

BOCES BITS

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Jessica F. Cohen, District Superintendent • Laurie Cook, Editor

From the District Superintendent

Dear Staff,

I look forward to September each year as the beginning of the new year. Even though our fiscal year begins on July 1, my orientation has always been that the school year begins the day after Labor Day. Our focus of efforts over the summer is on hiring new staff, providing staff development for our teachers and administrators, planning our goals and activities for the new year, and getting our buildings ready for students.

Our facilities have never looked better. John Wisniewski and his staff have coordinated facility changes, renovations, and cleaning at all of our facilities. Staff and students at the Henry Campus experienced the addition of four programs from the Career Training Center as well as our new Laboratory Technician and Computer Technology programs. Renovations to four classrooms and some office space have created state of the art classroom and lab space. The Lee G. Peters Career Training Center has also undergone significant renovations creating separate areas for Adult Education, Special Education, and the Career

Academy (including alternative education). The McEvoy Campus has completed some infrastructure changes as well as the development of our new Computer Technology Classroom and Lab. Office space in the former RIC building now houses the district office, personnel, business office, and health and safety. The Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment offices have moved to Rodax.

This year is a very special year for us at OCM BOCES as we recognize the 60th anniversary of our formation. The first meeting of the Supervisory District was held in Nedrow on September 22, 1948. Soon after, the Board hired its District Superintendent and an itinerant music teacher. Now, 60 years later, we have almost 1,000 employees providing an incredibly wide variety of services to enhance the educational experience for more than 62,000 students.

I hope your new school year is off to a great start!

Jessica

Contractor Goes Above and Beyond Renovating BOCES' Buildings



For those OCM BOCES staff not located on the Irvin E. Henry Campus, or an adjacent building and that have not yet seen the campus buildings revealed, it is something that you certainly don't want to miss. In just a few short months, what was once known as "Building A," has been transformed into a state of the art school building. Administration, Personnel, Business Office and Labor Relations Staff are in the process of settling into beautiful new office space at the former Regional Information Center, now the Henry Campus Administration Building.

As you walk through the renovated Career and Technical Education building on the Henry Campus, you will see new walls, flooring, tables, computers and other major transformations in



four classrooms. There are doors where there once were walls, lockers where once was a closet and open spaces where walls once stood. Four classrooms are freshly painted and polished with little, if any, memory of the destruction and reconstruction that has occurred in just over three months.

In April of 2008, BOCES bid for the campus construction was awarded to General Contractor Carkner Construction, with Mark Smith as the job Foreman/Superintendent. Mark, who has been employed with Carkner for seven years, headed a crew of typically between 20 - 26 workers for standard 40 hour work weeks. Additionally, BOCES contracted for electrical, mechanical and plumbing work with other companies. It is typical that with

Continued on page 2

Career Academy Takes Part in Teachers in the World of Work Training



Above: OCM BOCES Career Academy Earth Science Teacher, Jay Elko, transcribes thoughts from a group of teachers at the brainstorming portion of their "Teachers in the World of Work" training.



Left: OCM BOCES Career Academy staff (left to right): Ingrid Hatt - Spanish; Margo Smith - Teaching Assistant; Trevor Barbano - Math; Greg Myers - Physical Education; Jay Elko - Earth Science and Colleen Zawadzki - Principal meet as a group to discuss ways to incorporate ideas learned from local businesses, into their class curricula.

Many of the Career Academy teachers, accompanied by their administrators, Colleen Zawadzki and Pat Mahunik, spent the week of July 21st through 25th participating in a newly designed training, Teachers in the World of Work. The workshop focused on familiarizing educators with the needs of businesses and how to best prepare students to be successful beyond high school. The training was specifically designed around career pathways in the areas of Math, Science and Technology. Staff received an overview of the Career Development and Occupational Studies Standards and spent two days visiting several local businesses including Babbitt Bearing, Byrne Dairy, Clear Channel, Laboratory Alliance, Lockheed Martin and National Grid. The Career Academy teachers listened to the staff at each organization and heard about what businesses are looking for in students coming into the workforce.

The remaining two days of training were spent by our teachers designing lesson plans that incorporated all they had learned. This will springboard plans to better address career exploration through the Career Academy curriculum, especially concentrating on immersing students in careers. A big thank you to Bob Leslie for making all of the business connections!

Contractor Goes Above and Beyond (continued)

multiple contractors on a project, each is responsible for their own portion only. With Carkner however, Mark took the initiative to develop relationships with each of the foremen for the other prime contractors. He prodded them when necessary, helped them where he could for the good of the project, looked for creative solutions involving multiple trades, and communicated with them, with BOCES and with the architect/engineer, early and often.

Crews from Carker worked closely with BOCES Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Deb Ayers; Director of Facilities, John Wisniewski and Assistant Superintendent of Building and Grounds, Greg Carey. John was impressed with Mark's ability to keep the project moving as necessary saying, "Failure was never an option. It took all of us to get the job done but Mark was ultimately the one who made it happen. He did a lot of juggling and really broke the mold of a conventional project. If plan 'A' wasn't going to work, Mark came up with a plan 'B.'"

The week before the 2008-2009 school year began, BOCES treated contractor employees to a thank you luncheon catered by the Dinosaur bar-b-que. At the luncheon, Mark Smith was given a certificate of appreciation by BOCES signed by Superintendent Cohen, John Wisniewski and Assistant Superintendent Deb Ayers. Wisniewski presented the certificate and in his remarks, he commented, "Mark was great to work with...he was the man who got the job done. We at BOCES hope that other schools can be so lucky as to work with Carkner."



Kasson Road Students' "Out of This World" Summer School Experience!



During the summer school session at the Kasson Road School, Mrs. Braun's K-2nd Class studied space and astronauts. School staff purchased freeze dried foods for students to sample and experience what food in space would be like. Throughout the week Mrs. Braun read books about outer space and ended the week-long lesson with students making their very own "space-suit."

Mrs. Braun researched and found directions for making space suit costumes using empty cereal boxes covered with aluminum foil, for the breathing apparatus. For the actual suit, Mrs. Braun used a white garbage bag, and cut openings for the students' arms and heads. The class couldn't wait to venture out for their very first "space walk" wearing their space suits!



Important News Regarding 403(b) Regulations

Due to new IRS regulations, many rules associated with the administration of 403(b) plans will change on January 1, 2009. Every school district and BOCES will be required to have a "plan document" which outlines specific aspects of the 403(b) plan. We have been working with The OMNI Group, Inc. to create a "plan document" that will govern our BOCES 403(b) program. We expect that the plan document will be complete in the early fall, at which time every eligible employee will receive a copy.

These changes have also had a major impact on investment companies. When the new regulations begin, investment companies will be required to track, share and report detailed information on all 403(b) participants and plans. As a result, many investment companies will no longer accept 403(b) contributions. OMNI Group has been working to determine which companies will continue to accept 403(b) contributions after January 1, 2009. Please log onto the OMNI web site at OMNI403b.com to review a preliminary list of companies that have responded to their request. (More companies could be added to the list as we move closer to the January 1, 2009 deadline.)

At this time, we would recommend that you contact your financial advisor to discuss the implications of these changes. Specifically, you should ask if your current investment company will continue to accept 403(b) contributions after January 1, 2009. If you determine that a change is needed, you should log onto the OMNI web site at OMNI403b.com and complete the OMNI Flex Form.

Check-Out Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Website for Fall Wellness Information

Check out the Employee Assistance Program's website at www.eap.ocmboces.org for the fall wellness information! Available on the website are the Fall 2008 EAP newsletter, a workshop schedule and our new section on self tests.

News from New York State Board of Regents - State Education Department

Congress Expands Loan Forgiveness Programs to Teachers in BOCES



The Higher Education Opportunity Act, which reauthorizes the Higher Education Act (HEA) and was approved this week by Congress, includes provisions that will make teachers employed by New York's Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and other educational service agencies across the country eligible for current federal loan forgiveness programs. The expansion covers loan forgiveness under the Family, Direct, and Perkins loan programs.

Leading the charge in Congress on behalf of BOCES teachers were members of New York's delegation who sit on the House and Senate Education Committees – Representatives Yvette D. Clarke, Carolyn McCarthy, Timothy Bishop, John R. Kuhl, Jr., and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. Together they were successful in securing approval for one of the Regents top HEA reauthorization priorities.

State Education Commissioner Richard P. Mills said, "The Regents and I would like to thank the delegation members for ensuring that BOCES teachers are afforded the same opportunities as their counterparts in school buildings and for their continuing leadership and commitment to education in New York State."

James Baldwin, District Superintendent for Questar III BOCES said, "On behalf of my colleagues in the State's 37 BOCES, I express appreciation to the Regents, Commissioner Mills and the members of the New York State Congressional delegation for securing this important benefit for our BOCES teachers."

BOCES teachers had been excluded from the loan forgiveness programs due to a congressional oversight. Previously, the programs were available only to teachers in "schools" and BOCES are defined as "educational service agencies" in federal law. Aides for the Education Committee Chairs said it was not Congress' intent to exclude such teachers.

New York's 37 BOCES employ approximately 6400 full-time teachers. More than half teach students with disabilities; 25 percent teach general academic courses and 23 percent teach courses in career and technical education.

Henry Campus Assistant Principal Learns Firsthand About Evinrude Motors

OCM BOCES Henry Campus Assistant Principal, Peter Hunn is pictured below with Thomas Evinrude who is the grandson of famed outboard motor inventor, Ole Evinrude. Hunn was recently the guest of the Maritime & Yachting Museum of (Stuart) Florida, where he delivered a presentation on the early days of the Evinrude Company. He also served as ad hoc curator to identify several "experimental" and historic engines donated by the Evinrude family and the outboard maker's new owners, Bombardier Recreational Products. 2009 will mark the Evinrude brand's 100th year of production. The motor shown in this photo is a 1941 Evinrude Mate, a 1/2-horsepower model bequeathed to the Museum by Mr. Evinrude. Hunn is the author of six books about outboard and recreational boating history.



Photo submitted by Peter Hunn (phunn@ocmboces.org)

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