicians, and musicians used various keys as they made breakthroughs in terms of discoveries, growth, and musical successes.
- 9. UES will hold REMARKABLE RAIDERS RALLIES. These rallies will honor students of the month, Honor Roll students, and students who make academic growth in various subject areas. Students will get to walk a true RED CARPET!
- 10. UES will invest in an Eight Keys of Excellence banner for the cafeteria to remind student daily of the need to use the keys in their lives.



#### Beech High Students and Learning to Succeed with Foreign Language

The Spanish teachers in the **Beech High School (BHS)** World Languages Department are from diverse backgrounds and experiences; yet, all four agree when it comes to learning a foreign language, Failure Leads to Success. Angela Mendoza, a Spanish teacher in her sixth year at BHS, recalls a study abroad experience from her college years:



I went to Costa Rica with several others from my university. My host family and another classmate's host family were related, so we ended up spending a lot of time together over the month we were there. I was terrified to speak because I was afraid I would make a mistake and people would laugh at me. My classmate Rick, on the other hand, seemed fearless to me and jumped right in conversing with his broken Spanish. I knew he was picking up the language faster than I was because he was not afraid to make mistakes. I learned a valuable lesson early in my study of the language . . . I would learn faster if I could put aside my fear of failure. I have carried this experience with me and now make sure my students know it as well.

Mrs. Mendoza credits colleague Will Perry with helping her keep the Key of Excellence Failure Leads to Success in the forefront of her teaching style. In his first year at Beech, Mr. Perry introduced the idea of *pesos* to the department. Students earn *pesos* by practicing skills they are learning in class. Mr. Perry even has a weekly keyword (*contraseña* in Spanish) for which students earn *pesos* when they use the word or phrase appropriately during the class period. Students enjoy receiving a *peso* for their efforts and challenge each other to use Spanish by playing the *págame* game. If a student says a word in English that he or she already knows in Spanish, another student can call a *págame* and take a *peso* from the classmate. Students dislike losing *pesos* to their friends, so they keep chatter to a minimum and comments exclusively in Spanish! Failure Leads to Success!

Mrs. Mendoza found students in her Spanish 3 class sometimes struggle to leave the comfort of their familiar Spanish 1 and 2 vocabulary and use new structures when they get to an upper level course. She constantly reminds students to take risks with the language and try out new vocabulary. Level 3 students have already begun to prepare for the National Spanish Exam in the spring, and some were disappointed to see their scores on a recent practice test. Mrs. Mendoza reminded them to think about how much their language skills will have grown by the end of the semester. Learning now what knowledge is lacking will only prepare students for greater success on the spring exam!

Over the last several years, foreign language curriculum has evolved to focus more on proficiency in listening and speaking, in addition to reading and writing. With the increased emphasis on oral production and comprehension skills, language teachers have made adjustments to keep pace with the changing national standards. BHS World Language teachers are up to the challenge. They make sure every student knows when it comes to language and life, Failure Leads to Success.

#### Dr. William Burrus Elementary: Quantum Learning

**Dr. William Burrus Elementary School (WBE)** is proud to integrate Quantum Learning strategies into its physical education program. A variety of brain-based learning strategies are implemented into the engaging, hands-on classroom of WBE physical education teacher, Angela White. Ms. White believes movement is essential to learning, so she works to provide active learning experiences for students.

The inclusion of strategies from Whole Brain Teaching and Brain Gym support Quantum Learning to ensure students make meaningful connections for learning. Classroom management strategies, such as the SLANT technique, and a variety of choral responses are incorporated into physical education class daily. Examples of choral responses are: Ms. White says, "P.E.!" Students respond, "Is Fun!" Ms. White says, "Macaroni & Cheese!" Students act out a freeze motion and respond, "Everybody Freeze!" Classes also use a variety of other imitation strategies tied to content and learning objectives. In addition, cross crawl exercises and sensory activities help students think about the knowledge they acquire while learning!



"Every child has inside him an aching void for excitement and if we don't fill it with something which is exciting and interesting and good for him, he will fill it with something which is exciting and interesting and which isn't good for him." – Theodore Roosevelt

"SLANT" is an acronym that stands for Sit up, Lean forward, Ask and answer questions, Nod your head, and Track the speaker. It is a simple technique to encourage and remind students on being attentive and active in class.

#### Beech Elementary Finds The "Keys" To Success



To develop a constructive culture, strategic vocabulary words from the Eight Keys of Excellence are used schoolwide. Monthly, teachers choose one boy and one girl from each grade to best represent one of the keys. Ms. Hensley will take pictures of these students and create a board of recognition located in the cafeteria. "These students will be chosen because they are displaying traits that emulate the BES Key of the Month. These students may differ from those chosen for BES Student of the Month awards." Teachers will also nominate, vote, and choose a fellow teacher who displays traits of the key. With financial assistance from the school's PTO, students and teachers chosen will receive a gift.

"My hope for this program is that BES students understand that academics are important, but it's just as important to be a good person with good character," said Ms. Hensley. BES buys into the

One of the greatest responsibilities parents or guardians have is to help their children grow up to become moral adults with respected values. While instilling values is first and foremost a family obligation, schools also play a significant role by supporting families to foster and promote good character. As the 2017-18 school year began, **Beech Elementary School (BES)** decided to use the Eight Keys of Excellence to reinforce positive values and support families.

Keely Hensley, guidance counselor at BES, is incorporating the keys into her guidance lessons. "I like this program because I feel it gets the entire school on the same page," said Ms. Hensley. "It gets everyone in the building using the same dialogue which is important." **~~~~~~~~~~~** 



understanding that Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence is a "... character education program which guides young people toward a positive future full of confidence, motivation, creativity, team work, leadership, and valuable life principles."

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#### Quantum Focus Fridays and Goodies with Grands at Indian Lake Elementary



Indian Lake Elementary School (ILE) has taken to heart the Quantum Learning strategies all teachers were refreshed or trained on at the SCS Learning Summit. This year, as a part of ILE's Character Education initiative, a Quantum Learning Focus Friday will be included on the first Friday of every month. On this day, grade levels at ILE will focus on the month's Key of Excellence and will teach the students what it \*\*\*\*\*\*\*

means through activities geared toward their needs. The hope is students will better understand the Eight Keys of Excellence and how to make them a daily part of ILE's culture.

The first Quantum Learning Focus Friday, which was on the key Integrity, took place on

September 8<sup>th</sup>. Third grade led the assembly with a fun song energizing everyone. Next, ILE staff gathered on stage to teach the Eight Keys of Excellence and the physical movement for each. Finally, fifth graders presented individualized movements for the keys along with an Integrity skit. It was a great start to the school year!



#### Goodies with Grands

At ILE, everyone believes it takes a village to raise a child. Due to this philosophy, ILE strives to incorporate many different components of the family into celebrations. On Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, the relationship between child and grandparent was celebrated with *ILE's Goodies with Grands*. During this time, grandparents had the opportunity to meet teachers and see student classrooms. ILE also incorporated writing activities for students and grandparents as part of the day. This is just one of the many relationships ILE strives to foster.





#### Westmoreland Middle is Committed to Success



Westmoreland Middle At School (WMS), students are determined to reach their academic goals by focusing on Commitment, one of the Eight Keys of Excellence. As part of the school advocacy program, students are learning how important it is to commit to a goal they have set for themselves and to overcome obstacles that might steer them from their path of excellence. The WMS Advocacy Program will focus on the Eight Keys of Excellence highlighting one of the keys each month of the This characterschool year. building program will help empower students to become more confident in what they do to have a positive impact on school morale.

Students also use goal-setting strategies to take ownership of their individual learning by tracking their progress on Study Island benchmark assessments and bi-quarterly common assessments. Students will analyze pre-test scores and establish goals for their own success. Mid-year and post-test scores will then be compared to individual goals allowing students to reflect on their learning. The data from the Study Island benchmarks and common assessments will help guide students to stay committed to their goals.

Students commit to work collaboratively on improving Study Island benchmark scores at the class level as well. Teachers are using data walls to display benchmark scores so students can aim for higher achievement together as a team. WMS students take Commitment seriously!





# Other Happenings in Sumner County Schools



#### Howard Elementary Wins myON Reading Challenge

Promoting reading and avoiding the summer reading slide are reasons myON Reader, an online reading program, was provided to Title I schools from May 15 to August 15. Students were challenged to read over 100 hours during the summer. Sumner County Schools is proud to announce Howard Elementary School (HES) won the Title I myON Summer Reading Challenge. HES students read over 1000 hours with myON and finished over 5000 books. All HES students that participated in the reading challenge received a book from the Title I program. Congratulations to the faculty, staff, and students at HES!







These first grade students read over 50 hours and 400 books in the myON program this summer. Riley Soppe won first place, and McKenna Mooneyham won second place.

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Other reading participants pictured below:





This year, Indian Lake Elementary School (ILE) is excited to have its first Comprehensive Development Class (CDC). The staff and other students at ILE have embraced the diverse classroom and are excited about all students collaborating as an ILE family of learners. With the CDC classroom and students being a recent addition to ILE, some students have questions about the learning styles and needs of the new students. ILE staff work to answer all questions and promote the wonderful interaction occurring as ILE students blend together for learning. All ILE students are developing an awareness that everyone is different in some way, and those differences are accepted and celebrated at ILE.





Union STEM Elementary Begins a New Tradition with its 2017 Butterfly Launch

