Lisa Otten
John D. and Mary Denise Ranger Scholarship

Lisa Otten has been teaching for 14 years, 7 of which were in a 4th grade classroom. She then began teaching Reading Recovery and Intervention. She earned a Masters in Literacy from Hannibal LaGrange in 2013 and is currently working on a Masters in Educational Leadership from Western Illinois University. While she has had many successes while teaching, her biggest success is her family. She and her husband, Casey have three children, Adison (10), Asher (9) and Emry (8). By continuing her education she hopes she is teaching her students as well as, her children to be life-long learners.

Kathy Lafary
Norman L. and Eileen A. Krong Outstanding Student Award

Kathy Lafary is currently a principal at West Central Elementary in Biggsville, IL. After completing her masters degree in reading and becoming a reading specialist at Western Illinois University, she decided to pursue an administrative license through the Educational Leadership Department. Mrs. Lafary also completed the process in 2010 to become a National Board certified teacher. She has taught special education at both the high school and the elementary level and most recently taught regular education at the fourth grade level. It is her continued desire to work with young children while being an instructional leader within the building.

Matthew DeBaene
Arnold W. Salisbury Educational Leadership Award

Matt DeBaene completed his masters degree in Educational Leadership from Western Illinois University in 2006. He spent two years as the associate principal of Geneseo High School until being promoted to the principal of Geneseo Middle School, a role he held for 6 years. In 2014, Matt received his educational specialist degree in Educational Leadership from Western Illinois University and took his current position as Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability for the Moline-Coal Valley Community Unit School District #40. Matt resides in Geneseo, IL with his wife Kelley and daughters Emma and Evelyn.

James Garwood
Robert F. Hall Dissertation Award

James Garwood lives in Schaumburg, IL and is the Superintendent of Skokie School District 68. He earned his doctorate degree in education (Ed. D.) from Western Illinois University in 2013. James has also worked as Deputy Superintendent of Palatine CCSD 15, as principal in Des Plaines CCSD 62, and as a bilingual teacher in Palatine CCSD 15 and Cicero 99. In 2012, he was the recipient of the Moon Scholarship from the Illinois Association of School Administrators and of ISBE’s Those Who Excel Award in 2014.