



Courtesy photo

About 30 Macomb teaching and administrative leaders were trained on three new Web sites Thursday at the Regional Office of Education.

Macomb teachers, administrators study 'roadmap for school improvement'

Representatives from several agencies across the state were in Macomb on Thursday to train the teaching and administrative leadership of the Macomb School District how to use new Web sites that can help them in the classroom.

About 30 members of the leadership teams for the district's administration and school buildings gathered at the Regional Office of Education in Macomb for a three-hour training session.

Macomb Superintendent Dr. Fran Karanovich said the training is a "collaboration of three Web sites for teachers to use as a professional tool." She said the Macomb School District received a grant to pay for the local training.

They are Just for the Kids, School Data 4 All and Illinois' Interactive Report Card and are con-

sidered an "online roadmap for school improvement." The sites are designed to help students, educators, employers and policymakers in Illinois make informed decisions about education.

Jeffrey Mays, president of The Illinois Business Roundtable, said there are a lot of different ways to help schools, but that districts need that help now "more than ever."

The training is sponsored by The Illinois Business Roundtable, which has State Farm, Knapheide, Caterpillar, GROWMARK and ADM as local members.

Mays said the training is more than just a workforce development issue to his agency.

"It's the future of our country," he said. "And we have to get it right."

Janet Spence of the National Center for Educational

Accountability was in Macomb Thursday along with Mays and Jennifer Ross, president of School Data 4 All. Ross conducted the training for teachers with the help of laptop computers that were set up for teachers and administrators.

Karanovich said the Macomb district's interest in the program began about one year ago when it launched the training.

The building leaders and administrators will take what they learned and train the rest of the district's teachers at a future teacher institute day next month.

The Web sites also allow teachers working in a specific subject area to be linked to other teachers across the United States who are working in the same areas. That will help teachers to better learn what works best in planning the lesson.

The sites will give teachers tools to analyze test data and track progress.

Over the past several months almost 3,000 Illinois teachers and administrators have been trained or gained access to the sites.

"This is a tool to assist teachers and schools in identifying strengths and weaknesses in their program," Mays said. "It raises good questions about student performance...is our curriculum adequate to cover the topics tested...do we spend enough time on topics...is training necessary in how we teach this topic...who does it better that we can learn from?"

"This site can't answer all of those questions, but for the Macomb education community, the data will lead them to which questions they need to answer first."