

FEBRUARY 2021 SPOTLIGHTS



Principal Jeremy Ward, BAC member from Vinton County Middle School, has had multiple experiences this past year that have impacted his practices as principal. Since March, he and the staff have worked to adhere to COVID regulations and safety protocol without fully compromising other goals for student success. The group designed educational options for all students both online and in-person. They made it possible for student groups to participate and excel in virtual conferences and competitions. And, they dealt with concerns related to student nutrition, social services, and connectivity.

On the positive side, the awareness of the digital divide in Vinton County has become a priority and projects and legislation have quickly materialized. Additionally, due to technology tools and improved skills in utilizing them, schools will see better ways to deal with student and adult absences. And, the school has built stronger relationships with many students and parents as more direct conversations and correspondence occurred than may have otherwise.



Ellen McCabe, Dean of Partners at the Award-Winning Buckeye Hills, represents the career school on the ESC council. Ellen supervises Buckeye Hills' career-technical instructors that work away from the main campus on area high school sites. In addition, she oversees the main campus activities of the Drug Free Clubs of America (DFCA). During year one, DFCA supervisors celebrated the students' membership and their pledge to be drug free by providing trips for fun activities like bowling and movies. When COVID hit, the schools were not allowed to schedule off-campus activities. Mrs. McCabe and her coworkers were determined to adapt rather than abandon the festive tributes. They developed a plan to bring the fun to the Buckeye Hills campus. They held a socially distanced rally, brought in numerous food trucks, arranged competitive games, awarded valuable prizes, and provided students with tee shirts, hoodies, and masks. The career center crew took an optimistic approach leading to a successful solution for student benefit!



For more than 80 years, Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative (Buckeye REC) has provided electricity to nearly 19,000 homes, farms, and businesses across 2500 miles of lines in parts of nine counties in the southeastern area of Ohio. The company maintains Emergency Management and Crisis Communication Plans to prepare for anything from natural disasters to terrorism. The management team routinely meets for roundtable discussions to cover different scenarios and how to respond. These practices helped Buckeye REC to effectively manage the challenges brought on by the pandemic. They even assisted schools in dealing with COVID by

installing equipment at the Jackson County Buckeye REC office to provide internet for remote learning for virtual students. The equipment helped to alleviate the massive gap in internet services that impacts the students and educators in our area.

Buckeye REC has always been a supporter of education. They provide \$5,800 in college scholarships and donate student backpacks with back-to-school supplies. **Kent Eldridge, who is responsible for oversight of the Buckeye REC Member Services department**, is appointed by the company to serve as a valued member of the Educational Service Center's BAC. Mr. Eldridge stated, "Serving on the Gallia-Vinton ESC business advisory board has been a great pleasure and an education for myself as well. This is a dedicated organization that has many unsung accomplishments for the benefit of our students."