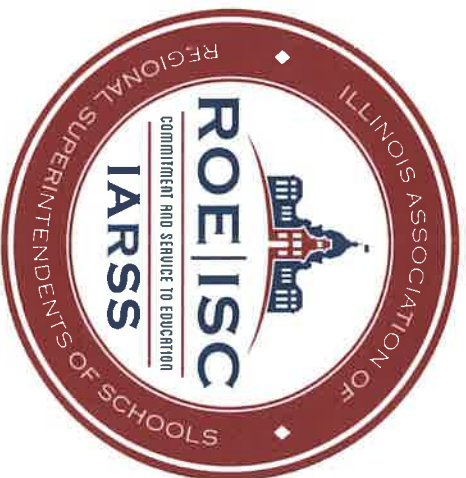


Thank you!

Today's lunch and awards were generously provided by President Dr. Mark Klaisner and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools.



ICEARY extends its gratitude to all the vendors for participating in this year's conference.



2022 Outstanding Student Awards



Thursday, March 3
Marriot Hotel &
Conference Center
Normal, IL

iceary.net



Daniella Allen

Attendance problems and constant fighting at school led her to us. When she came to our school she was dealing with her dad's health and her own health. She was also dealing with the death of her sister who had been killed in a car accident years earlier but the trial was ongoing. And mom had to work a lot. Danie also had to get a job to help with the bills. But Danie persevered and worked hard. In addition to everything else going on in Danie's life, she found out in December that she was pregnant. She could have allowed this news to sidetrack her, but she used it as motivation to work harder and achieve the goal of graduating, not only for herself but now also for her child. Danie is strong, determined, caring and motivated and has a bright future. I am happy to nominate her because she is truly outstanding.

Elexus Dotzert ROYALS Canton

Elexus came to us being behind in credits and struggling with attendance due to past traumas. Elexus has amazed me with her resilience and her positive attitude. No matter what she has been through in the past, she was going to win in her future. At the age of 17, Elexus was making gigantic academic strides, working not one but two jobs and living on her own and paying her own bills. And all of this while commuting an hour each way to school. Her bubbly attitude and positive personality makes everyone's lives a little brighter. Elexus plans to share her amazing aura with the world and give back by being a 911 dispatcher. There is no doubt in my mind that she will change numerous lives because her mother was right - to know her is to love her.



Elijah Laine McGinity ROYALS Carthage

When I think of Eli, I think of growth. It's the change in his ability to march forward in his education journey, move through this winter without debilitating depression and dream about the future. He has struggled with mental health for as long as he can remember without much attention from adults in his life. He has always been a perfectionist and navigated his personal struggles with his desire to achieve. After a hospitalization due to his mental health struggles, he found himself needing an alternative program to get back on track and continue to better himself personally and academically. The growth Eli has shown this year is vast. It is the type of growth that will stick and bring happiness into his life because he will know how to navigate through the rough times. He is working toward his high school diploma and is saving for college. I'm very proud to know him and be part of his journey.



Gilbert Hissong

Truancy, addiction, and lack of motivation could be words used to describe Gilbert during his early years at New Approach High School. However, Gilbert has turned it around and is an outstanding young man that has proven to be a great role model for our program. He has struggled along the way but in the end has excelled in what we call the three As: attendance, academics and attitude. He has repeatedly been heard encouraging other students and telling them "If I can stick it out and graduate, so can you!" Gilbert has become an inspiration to staff and students. We have watched him become a graduate and a dad and are so proud of the person he is and continues to be.



Jazmin Perez

When starting school, she didn't know the language, felt alone, depressed and did not have any friends. After suffering a miscarriage, she began a deep spiral. She decided to stop school and to work instead and help her family financially. With her mom's encouragement, she decided to go back to school. She began our program and worked her hardest to work 30 hrs a week while going to school. And although she was stressed about it all, she did it, she graduated! At 21, she had plans for her future but found out she was pregnant. Although it wasn't part of her original path, she counted this baby a blessing. She has applied to community college and is planning to get certified in welding. I truly believe that whatever Jazmin puts her mind to she will do it!

Joseph Ryan Paulsen

Joey came to our program after personal family issues made the front page of the paper, making school too much to handle. Joey's parents began looking for alternative school programs and advocating that Joey try something different. When he first came to us, he was hesitant to connect socially. But after a while, he found himself comfortable to embrace the change. Joey has gone from nervous, anxious, scared, fearful, angry and suicidal to focused, motivated, and determined. He has the amazing ability to connect with people, despite his initial presentation of social anxiety. He wants to go to college and run his own business and we look forward to watching this happen.



Justin Uyeda

Justin entered our program essentially for associating with the wrong crowd and making poor choices, which resulted in his falling behind academically. He has gone through some traumatic circumstances with the loss of several friends and other situations. He made poor choices by joining the street life of fighting, using drugs, gambling and stealing. But he has put all that in the past and was willing to change. He has shown significant growth and maturity during his time in our program. During this transformation, he has developed leadership skills, offering assistance, advice, and bringing a positive attitude and energy that is contagious. As this school year is winding down, Justin is geared up for graduation and the pursuit of a career in real estate and construction.



Mabel Chavez

Health, family problems and poor decisions led Mabel down a path where school was not important. She found herself pregnant and behind on credits. By being a single parent and wanting to do better for herself and her baby girl made her determined to finish school and make a better life. When we returned to in person learning, Mabel missed a bunch of school due to no childcare but then her grandmother decided to stay and be her babysitter, and Mabel hasn't missed a day of school since. She started doing double sessions, accepting help, worked hard and earned credits. She has been honest about her past mistakes allowing others to feel comfortable to share. Mabel is the student who overcame. She has many plans for the future, all which include making the best and happiest life for her and her daughter.

