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# BOCES BITS

September 2017

## Message from the Superintendent



Happy New School Year! I hope you're as excited as I am to celebrate another year of collaboration, community and learning here at OCM BOCES. I feel as though the 2017-2018 school year holds great promise to be another incredible year.

As I toured our buildings and classrooms on the first day of school, I felt a palpable energy in the air. Our staff are excited to be here and even more excited about the possibilities for their students ... for OUR students. We hold those possibilities in our hands, and it is our job to effectively share them with our students.

In my letter to you this month, I wanted to take a moment to remind you of our mission. Even if you're not in a classroom, our students are the reason we do what we do every day. Sometimes, when we aren't surrounded by students, we may lose sight of our mission. But just taking a few steps into a building and feeling the energy and excitement is an unmistakable and humbling reminder.

### Starting a chain reaction

This year, OCM BOCES is proud to be take part in "[Rachel's Challenge](#)," a national program that promotes a culture of kindness, respect and compassion in schools and communities. Rachel's Challenge stems from the deadly Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999. In that tragedy, two armed teens killed 13 people and wounded 27 others before taking their own lives. Rachel Joy Scott was the first victim of the shooting.



On August 31, OCM BOCES' instructional staff learned about Rachel's Challenge in our opening day celebration. They came up with their own ways to participate by brainstorming acts of kindness for the new year. This month, students have been learning about Rachel's Challenge through presentations in their schools. My hope is that all of us at OCM BOCES can create a "chain reaction of kindness" to promote a positive and welcoming school culture.

### **Welcome, new employees**

OCM BOCES would like to officially welcome all of our new staff members! It is always nice to see fresh faces and experience new perspectives from new co-workers. I hope you enjoy your time here and have had a smooth transition into the year.

Now that the first few weeks of school are coming to a close, I hope you are settling into your new routine and wish you all the best for a safe and successful year. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Dr. Jody Manning  
District Superintendent



### **New BOCES leadership**

OCM BOCES will soon have the support of a new administrative leader, Andrew J. DiBlasi. Andrew, an 18-year school business official, was appointed as the new assistant superintendent for administration. He is stepping into the position currently held by Deb Ayers, who is retiring in October after 17 years of exemplary service to the organization. The OCM BOCES Board of Education voted unanimously for Andrew's appointment at its August meeting. He will start Oct. 2. Please join us in welcoming him to OCM BOCES. [Click here to read more.](#)



## Gallaher Golf

Many thanks to everyone who attended and supported the 20th Annual Gallaher Golf Tournament on August 16. Turnout for the event was tremendous, with 25 teams participating. Each year, funds raised through the tournament benefit the Jack Gallaher Memorial Helping Hand Fund, which provides scholarships for students pursuing new careers through OCM BOCES Adult Education programs. [Click here to learn more about the OCM BOCES Jack Gallaher Helping Hand fund.](#)



## Clutch Player

OCM BOCES successfully managed Summer School this year for more than 2,500 students at four locations in Central New York. OCM BOCES Education Programs Coordinator Pam Dowse gave an especially big shout-out to summer employee Jennifer Kershner, an education major at SUNY Fredonia who filled in full-time for Aislyn Spencer, who was out on maternity leave. “Jennifer did an outstanding job in a role that would be challenging even for an experienced staff member,” Dowse said. “We really appreciate her stepping in, working hard and performing so well.”



Jennifer said she was thankful for the experience. "I am so grateful I was able to have such a big role in giving students another chance. Although I was not in the classroom, my experience has given me valuable lessons that will help me as a future educator."

## No rest for ISS

Summer can be a slower time in educational settings, but it was jam-



packed for employees in Instructional Support Services. ISS tackled a multitude of professional development responsibilities, including: the rollout of new science curriculum materials, Summer School, training on culture and climate, changes to Title I, retreats, planning for the current school year, high school science programs in the Adirondacks and Long Island, Project Based Learning training for component districts, an all-day “mediaConnect” event, training for new librarians, writing initiatives, new-staff hires and more. Jen Spong, the assistant superintendent for ISS, praised her staff for doing their part “to keep our region moving forward to achieve our WHY: improving outcomes for all students.”



### **Celebrating Deb**

A retirement celebration for Deb Ayers, one of our most dedicated and influential administrators at OCM BOCES, is fast approaching. Deb’s party is set for 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 2, at The Cider Mill, 4221 Fay Road in Syracuse. (A program begins at 5:30 p.m.) If you would like to attend, please contact Theresa Smith at 315-433-2602 or [tsmith@ocmboces.org](mailto:tsmith@ocmboces.org) by Friday, Sept. 22. The cost is \$30, which includes food and gift. (Checks should be made out to Jen Spong.) If you cannot attend but would still like to contribute, please contact Theresa. We look forward to giving Deb a wonderful sendoff after 17 years of service to our organization!



### **Fun at the Fair**

Thousands of people learned about OCM BOCES as they strolled through the New York Fair this year. Members of our Adult Education division set up a table associated with New York State's "Future of



Nursing” campaign. LPN Coordinator Crystal Smith said thousands of visitors stopped by the table to learn about our LPN



program as well as our adult training, literacy and online programs. Later in the week, School Library System Coordinator Doreen Bergman and members of her team joined other librarians at a fun, busy and popular booth that promoted libraries across New York State. #nylibs

### Team-building at Orenda Springs

During the summer, students at OCM BOCES enjoyed adventures in the great outdoors during a two-week pilot program at Orenda Springs in Marcellus. Nine students who have disabilities participated. The program is designed to improve students’ social and emotional skills while also making academic gains. The students



participated in project-based learning, equine therapy, and project adventure activities on the high and low ropes courses. Students’ response to the pilot was overwhelmingly positive - they even asked to attend on the weekend!

### Huge honor

Congratulations to OCM BOCES’ Teacher Trainer/Instructional Coach Randi Downs for recently being named a [National Faculty Member](#) for the Buck Institute for Education (BIE). The National Faculty team is a hand-picked group of seasoned teachers, administrators, school coaches, authors, and PBL (Project Based Learning) experts who conduct professional development activities on behalf of the organization. Randi applied to the institute in the fall of 2016 and was recently advised that she had successfully completed the application process and was asked to take on the role of a National Faculty member.



Randi, who is a skilled PBL coach, went through an extensive, multi-staged application process that included the co-facilitation of PBL courses across the country, along with phone interviews, mentor meetings and various reflection exercises. Randi is excited to become a BIE national faculty member and says, "It's very energizing to take on this new role. I really think that this new work will help me with my coaching work here at BOCES." [Click here for more information about Buck Institute for Education.](#)

### Required online training

**This is important!** Don't forget to do your required online training in these areas:

- Emergency Response Procedures Orientation - The deadline was September 15, 2017; and
- Right-to-Know (RTK)/Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) - No later than December 15, 2017

Access to these presentations can be found by going to our OCM BOCES [Health & Safety page](#) at [ocmboces.org](http://ocmboces.org) and clicking on the above titles.



### 2017 Notice of Availability, Asbestos Management Plans

As provided under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (40 CFR 763), the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services hereby makes known the steps it has undertaken to comply with AHERA and the availability of asbestos management plans. In 1988, OCM BOCES contracted with the firm of O'Brien & Gere Engineers, Inc. of Syracuse, New York to survey our buildings and construct a management plan for each of our facilities. Mandatory re-inspections have been performed every three years since then. The last re-inspection was conducted in June 2016. Management plans for applicable facilities were updated accordingly. The re-inspection information was submitted to the State Education Department as required. Periodic surveillance is conducted on a six-month cycle. The Maintenance and Operations staff have completed an Awareness Training program. All response actions taken are within Federal and State guidelines. AHERA Management plans may be viewed by appointment at the Henry Campus, Administration

Building, Health, Safety and Risk Management Office during the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

For additional information or appointment, please contact David Daignault, Coordinator of Health & Safety by mail at Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES, Thompson Road Campus, 6820 Thompson Road, Syracuse, NY 13211 or by phone at (315) 431-8591.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The OCM BOCES non-discrimination policy has been updated and added to our web site. Please [click here](#) to view it in full.

### **Like us on Facebook! Follow us on Twitter! Check us out on YouTube!**

While several OCM BOCES programs have their own social media outlets, our organization now has a general Facebook page, Twitter account and YouTube channel that we can use to share news and events across all departments. We are happy to share and retweet any and all of your important news! PLEASE like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) (@ocmboces). Check out our [YouTube Channel](#) as well, especially if you want to review the Opening Day video about our goals and targets. For all of our social media platforms, check out our social media hub at [ocmboces.org](#).

### **Employee Assistance Program**

Don't forget about our confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which can help you with anything from job stress to aging parents to a death in the family. Go to [ocmboces.org/eap](#) for more.

*If you would like to contribute to the BOCES bits, which is generally distributed the first week of each month, please contact Laurie Cook at [lcook@ocmboces.org](mailto:lcook@ocmboces.org) or Jackie Wiegand at [jwiegand@ocmboces.org](mailto:jwiegand@ocmboces.org)*

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