



LEADING THE WAY IN KINDERGARTEN READINESS

March 16, 2026

Sandra Ehrat, Regional Office of Education 51 KIDS Program Coach
Dr. Ghantel Perkins, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Kara Coglianese, Superintendent

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

Advancing Kindergarten Readiness

OTL

KIDS
Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Every Illinois Child Ready for Kindergarten



PK–K Alignment and the Illinois KIDS Framework

- CM 201-U has been working in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to strengthen early learning through the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS).
- Through the leadership of the Office of Teaching and Learning, the district has aligned Pre-Kindergarten through Kindergarten instruction with the state's developmental readiness framework.
- These efforts position Crete-Monee ahead of emerging state expectations for early childhood learning.

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

Why Early Learning Matters in Illinois



- Illinois has strengthened expectations around developmentally appropriate learning in early childhood classrooms.
- State guidance emphasizes:
 - Play-based learning environments
 - Development of the whole child
 - Instructional practices aligned to developmental milestones
 - Observation through the KIDS framework
- Districts across Illinois are now redesigning kindergarten instruction to align with these expectations.

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

Strategic Vision for Early Learning in Crete-Monee 201-U



- Several years ago, The Office of Teaching and Learning examined how the district could strengthen kindergarten readiness and better support early learners.
- Recognizing the direction of state policy and early childhood research, the district began strengthening:
 - PK–K instructional alignment
 - Developmentally appropriate classroom environments
 - Teacher observation using KIDS
 - Professional learning focused on play-based instruction
- Beginning this work early positioned Crete-Monee ahead of many districts now making these shifts.

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

PK–K Alignment

- A major focus has been on aligning Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten instructional practices.
- This alignment supports:
 - Smoother transitions into kindergarten
 - Consistent developmental expectations
 - Collaboration between PK and Kindergarten educators
 - Stronger early learning foundations for students



Observation Through the KIDS Framework

- The Illinois KIDS observation system allows teachers to understand student development across multiple domains, including:
 - Social and emotional development
 - Language and communication
 - Cognitive development
 - Approaches to learning
- Observation helps educators respond to individual student development and needs.

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.



Building Teacher Capacity



- The Office of Teaching and Learning has focused on building teacher capacity to support developmentally appropriate instruction.
- This includes:
 - Professional learning aligned to play-based learning
 - Training in KIDS observation practices
 - Coaching and collaboration between PK and Kindergarten educators
- These supports ensure readiness practices become embedded in classroom instruction.

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

State Partnership and Investment

OTL

KIDS
Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Every Illinois Child Ready for Kindergarten



\$85,000 in State Funding

Because of the district's progress in implementing early learning, Crete-Monee received approximately \$85,000 in state funding to support this work.

Funding Received Supports

- Model learning environments
- Materials aligned to play-based instruction
- Teacher professional learning
- Collaboration with the ISBE KIDS coaching team

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

Partnership with ISBE



Crete-Monee has built a strong partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education KIDS team.

Through this collaboration:

- District leaders and educators have participated in presentations with ISBE partners
- The district continues refining readiness practices with state coaching support
- Other districts have expressed interest in visiting Crete-Monee classrooms

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

Governance and Statewide Leadership

Crete-Monee's work is strengthened through collaboration between instructional leadership and governance.

- A Board of Education member serves on the statewide KIDS committee
- The district remains connected to statewide early learning conversations
- Crete-Monee contributes to professional learning discussions around readiness practices



ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

From Vision to Implementation

OTL

KIDS
Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Every Illinois Child Ready for Kindergarten



Key Stage

Strategic Vision

Recognizing early the state's movement toward developmentally appropriate instruction and observation systems.

Key Stage

System Development

PK–K alignment, developmental classroom practices, and teacher observation through KIDS.

Key Stage

Capacity and Partnership

Teacher professional learning, ISBE collaboration, and \$85,000 in state investment.

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

**These efforts position
Crete-Monee as a district
leading early learning
implementation in Illinois.**



ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

KIDS Project Team



Dr. Ghantel Perkins

Teaching and Learning
Assistant Superintendent

Kelly Chesta

Early Learning Center
Director

Maurice Brown

Crete-Monee 201-U
Board of Education
President

Sandra Ehrat

ROE 51 KIDS Program
KIDS Coach

Dr. Sarah Machamer

Teaching and Learning
Coordinator

Debbie Caserio

Monee
Instructional Coach

Paloma Rodriguez

Early Learning Center
Bilingual Teacher

Alyson Sullivan

Early Learning Center
General Education
Teacher

Jamie Hayden

ELC Blended
General and Special
Education Teacher

Danielle Crayton

Balmoral
General Education
Kindergarten Teacher

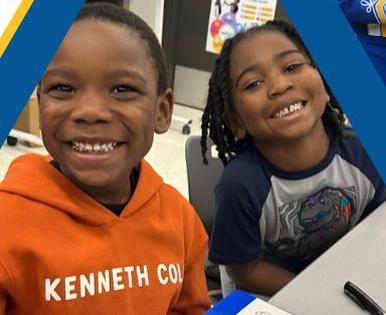
Holly Olson

Talala
Special Education
Kindergarten Teacher

Diane Richey

PreK Early Childhood
Professional Learning

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.



Thank
You!

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. IMPACT.

THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF EDUCATION & SUPERINTENDENT!



Maurice Brown
President



Alejandro Gallegos
Vice President



Jamie Zite-Stumbris
Secretary



Dr. Todd C. Hall
Board Member



William J. Sawallisch, Jr.
Board Member



Elizabeth Venegas
Board Member



Janine Woolfolk
Board Member



Dr. Kara Coglianesi
Superintendent