

Kris Reis has an important role in the Macon County Schools System, as he is the principal of Union Academy. Union Academy is the alternative school of Macon County, and its main purpose is to individualize and help students that are at risk of not receiving a high school diploma. Being principal is a very strenuous and time consuming job, and often requires more demand after school hours. Mr. Reis' main objective as principal is to be committed to the individual success of each student. There are many students in Union and they all have different needs, so the different aspects of being principal varies constantly.

A typical day at Union is not typical; the only thing that happens regularly is that school starts at 7:30 and ends at 4:00. Everything at Union is adjusted constantly to help support the students. This is one of the reasons why Kris Reis likes to come to work -- he has the opportunity to adjust and change himself every second of every school day.

With every job, there are challenges and successes. The biggest challenges are staff and money issues, but also having the classes available for students. Not all classes are available at the same time, and sometimes, students will need one class to graduate. To ensure graduation for that student, the staff at Union tries to provide that class. Some of the greatest successes at Union are seeing middle school students attend school there for nine months, and then transfer back to their old schools. Another major success at Union is watching the high school students graduate. Without Union, twenty students would not have gotten their high school diploma in the 2011-2012 school year. One of Kris Reis' favorite parts of being principal at Union is getting to see kids who did not think they would make it graduate. These students are very appreciative of Union and all it has to offer. However, some of the students give up on themselves and do not graduate. Some students turn eighteen before Christmas, and they drop out. This is Kris Reis'

least favorite part: not being able to control if a student drops out after they turn eighteen. Some may drop out a couple of months before graduation, which is hard on all the employees.

One of the best things that can help Union is community support. Kris Reis believes that overall, the community supports Union, but education is key to helping the community understand that Union is an alternative school to help all students succeed, not a place where the “bad students” go.

Union Academy is an excellent program that helps many students that go through its doors. Without it, many students would not graduate and the overall statistics of students graduating would fall. While being principal of any school can be a demanding and frustrating job, seeing students graduate, who did not think they would, just happens to make Kris Reis happy about his job.

Lexie Edwards – Macon County