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To: Shawn Petri, Superintendent

From: Melisa Akers, Director of Special Education

Date: June 2, 2025

Subject: Special Education Update

A Message from our Director, Melisa Akers

As we approach the end of the school year, I wanted to share some important staffing updates within the Special Education department following Brenda Vaughan-Ide's upcoming retirement.

Brenda has been with COOR ISD for over 15 years and has had a tremendous impact on both students and staff across the district. She has been a mentor, a guide, and a constant source of support for many of us—including myself. Her knowledge, dedication, and calm presence will be deeply missed, and her legacy will no doubt continue to influence our work for years to come.

While Brenda's position will not be directly replaced, her many responsibilities will be thoughtfully redistributed among several capable team members:

- **Nicole Grace** will assume responsibility for **monitoring duties**.
- **Amber Larrison** will handle **referrals from the districts to our center-based program**.
- **Kerri Smitz** will take on **transition planning**, supporting local districts with students with disabilities who are graduating.

- **Joe Moore** will step in as the **McKinney-Vento liaison**.

If you have questions or would like additional details about these changes, please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm confident in our team's ability to continue providing strong support and leadership through this transition.

Construction Update

The slab trenches have been repoured, and metal stud framing and furring are now underway. Exterior wall insulation and site work on the east side of the building will begin soon, which includes boring for the new sewer line.

A Message from our Early On Coordinator, Michele Cochrane

Summer Outreach & Early On Playgroup Update

We're excited to share that COOR will be participating in four community events this summer to help promote **Early On**, **Build Up**, and **Help Me Grow** programs:

- **May 29 | 5:00–6:30 PM** – *Mio Schools Spring Fling* – Jen Hart
- **June 4 | 4:00–6:00 PM** – *Oscoda County Project Connect at Mio Elementary* – Michele Cochrane
- **June 26 | 3:00–5:00 PM** – *Neighborhood Connections at Grayling High School* – Michele Cochrane
- **August 7 | 2:00–6:00 PM** – *Health Fair at Houghton Lake High School* – Amber Akin & Lillie Meadows

Playgroup Update

Our Early On playgroups were a tremendous success this year! We saw consistently strong attendance at all three weekly locations: Mio Elementary, Grayling Elementary, and the COOR ATIC located in Roscommon Middle School.

As we plan for fall, we are once again facing some uncertainty around our playgroup locations. All three sites will be relocating, and at this time, no spaces have been confirmed. While holding playgroups within school buildings provides numerous benefits to children and families, limited space continues to pose a challenge across the districts.

In the meantime, we're thrilled to continue offering summer playgroup opportunities. Join us for weekly outdoor sessions at **Grayling Township Nature Park** (across from the Fish Hatchery on North Down River Road):

🧸 Tuesdays | 10:00–11:00 AM | June 17 – July 29

We look forward to another great season of connecting and growing together!



A Message from our Principal, Joe Moore

As we near the end of the 2024–2025 school year, we are excited to celebrate this year's graduates: **Chris Davis Jr.** and **Madison Bavar!**

Chris is a student in our **Work-Based Learning Program** at the Adult Transition Center, and Madison is part of our **Adult SCI classroom** at the CEC. While we are sad to see their time with us come to a close, we are incredibly proud of all they have accomplished and look forward to the bright futures ahead of them.

We had the joy of celebrating Chris alongside other RHS graduates with a special graduation banner proudly displayed downtown in front of the CRAF Center. While we were unable to do the same for Madison due to not having a media release on file, our pride and best wishes for her are just as strong.

Congratulations, Chris & Madison! You've made us all proud. 💙🎓



Over the past few weeks, the students in **Ms. Pat's classroom** have been eagerly monitoring their incubated chicken eggs—and we're thrilled to share that the baby chicks have finally hatched! The students have been having an absolute blast learning how to care for them and experiencing this hands-on science lesson come to life.

A huge **thank you** to **Carrie Yale**, a parent of one of our students, for generously donating the eggs and incubator, and for supporting the class every step of the way. Her kindness and involvement made this unforgettable experience possible! 🐣💛

