



## Message from the District Superintendent:



I received an email from our marketing coordinator, Jackie Wiegand, this week reminding me that it was time for a BOCES Bits article. While I enjoy writing and am always looking for an interesting angle or a different way to approach communication with everyone at OCM BOCES, I found myself stumped this month for a creative approach. I have nothing new to say about the budding romance/publicity sensation between Taylor Swift and Chiefs Tight End Travis Kelce. I have gotten over my disappointment in the postponement of the Springsteen concert in Syracuse that was supposed to coincide with the

opening of school. I won't comment on my vacillation of fear and optimism for when my Buffalo Bills play against the buzzsaw that is the Miami Dolphins this Sunday — just know I'll either be heartbroken or insufferable on Monday.

Those "important" topics are about famous people, doing their work in a very public arena and can be fun cultural touchstones for folks like us to talk about at the watercooler. But the real work often happens behind the scenes, and that's where I wanted to start, as I reflect on how proud I am to be part of this organization, especially when considering all that happens to get ready for the start of a new school year.

The buildings were ready and looked fantastic, which is a tribute to the operations and maintenance team and all of their hard work that too often goes unsung. Their lift was made even more challenging by how hard so many in our student services team worked during summer school, only taking a few weeks off before the official start of the new school year in September. More behind-the-scenes work happens at the CNYRIC, where cybersecurity, printing and data coordination are a main focus for so many of the team, making sure the technology systems are running smoothly and the staff at our component district have what they need to start off in 2023-24. In Instructional Support Services, the team spends much of its summer managing Regional Summer School and providing high-quality professional development while planning even more for the coming year. The business office is another group that keeps things humming between payroll and ensuring orders are placed and bills are paid so that folks within our BOCES region have what they need as students return. All the while, our Adult Education team is beating the bushes and doing what they can to promote and offer high-quality educational opportunities to folks looking to better their lives by gaining skills necessary to gain employment or make a career change. And with all the hiring we do, our personnel department never sleeps and provides the necessary support to all of our programs as we work to get back up to full staffing across the departments.

So much of what BOCES does is behind-the-scenes work. We don't get the glory or publicity of Taylor Swift, Bruce Springsteen, Josh Allen and Stefon Diggs, but what we do is vital to the success of all of our K-Adult students across Onondaga, Cortland and Madison counties. To me, that's the most fulfilling kind of work and I remain in awe of all you do. Thanks for everything and I hope 2023-24 is your best year yet.

With gratitude,

Matt

# Welcome back! OCM BOCES kicks off the new school year

“We come as strangers, we grow as a community.”

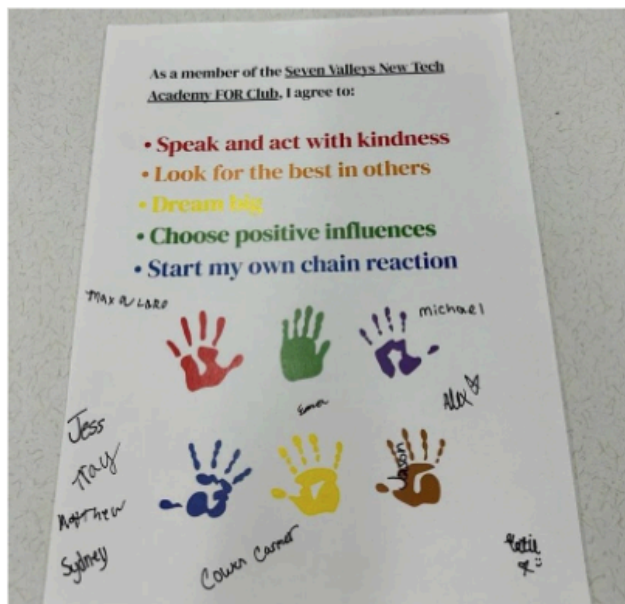
Those were the words at Innovation Tech that embodied many of the community-building activities that took place across OCM BOCES programs at the start of the new school year.

Teachers and other staff made it a priority to create welcoming and affirming environments for all students. They played “Mingle Bingo” games, organized scavenger hunts, offered “Jitter Juice” for wary elementary students, waged a rock-paper-scissors competition, and more.

[In this video](#), which was presented to the OCM BOCES Board of Education on Sept. 21, you can see dozens of photos and video clips that capture the excitement of the new school year. (4:44 min)



## Students and staff re-affirm their commitment to ‘Rachel’s Challenge’



It's been six years since Rachel's Challenge [kicked off at OCM BOCES in 2017](#), so teachers and other staff had a renewed opportunity this year to hear about its origins and purpose through a special visit from the CEO of Rachel's Challenge, Kristi Krings, who greeted our instructional staff on Aug. 31, the opening day of the new school year.

Later, once the new school year began, it didn't take long for students to get back into action. At Innovation Tech, for example, members of the Friends of Rachel (FOR) Club painted kindness rocks and took advantage of a gorgeous summer day to hide them around Carrier Park in East Syracuse.

At Seven Valleys New Tech Academy, the FOR Club crew shared the background of the program with new members, signed or re-signed Rachel's Pledge, and discussed the values associated with the [Rachel's Challenge](#) mission, which focuses on promoting a positive school culture to curb violence in any form.

## New this year: Firefighting & EMT program begins in Madison County



A new, two-year Career & Technical Education program kicked off this fall for students interested in learning about firefighting and preparing for their Emergency Medical Technician credentials. The two-year program is embedded at a Madison County Emergency Management Training Facility, which means students have access to a classroom, supplies, equipment and more. During a recent class, students inspected firefighting gear for wear and tear and practiced putting it on.

## BOCES provides training to help prevent youth suicide

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, an annual recognition that spotlights the yearlong work of the Youth Development Department in Instructional Support Services.

This year, Youth Development Coordinator **Janel Payette** worked with CONTACT Community Services to create a "Suicide Prevention Awareness Campaign" for all school staff so they can recognize and address mental health problems in youth. The campaign included the creation of [this timely website of training sessions and resources](#) that was shared with school administrators throughout the region and promoted on the OCM BOCES social media channels.



## Students "Chalk the Walk" to promote Suicide Prevention Awareness



Adult Education students and OCM BOCES staff took some time on Monday, Sept. 25, to "chalk the walk" outside the main entrance in Liverpool in honor of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. We were impressed with their artwork and willingness to support a great cause!

## High-achieving Adult Education students receive honors

Adult [Education](#) HVAC/R Instructor **Joe Miuccio** recently presented the Malco "head of the class" award to one of his top students, **Shaunna Spivey-Spinner**.



Malco Products, SBC, is the nation's leading manufacturer of tools of the trade for trade professionals. Students are selected for the honor based on attendance, participation, grades and internship experience. The honor comes with prizes that include a tool, hat, and certificate.



In another recognition, two students in the OCM BOCES Dental Assisting program each received a \$500 scholarship from the Onondaga County Dental Society. In the photo, award recipients **Abigail Timmins** and **Jenna Presutto** are standing with their OCM BOCES instructor, **Nancy Chappell**. Please go to [ocmboces.org/adulted](http://ocmboces.org/adulted) to learn more about our full-time workforce training programs.

## Seven OCM BOCES SkillsUSA state champions compete at nationals

A group of high-achieving Career & Technical Education and New Vision students from OCM BOCES "had a fantastic time" in Atlanta over the summer at the prestigious [national SkillsUSA championships](#), according to one of their advisors.



"It was a week filled with learning, competing and meeting people from across the United States," said Cortlandville CTE school counselor **Rebecca Robertson**, who advises SkillsUSA at the Cortlandville Campus.

The event in late June drew 5,000 students, advisors and industry professionals for more than 20 different competitions and a leadership conference.

At OCM BOCES, seven students qualified for nationals after winning state championships on April 28 at the New York State SkillsUSA competition in Syracuse. [To see the full list of place winners, please go to this story at ocmbooces.org.](#)

In the photo, from left to right, are Cortlandville participants **Jake Guay** (Homer - welding), **Cecelia Rappleyea** (Homer - Health Knowledge), **Raleigh Larkin** (Cortland - Health Knowledge), **McKenzie Buhr** (Homer - Health Knowledge), **Elizabeth Hurd** (Cortland - Early Childhood Education), and **Emma Dekenberger** (DeRuyter - Health Knowledge).



In the second photo, from Onondaga County, is **Brian Yager** (Baldwinsville -

Auto Technology), who went to the competition with advisors **Heather Hardke** and **Danielle Curtis**.

All of the advisers praised and thanked the students' teachers for preparing them for the state and national competitions and being instrumental in their success.

## OCM BOCES 'ambassadors' greet new staff

About 90 new staff members attended an all-day orientation in August at Main Campus to learn about BOCES services, benefits, the unions, New York State's Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education framework and the OCM BOCES Strategic Plan and mentoring programs.



Greeting them for the first time were OCM BOCES "ambassadors" such as David Connors, above, who chatted and answered questions to help our new colleagues feel supported and welcomed. OCM BOCES created the pilot ambassador program last year as part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) goal in the OCM BOCES Strategic Plan. Also attending the session were ambassadors **Corinne Campbell** and **Jordan del Fierro Nater**.

## For the first time, Section III administration falls under OCM BOCES

At the OCM BOCES Board of Education meeting on Sept. 21, Assistant Superintendent for Administration **Suzanne Slack** discussed this year's rollout of the new Section III cooperative service agreement, or CoSer, at OCM BOCES.



Following the example of 7 of the 11 other athletic sections in New York State, OCM BOCES will serve as the umbrella organization for Section III's administrative team, which includes Executive Director **Todd Mulvaney** and Assistant Director **Jason Czarny**. Both will work in the current Section III offices in Brittonfield Place in East Syracuse.

School district officials requested the move as a way to attract more candidates for the position and a structure for Section III administrators to better connect with the districts they serve. Districts that participate in the CoSer will become eligible for state aid the following year.

## First-ever Equity Summit draws national speakers, 200 attendees to Le Moyne College

About 200 educators from across the region heard from an impressive lineup of national speakers, authors and local educators at the first annual Equity Summit held at Le Moyne College in July.



The event was organized by OCM BOCES DEI Coordinator **Alyssa Haymore** with help from Instructional Support Services and other departments across the organization.

Keynote speakers included José Vilson (in photo), Huda Essa of Culture Links, LLC, and author and teacher Matthew Kay. In addition, an author panel representing Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) panel included Linda Sue Park, Grace Lin, Susan Tan, and Ellen Oh.



The event also featured Dr. Bernadine Futrell, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Equity and Discretionary Grants and Support Services for the U.S. Department of Education.

Work surrounding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is one of the goals of the OCM BOCES Strategic Plan. [For an update on the Strategic Plan and what was accomplished before the start of the new school year, please click here.](#)

## 165 Adult Education students walk the stage this summer

About 105 Adult Education graduates who earned their high school equivalency diplomas or completed their full-time workforce training programs at OCM BOCES walked across the stage on Aug. 16 in the SRC arena at Onondaga Community College.



Earlier in the month, on Aug. 3, more than 60 Practical Nursing students walked across the stage at North Syracuse Junior High School. Nursing students donned white uniforms and caps and received pins from friends and loved ones as part of a traditional Florence Nightingale ceremony.

OCM BOCES would like to congratulate all of our Adult Education graduates and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

## All Aboard! Students join Discover Cayuga boat for research trip

Science students at Seven Valleys New Tech Academy recently joined the crew of the “Teal” — a boat with Discover Cayuga Lake Boat Tours — for a research trip that included sampling plankton and viewing it under the microscope, measuring lake depth and temperature profiles, and getting first-hand lab research experience with marine scientists. They also learned about the glacial formation of the Finger Lakes. The Cortland Kiwanis Club helped sponsor the trip.



## Inside CNYRIC

Employees at the Central New York Regional Information Center had a busy summer, as always, but this year’s tasks for the Educational Data Services team also included wrapping up the migration of SchoolTool data to a new host. “This was an incredibly intensive process to undertake, and I’m proud of the way the team tackled the challenge. This should provide much greater flexibility and responsiveness for all SchoolTool customers going forward,” CNYRIC Director **Chantal Corbin** said. [For more information about the CNYRIC, be sure to check out the latest edition of “Inside CNYRIC.”](#)



## Red Cross blood drive set for Oct. 2 at Main Campus

The American Red Cross will be setting up in Conference Room 108 at the OCM BOCES Main Campus at 110 Elwood Davis Road in Liverpool from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 3, for anyone interested in donating blood. There is currently a national shortage.

To register, please call 1-800-RED CROSS or go online to [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and choose sponsor code OCMBOCES to donate.

The Red Cross encourages and appreciates appointments, but it also welcomes walk-ins.

Please consider a "Power Red Cell" donation if you are O Neg, O Pos, A Neg, or B Neg. Download the Red Cross Blood Donor app and use Rapid Pass to save time on the day of the blood drive.

You can also save time (up to 15 minutes!) by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) to complete your pre-donation reading and health history.

Finally, you can get a \$10 Amazon gift card by email if you donate between Oct. 1 and Oct. 20. See [rcblood.org/together](https://www.rcblood.org/together).



## Have you done your required employee training yet?

If you have not already done so, please complete these required online training sessions. All of the required training, links and deadlines [can be found in this link on the OCM BOCES Personnel website](#). Here are the deadlines:

- **Emergency Response Procedures, Violence Prevention & Mental Health**  
Was due Sept. 15
- **Data Privacy and Security**  
by Oct. 13
- **Right-to-Know/Bloodborne Pathogens**  
by Dec. 15
- **Sexual Harassment Prevention Training**  
by Dec. 15



\*Employees of the Operations and Maintenance Department will continue to receive live training and are not required to take the online training. Please contact your supervisor if you have any questions.

## OCM BOCES is still hiring for multiple positions across several programs

Spread the word! OCM BOCES is hiring for a wide range of positions, with an especially important need for math teachers, teaching assistants, speech therapists and more. Take a look at our [Employment Opportunities webpage](#) if you are interested in learning more or in sharing our openings with others.



## Why not try a class in Adult Education?

You are never too old to learn something new. The [fall/winter edition of the OCM BOCES Adult Education course catalog](#) is packed with opportunities for full-time workforce training and dozens of part-time continuing education courses for any passion you might have.



It's time to join OCM BOCES on social media!

OCM BOCES is on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, so follow us! Tag us! 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) and [Instagram](#) (@ocm.boces). Check out our [YouTube Channel](#) as well. Various programs and ISS teacher-trainers also have their own Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

The OCM BOCES non-discrimination policy is on our website. Please [click here](#) to view it in full.

## Need help? Don't forget about our Employee Assistance Program

Don't forget about our confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which can help you with many personal and professional challenges. Go to [ocmboces.org/eap](https://ocmboces.org/eap) for more.

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*If you would like to contribute to the BOCES Bits, please contact Jackie Wiegand at [jwiegand@ocmboces.org](mailto:jwiegand@ocmboces.org) or email the OCM BOCES Marketing Department at [communications@ocmboces.org](mailto:communications@ocmboces.org).*

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