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Fwd: Letter from Executive Director

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Nicole Blodgett <nblodgett@panaschools.com>

Fri, Sep 13, 2019 at 8:16 AM

September Board Meeting

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools** <execdir@airssedu.org>
Date: Thu, Sep 12, 2019 at 4:57 PM
Subject: Letter from Executive Director
To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>



ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS
COMMITTED TO THE RURAL ADVANTAGE



ASSOCIATION OF
ILLINOIS RURAL AND
SMALL SCHOOLS

Miss Illinois
Ariel Beverly

Power of Wonder

From the desk of David M. Ardrey - Executive Director (AIRSS)



The opportunity to partner with Miss Illinois Ariel Beverly made a lot of sense as we sat at the boardroom table and discussed the possibilities. What I thought might happen and the positive impact to children was obvious. What I was not prepared for was the impact this partnership would have on me personally and professionally.

What I witnessed during and my thoughts after our first round of school visits of the kick-off to Miss Illinois' statewide tour was very profound and worth sharing with each of you.



The school visits offered me an important reminder to never forget **the power of wonder or the sense of awe** in the eyes and minds of our rural children. Eyes wide open, mouths agape, and bodies and feet frozen in place and time, all the while a princess entered the room, sat in the cafeteria, shared time in a classroom, walked down the hall or entered the front door to their own castle (schoolhouse).



It is so important to see the world through the eyes of a child and share

experiences that they understand, observe or just simply need. Sometimes we get caught up in the value of, the impact of, or the defined outcomes of something big, fancy and expensive and not just allow learning to take place right where they are with what they see and feel.

I know from feedback that has been shared by Superintendents of schools visited, this was a highlight of the week and was valuable to all involved. I watched the interactions, listened to the questions and conversations, and observed children of all ages mesmerized but engaged with Ariel as they discussed a myriad of issues the students cared about.



Thank you again to the schools that allowed us on short notice to interrupt the traditional school day and learning process to create a special opportunity for the children of each respective school.

Always supporting our rural schools,
David M. Ardrey – Executive Director (AIRRS)

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