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What started last decade as a means of creating an innovative, hands-on-learning high school has flourished into a two-BOCES partnership that is expanding the horizons of students in seven counties.

The working relationship between Capital Region and Questar III BOCES was cemented in Tech Valley High School (TVHS), a regional public high school based on the principles of the New Tech Network. The two BOCES – which make up the vast majority of the region known as Tech Valley – worked with business leaders and state lawmakers to open the school in 2007. TVHS offers students in their component school districts the opportunity to learn 21st century skills while working with innovators in technology and business.

In five years of existence, TVHS has achieved a 100 percent four-year graduation rate with 95 percent of those students pursuing higher education and about 35 pursuing degrees in the nanosciences.

“This is an example of regionalization done right. By working together to share resources and build partnerships, we’ve been able to provide unique and powerful opportunities for our students,” said Capital Regional BOCES District Superintendent Charles Dedrick.

Capital Region BOCES serves schools in Albany, Schenectady and Schoharie counties, while Questar III serves schools in Albany, Greene and Rensselaer counties.

This year, the working relationship advanced again with the expansion of New Visions and career and technical school offerings. While New Visions courses had been offered by the BOCES jointly for several years, the new agreement expands the number of courses offered and streamlines the sign-up and billing process for school districts.

The expanded partnership offers students opportunities to take classes ranging from a flight-training program to a global fashion studies, while promoting cost savings by eliminating duplication of effort by the BOCES.

**TVHS freshman Matteo Loccisano looks at a water sample gathered from the Hudson River during a project in which students collected data on pollutants in the river.**

**TVHS students Jesse Hunziker and Hunter Fortuin burn metals while teacher Diana “Dee” Weldon looks on. The students were working on a project that entailed identifying metals by the colors they burned.**

**By Michael McCagg, Capital Region BOCES www.capregboces.org**

**Partnership yields big payoff for students**

Expanded student options and educational savings result
Being able to transform as school districts’ needs change is a required service for a BOCES. However, when you offer more than 130 programs and they are often evolving, that often leads to the one phrase Nassau BOCES’ administrators report hearing most, “I didn’t know you offered that.”

Determined to make it easier for school district personnel to navigate the programs and services offered by the agency, Nassau BOCES is opening a Customer Care Center – one central location where educators can go for information about any existing program or to request a new one.

“Our goal is to create a frictionless experience for our districts,” said Dr. Thomas Rogers, District Superintendent of Nassau BOCES. “By providing them with a single point of contact where districts needs and requests can be addressed, we are hoping that districts with an issue will automatically think, ‘Let me call Nassau BOCES first to see if they have a solution.’

The Customer Care Center will also allow for superior technology, telecommunications and security services, incorporating among other things the agency’s existing Help Desk. Staffed by a squad of technology experts, the Help Desk answered more than 50,000 service calls for school districts during the 2011-12 school year.

It also will serve as the main hub of the agency’s Bo-TIE project – a fiber-optic network that when completed in 2015 will connect the county’s 56 school districts. It is providing already participating districts with at least 15 percent savings annually on telephone and Internet services and has doubled their existing Internet bandwidth.

A new offering that is being developed within the Customer Care Center is Security Monitoring Services. A direct fiber optic link is now in operation on the Bo-TIE network between Nassau BOCES and the Nassau County Police Department. Utilizing this link and a new Web-based Crisis Response Portal, police responding to school incidents will be able to access building plans and direct feeds to surveillance cameras within the school building for participating districts. In addition, Nassau BOCES is finalizing partnerships with outside security organizations to provide 24/7 monitoring of school facilities, building systems and technology services. The agency projects that these services will be available in the second quarter of 2013.
Preparing Students for Careers

A workshop for life readiness

By Molly Gushea, St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES • www.sllboces.org

This year marks the 20th Annual “Gateways to Careers” program, a career pathways workshop that has given thousands of students an opportunity to learn critical job seeking skills, get honest feedback, and learn about the opportunities that are available after high school.

The Gateways program began in 1993 by St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES, the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, Penski Inc., and the NYS Department of Labor, to aid students in their transition from high school to college, the military, or a career. Each year more than 1,200 students from the 18 school districts comprising the St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES have the opportunity to learn critical job seeking skills as well as the knowledge of how a well-developed resume, solid communication skills, and a positive attitude can impact their future success.

“This is not a job fair,” noted Supervisor of Instruction for St. Lawrence- Lewis BOCES Career and Technical Education Rachelle Romoda, “this is a workshop for life readiness skills, whether students are looking to prepare for college interviews, internships, or employment right out of high school, they get a chance to hear honest feedback about what types of soft skills are needed to succeed in any choice they make.”

Over 70 area employers will be participating on March 27, 2013 and will evaluate each student on the basis of preparedness, attitude, skills and knowledge, and readiness for work.

Students can expect at least three mock interviews each, with plenty of helpful feedback provided by the employers. Along with area businesses, students will also have the opportunity to meet with college and military representatives.

“These employers and representatives volunteer their time every year to help our area students, it is absolutely a North Country effort,” added Mrs. Romoda.
When students decided to enroll in the Automotive Collision Technology Program at Ulster BOCES, none of them would have guessed that their schoolwork would include refinishing equipment to be used by USA Olympians.

The students, under the instruction of teacher David Rosenberg, recently completed a sled-painting project for the USA Olympic Luge Team, including Erin Hamlin, the reigning women’s World Luge Champion.

“Real world experience does not get more real than this,” explains Genna Suraci, principal at the Ulster BOCES Career & Technical Center, which is a hands-on educational facility that provides career training in dozens of specialized areas.

The USA Luge team learned about the Ulster BOCES program through PPG.

From left to right- Davon Drake, Kingston High School; Peter Mancuso, Rondout Valley High School; Kyle McCooey, Kingston High School; and Christian Constantini, Highland High School; display the Luge sleds they painted for the USA Olympic Luge Team.

2014 Winter Olympic team aided by students

By Tammy Cilione, Ulster BOCES • www.ulsterboces.org

Pittsburg Paints territory manager Tom Auer. Auer describes Ulster BOCES as “an incubator” that turns out qualified, work-ready individuals into the job market each year.

Students are exposed to authentic situations in an environment that is designed to mirror a workplace. Rosenberg adds that the program not only focuses on providing the skills necessary to enter or advance in the collision repair industry, but also on honing students’ level of professionalism and ability to satisfy consumers.

For this job, the stakes were raised when students’ skills were put to the test of meeting USA Olympic standards.

Students in this two-year, hands-on program learn about repairing, restoring, and rebuilding damaged auto bodies, from a fender-bender to a major mishap. Throughout their coursework, they experience the professional techniques needed to complete auto collision repair: sheet metal work and frame repair, painting and refinishing, exterior and interior trim and glass, and mechanical and electrical adjustments and repairs. Students will also practice the art of customizing, which is an increasingly popular aspect of the trade, as well as learn how to estimate repair costs and manage a repair shop. Academic instruction in English is integrated and students can earn credits for English, technical math, and technical science. Students can also earn college credits through articulation agreements.

Davon Drake, Kingston High School; Thorman Warren, Highland High School; and Stanley Davis, Highland High School, speak with USA National Luge Team member and 2006 Olympian Preston Griffall about his experiences on the Olympic Team.
Reducing drop outs with pre-tech program

By Donna Hemmer, Sullivan County BOCES • www.scboces.org

During the 2010-11 school year, the Career & Technical Education Center at Sullivan County BOCES launched the Pre-Tech Career Exploration Program. Now in its third year, the program is showing success at discouraging 9th and 10th grade students from dropping out.

This unique program offers motivating, project-based learning opportunities that allow students to remain on track towards earning a Regent’s Diploma, while exploring careers, developing work ethic and improving applied academic skills.

The half-day career component emphasizes core character education, positive work habits, life and communication skills, while giving students a glimpse of the vocational possibilities they may have at the Career and Technical Education Center as juniors and seniors. The program also offers a small class size, differentiated instruction, and access to career counselors and other professional support staff. At the core of the program is a student run business, which adds a wonderful learning experience to the curriculum and affords the students unique business skills and life lessons that they will be able to reflect on as they enter the workforce.

“If it wasn’t for the Pre-Tech Program at BOCES, I would probably be sitting at home right now,” said Gerald Lum, Pre-Tech 2nd year student. “Now that I am in the Pre-Tech Program, I want to continue with my education. The Program made it possible for me to discover what I really liked to do, so I plan on attending the Career & Tech Automotive Technology Program next year.”

News regarding the success of the program is making its way across the state. In October, Denise Sullivan, Director of CTE presented the development, innovation, and results of the program at the New York State School Boards Association’s Annual Conference.

The motto of the Career & Technical Education Program at Sullivan BOCES is to provide “Skills, knowledge and work ethic for the 21st century.”
Since May 2011, Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES has offered a Commercial Wind Turbine Technician (CWTT) Training program for adult students. The CWTT program, now in its second year, is creating additional career pathways for adults while giving them a unique skill set.

“Whether you are just starting a career, making a career change, or have experience as a mature member of the labor market, our CWTT program offers skills that will set you apart from others,” excitedly stated Mary Gratton, CWTT Case Manager. “The hydraulics, electrical, and safety skills will make you a valuable asset while you soar to new career heights!”

This 12-month, 900 hour, program offers students the opportunity to gain operational, mechanical, electrical, safety and general work skills. Through a traditional classroom setting, experiential learning and lab time (which even includes a section of an actual turbine blade) students become well-trained, qualified employees.

“Upon completion the students are ready to enter a competitive workforce which serves the needs of the clean energy technology market in the Wayne-Finger Lakes Region”, states Jim Buck, CWTT Instructor. “This Wind Turbine Technician program is immersing students in the latest technology and applied skills that prepare them to become high quality employees as well as future leaders.”

Students who recently completed the first section of the CWTT program are eager about future opportunities. Robert Miles stated, “People want a future; wind electricity is where it’s at. I know I’m prepared and have the skills to make this a reality.”

Fellow classmate, Jim Heidorn echoed his sentiment by saying, “I’m so excited for my upcoming opportunities. I’m ready for whatever may come my way!”
For young adults enrolled in Rockland BOCES’ Project Search program, “employability” has much more significance than the oft-used phrase “college and career readiness.” Project Search is a grant-funded, business-led transition program that immerses special needs students in an authentic workplace setting.

Rockland BOCES’ program is based at Good Samaritan Hospital in Suffern, NY. Student/interns are between the ages of 18 and 21 and have a range of physical and cognitive disabilities. Their day begins in the classroom for instruction on team building, navigating the work environment, workplace safety and communications skills. After an hour, interns head out to their assigned rotations within the hospital.

Over the course of the 10-month program, interns learn job-specific tasks in addition to a host of valuable administrative, customer service and social skills through three job rotations. “Students put in 20 hours of work each week and really become part of the host business,” says program coordinator Dawn Kitz. “They are acquiring transferable skills that will make them potential hires in a variety of healthcare settings.”

Each intern is supported by a team comprised of his/her supervisor, a BOCES staff member, a vocational rehabilitation counselor from ACCESS-VR, a representative of Rockland County Association for Learning Disabilities and a family member who meet to evaluate the intern’s progress throughout the program.

On-the-job training builds interns’ social skills and confidence. “One of our interns began this program refusing to participate. He has grown so much that he went from not wanting to go to his internship department to not wanting to leave,” she says.

Another intern had monitored job postings, applied for a part-time position, sought support to prepare for her interview and was subsequently hired. Through Project Search, she succeeded in taking an important first step in transitioning to a fulfilling and productive adult life.
For students taking a course in applied art, they have mastered art basics such as the elements and principals of art, perspective and renderings. Now students can apply those skills to explore the art of interior design.

Interior design teaches students about furniture, upholstery and textile design, drafting, and room decoration from the floor to the window treatments. This year, the Southern Westchester Center for Career and Technical Education is offering a new two-year course in interior design. The course is an extension of the long-running applied art class taught by Christine Ireland. An added bonus to this program is that youth in the carpentry class will have a chance to actually build the furniture as designed by their fellow students.

“The interior design course in the first year will get students to the point where they understand how to put a room together,” Ireland said. In the second year of the program, students will be able to design every room in a house.

Ireland worked as an interior designer for 10 years, most recently at the New York Design Center in Manhattan, before switching to a career in education. She studied art and design at SUNY-Purchase, receiving a bachelor of fine arts degree. She also earned a master’s degree in art education from Manhattanville College.

Opportunities abound for students who further their studies in interior design, she said. Students may choose to work as a store designer, theatrical lighting and set designer, and work for interior design studios full-time or as a freelancer. Experienced interior designers often start their own companies.

Students can continue their interior design studies at the New York School of Interior Design, College of Westchester, Fashion Institute of Technology, Parsons, and SUNY Cobleskill, among others.
Skills are significant in education

By William Speck, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES • www.cayboces.org

As many technical jobs go unfilled, business and industry continues to struggle to find skilled employees that are prepared to meet the challenges and needs of a 21st Century workforce. New York State’s Board of Regents has recognized the importance of Career & Technical Education (CTE) and has launched an initiative to examine what can be done to increase student access to these programs.

A NYSED Career & Technical Education Advisory Panel was appointed to study exemplary programs and to make recommendations to the NYS Board of Regents that would improve student access to high quality CTE programs leading to successful postsecondary opportunities. This advisory panel, led by educators from Harvard and Cornell University, has noted that many indicators have demonstrated that rigorous CTE programs are filling a large void that exists.

On January 17, 2013 two teachers from the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES presented the Computer Systems & Network Administration (CSNA) program to the NYS Board of Regents. Matt Champlin, a CTE teacher, and Tracy Musso, an ELA teacher, participated in a panel discussion with Board of Regents members. As panelists Matt and Tracy discussed how their co-teaching model has allowed students to become engaged in career building skills and create a pathway to success after high school graduation.

Champlin and Musso had an opportunity to share curriculum and instructional strategies with the NYS Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education. A key element of the discussion centered on the rigor of current technical assessments used within the program and the ability to connect graduates to high imagination/wage careers.

Members of the Board of Regents gained a clearer understanding of the definition of a high quality CTE program and the importance of student access to these pathways toward graduation.
Kinsley French may have graduated Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in just three and a half years, but she actually started on-campus a year earlier. As a high school senior, French attended Questar III’s New Visions: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), an accelerated, half-day high school program offered on the Troy campus.

She said the hands-on career-tech program prepared her for the realities facing her in college.

“Questar III’s New Visions really gave me a head start in college, making it a very valuable experience. It gave me the chance to take college courses, exposed me to cutting-edge research in science and engineering, and hands-on experience in engineering.”

Over the past decade, many former STEM students, like French, have gained admission to the nation’s best colleges and universities based on their academics and record of accomplishment.

A 2007 graduate of Berlin High School, French graduated RPI with a perfect 4.0 grade point average as a dual major in mathematics and biology.

Today, she is researching proteins and HIV transmission while working toward her doctoral degree at Rensselaer thanks to a prestigious graduate research award from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The award, which goes to only a select few graduate students around the nation, helps to cover French’s tuition, fund her research, and provide her a stipend while she pursues her Ph.D.

Looking ahead to the future, French hopes to continue her research while giving back to others.

“I would like to continue protein, biochemical, and biophysical research and use my education to have maximal impact on students interested in science. It is my hope that as a woman in science, I can act as a role model and inspire other young women to enter this field,” she said.
Advance placement possible with blended learning

By Patrick Fanelli, Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES • www.e2ccb.org

The Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES (E2CCB) is laying the foundation for new instructional offerings that focus less on the traditional classroom model and more on a “blended learning” approach.

Blended learning is a model of teaching that combines face-to-face instruction with digital and online learning and mobile devices that can be used before and after school. This approach provides students with a more integrated and comprehensive educational experience.

An E2CCB-led consortium of 10 districts in Western New York recently received a $618,009 grant from the State Education Department to provide broader access to Advanced Placement courses through the E2CCB Distance Learning Network. The E2CC BOCES and participating districts will select and train teachers, purchase equipment, develop course content specially designed to be used in an online environment, and select students for the coming school year.

After the grant period ends, the infrastructure will remain and the blended AP courses can become part of the Distance Learning Network’s diverse portfolio of course offerings in addition to serving as a model for other blended learning opportunities.

The E2CCB Distance Learning Network, also known as the Junction, has significantly increased the educational opportunities available to students in its participating districts. Students have had the opportunity to enroll in AP classes through the Junction before. For instance, students at Sherman Central School District – one of the 10 districts participating in the initiative – are currently enrolled in an AP Calculus class offered at Franklinville High School more than 70 miles away.

The grant-funded virtual AP initiative, however, will significantly increase the number of students able to enroll in AP classes and it will change the dynamic of those classes, providing a richer, more integrated educational experience.

The grant came from the RTTT-funded Virtual Advanced Placement (VAP) Program, which supports virtual AP course development in low-income school districts.
Independent living

By Maggie Fitzgibbon, Genesee Valley Educational Partnership • www.gvboces.org

Laub was recently presented with the Excellence in Teaching Award at the New York State Council for Exceptional Children’s Annual Conference. Laub is a 32-year veteran teacher who leads the LIVES Program.

(left to right) Marcy Andrews, LIVES teaching assistant; Tyler Geraci, LIVES student; Jeff Laub; and LIVES students Ellen Beisheim, Keith Holmes, and Lauren Daly.

“The students have learned how to think independently. Students interact with their peers. Socialization is important to each student’s success,” Laub explained.

Students set up their internships, and meet with their professors and parents to determine their workload. Laub works with students on their core curriculum subjects.

“We give students challenge but make sure they can accomplish their goals,” Laub said.

Chuck DiPasquale, is the principal for Special Education and Alternative Education for the Partnership.

“LIVES students take part in college life, and study alongside their peers. They gain hands-on work experience, while following their IEP and goals,” DiPasquale explained.

Elizabeth W. Hall, Ph.D., is the Director of the Childhood/Special Education Program, Division Coordinator at SUNY Geneseo.

“These students have made tremendous progress this past year in their academics, independent living skills, in their vocational goals. The group recently presented on their strengths and struggles, strategies for being successful in college, and how to job search,” Hall explained.
Larry Parsons used to work with heavy equipment when he was in the military. After he left the service, Parsons, 52, worked most of his adult life in warehouses and factories. After he lost his job during the recession, he tried to go back to his military roots to find work. He soon learned that those skills had gotten stale.

“I lost a few job offers because of ‘no recent experience,’” Parsons said.

That’s when he found the Heavy Equipment class at the Jefferson-Lewis BOCES Charles H. Bohlen Technical Center in Watertown.

“It’s updating the experience I’ve had,” Parsons said, taking a break from the busy worksite behind him.

Parsons and his classmates spent November laying the groundwork for an important hands-on project: Extending the fire alarm of the Jefferson-Lewis BOCES from the main building on the campus out to a garage on the campus.

“It’s a complete learning experience here,” teaching assistant Steve Martin said. “They all have a chance to leave here with a commercial (equipment) license which makes them very employable.”

Parsons is hoping after he’s done with the class the next job opportunity will be the start of a new career.

He’s not alone. The Jefferson-Lewis BOCES has 35 adult learners in the 25 programs it offers, many who are working towards well-paying jobs in the healthcare field – a growing industry in New York’s North Country, the state and the nation. Recently 18 certified nursing assistant students were trained and interviewed by Samaritan Medical Center for possible employment.

The BOCES is now partnering with Samaritan Medical Center to provide career training to its newly hired employees to staff a new facility. The Jefferson-Lewis BOCES will be training approximately 30 home health aides who will start their new jobs once they complete the program.

“I think all the services in the healthcare field that we offer are in high demand. I don’t think that’s going to slow anytime soon,” said Karen Humphrey, coordinator of health careers for the Jefferson-Lewis BOCES.
Back to work in the Southern Tier

When John Sikes lost his job due to downsizing, Cattaraugus-Allegany (C-A) BOCES equipped him with skills to begin a new career at major local manufacturer, Dresser-Rand Industries.

With funding from a state employment training agency, Sikes enrolled in the 15-week, 90-hour Advanced Manufacturing/Machining class at C-A BOCES’ Olean Career Tech Center. Two nights a week, he studied Manual Machining, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Lathe and CNC Mill under the tutelage of instructor Jeffrey Teluk.

Meanwhile, Sikes completed an on-line application for Dresser-Rand and was elated to be contacted two weeks later for an interview.

“My past jobs have been in a machine shop with wood manufacturing, so that’s why they called,” Sikes said. During the interview, he brought up the BOCES course and said, “The interviewer became very excited and asked, ‘Why didn’t you mention that before?’”

Sikes was offered a position at Dresser-Rand and continued his training at BOCES while starting his new job.

Nancy Salvucci, C-A BOCES Contract Trainer for Industry, said the purpose of BOCES adult education programs is to upgrade the skills of current workers and retrain others who have lost their jobs. Adult education also supports the growth and sustainability of area manufacturers through customized training and partnerships with SUNY-Alfred, Jamestown Community College, Erie Community College and more.

Of particular success are the fields of Advanced Manufacturing/ Machining, Welding/Metal Fabrication, and Health Care Professions where businesses struggle to find qualified employees who have the technical expertise required to fill high-paying jobs.

In addition to Dresser-Rand, Salvucci said other employers who use BOCES as a resource for quality recruits include Napoleon Engineering Services in Olean, Snyder Manufacturing in Salamanca, Scott Rotary Seals Inc. in Olean and Steel & O’Brien Manufacturing in Arcade.
Working youth initiative seeks business partners

By Nancy M. Lenz, Eastern Suffolk BOCES • www.esboces.org

This past fall, education leaders and business people attended a Long Island Metro Business Action (LIMBA) meeting to discuss Governor Andrew Cuomo’s project, “New York Youth Works Program.” The program is designed to help young people ages 16-24 who lack saleable skills. The goal is to make this segment of the population more productive through training and pairing with employers.

Former NYS Assemblyman Dean Murray and Eastern Suffolk (ES) BOCES Chief Operating Officer Gary Bixhorn brought together elected officials, NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL), LIMBA, and industry partners to encourage businesses to hire unemployed, disadvantaged youth ages 16 to 24 who live in the Town of Brookhaven. The initiative provides $25 million in business tax credits, $8 million for job-readiness training and stipends, and additional monies for training and supportive services. Information is available at info@YouthWorks.ny.us.

NYS Senator John Flanagan, a program supporter, said, “The ability to get hands-on training at the side of a professional is invaluable to young men and women. It helps prepare them for their future career, keeps them in a safe environment, and allows them to gain independence.”

At LIMBA, the consensus was that manufacturing companies are the underpinning of the economy and the training of skilled craftspeople is essential to a vibrant region.
One afternoon, students at the Southern Adirondack Education Center took the AIMSWeb progress monitoring assessment, a test for students receiving intensive intervention.

“One boy scored a zero. He didn’t read at all. I took him aside and told him – I understand school has failed you, but I assure you that you can learn and I will help you,” said WSWHE BOCES Speech and Language Pathologist Maura Fox. “He had tears in his eyes and so did I.”

Speech Therapist Margaret Katz had a similar experience at the F. Donald Myers Education Center. She spends time every day with a ninth grader who doesn’t read. The two have created a secret signal so the student knows when to see her without the humiliation of being pulled out of class in front of his peers.

Fox, Katz and Speech and Language Pathologist Martha Hainey-Flacke are WSWHE BOCES’ Literacy Facilitators, although they usually go by “Literacy Ladies,” or “the three Ms.” They are based in every WSWHE BOCES learning center to provide individual instruction to students who are lagging far behind their peers and help teachers transition to a new literacy system.

“We used to have varied approaches to literacy,” said Hainey-Flacke, who works with children on the autism spectrum and elementary students at Sanford Street TLC.

Now, WSWHE BOCES is implementing reading systems across all buildings and grade levels. Younger students are using Foundations and System 44. Middle School students at Washington Street TLC are gaining more English language arts skills with Read 180. Grades 9-12 will transition to a more mature-looking Read 180 next year.

“The new literacy programs keep terminology, vocabulary, and expectations consistent throughout our BOCES,” said Katz. “As students move through the grades, their transitions are smooth and sensible.”
Bullying prevention on all levels
By Candace Reimer, Erie 1 BOCES • www.e1b.org

Just by turning on the news you can see how bullying impacts an entire school community, not just students. Experts agree that to be effective, bullying prevention techniques must encompass staff as well as school district operations.

Alan Rubeck is a local trainer for the nationally recognized Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. He works for Erie 1 BOCES to provide customized training to school districts in and near Buffalo.

“Academics and behavior go hand-in-hand; both require interventions and support systems to foster improvement,” said Rubeck.

Rubeck, and his colleagues in the School Support Services division at Erie 1 BOCES, are trained in and rely on three main programs to adjust a school’s climate. The three programs, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Safe and Civil Schools, and Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS), all share one element in common – engaging the students as a part of the solution.

“The programs are also research-based and data-driven, which allow a school to target, train and adjust behaviors where needed including in the cafeteria, on buses and in the classroom,” said Rubeck.

Janell Hallgren, manager of Policy Services at Erie 1 BOCES, says that the majority of code of conduct documents generally reference that civil and appropriate student behavior is expected, but the specific language within policy can quickly become out of date due to changing legislation and technology.

“In addition to the code of conduct, we recommend that districts review their school policies, regulations and student handbooks on a regular basis,” Hallgren.

Hallgren explains that school policy and the code of conduct serve as the standards to which a board of education, school district staff and students are held accountable.

“Relevant and up-to-date policies, combined with strong training programs, can lead to improved results for effective bullying prevention in our schools,” said Hallgren.
Student leadership renews interest in school

By Bryon Ackerman, Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES • www.herkimer-boces.org

The new RLA Ambassadors group at Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES aims to conduct projects that aid the community. It also gives students who have dealt with school-related struggles an opportunity to become role models for their classmates.

“In the past two years, I have gone from not liking school and failing classes to being on the high honor roll this first marking period,” said RLA Ambassadors member Steven Holliday, a senior from the Mount Markham Central School District. “RLA has given me a second chance at doing good in school, and now, as an ambassador, I want to show other kids like me that it’s not hard to do good in school if you stay focused and stay on task.”

The RLA Ambassadors formed in December 2012 with four students: Holliday, Richfield Springs senior Dean Davis, Mount Markham senior Sylvia Miller and Mount Markham junior Ethan Smith. The first monthly project was a canned food drive.

“It’s a new start for people that weren’t great in school,” Smith said. “It all comes down to having a chance to do great things.”

The RLA is in its second year of operation. It offers high-school and middle-school students who have experienced difficulty with attaining success in a traditional school environment a chance to recapture credits and class experience at their own pace.

Goals of the RLA are to prepare students for a Regents diploma, provide college/career exploration and help students develop life skills.

“To me, being a Regional Learning Academy ambassador means I proved to everyone that told me ‘you’re nothing’ that I am something and that I am important,” Miller said. “I never had good grades in school – acceptable grades, but not good. Now, I am an honor student – something I never thought I would be able to say about myself.”

The following Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES Regional Learning Academy students became the first members of the new RLA Ambassadors group. Pictured from left to right: Sylvia Miller, a senior of Mount Markham; Ethan Smith, a junior of Mount Markham; Steven Holliday, a senior of Mount Markham; and Dean Davis, a senior of Richfield Springs. RLA Ambassadors conduct monthly projects to benefit the community and act as role models to their classmates.
Leadership recognized in the Champlain Valley

Dr. Barry W. Mack, director of CV-TEC, part of Champlain Valley Educational Services in Plattsburgh, was selected as the recipient for the 2012 Leadership and Support Award by the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS).

Mack has served in education for 39 years, 33 as an administrator and 18 in his present position. His major responsibility is to coordinate the Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings in the region offered on three campuses and two off-site locations. The high school enrollment in CTE at CV-TEC has increased 49 percent since 2003 to over 600 juniors and In addition, Mack has led the major initiative to enroll regional adults needing skill training in daytime CTE programs where seats were available. This has helped to keep tuitions at a cost effective level as the adults pay their own tuition for accessing CTE programs.

In addition, Mack is currently providing the leadership for CV-TEC to become nationally accredited by the Council on Occupational Education. Along with meeting rigorous national standards, this accreditation will allow adults in the region to access CTE programs at CV-TEC with federal financial aid.

Under the leadership of Mack, CV-TEC became involved in an unprecedented major collaborative effort involving area schools, the Plattsburgh North Country Chamber of Commerce, area businesses, and various government entities to develop a world-class FAA approved aviation tech program with international standards. This has resulted in over $20 million of donations, grants, and acquisitions to open this exciting new program to help support the growth of the aviation sector in the North Country.

Mack was recognized for his achievements at the SAANYS annual awards ceremony on May 4, 2012 at the Century House in Latham, New York.

RTTT network teams active in DCMO

Network Teams are New York State’s vehicle for implementing the reforms associated with Race to the Top and the Regents Reform Agenda. They are 3-15 person teams located around New York State (about 800 individuals total), who work in close partnership with districts and schools to build the capacity of New York educators around three school-based initiatives: common core state standards, data driven instruction, and teacher–leader effectiveness.

At Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego (DCMO) BOCES, the advent of common core curriculum modules provided an opportunity for their Network Team to initiate a group of Common Core Ambassadors to assist their turnkey training efforts.

Four teachers, from various school districts, each earned the title of Common Core Ambassador based on their ongoing professional development efforts. They are now being coached by the DCMO Network Team and will open their classroom doors as learning “laboratory classrooms” for other teachers to visit. The Network Team is providing professional development support to visiting teachers prior to and during the laboratory classrooms sessions. The Network Team and Common Core Ambassadors will return to Albany in February for continued module training.

The DCMO BOCES thanked the sixteen school districts that supported this initiative, especially the administration from the districts supplying their faculty and classroom space: Franklin, Greene, Sidney and Unadilla Valley.
Computer business venture seeded in high school

By Lisa Bielmeier, Orleans/Niagara BOCES • www.onboces.org

There is nothing that teacher Joe DeMerle likes better than to hear than what he has taught his computer technology students has helped to launch them into a rewarding career. Joseph D’Amore, Ethan Rothfuss and Steven Davis graduated from DeMerle’s program at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center in 2009. Recently they paid a visit to their former teacher to tell him about their new venture, their own company Orleans Computer Repair Services.

“We learned so much from Mr. DeMerle. If it weren’t for him I would not have learned any of this. He gave me such a passion for it,” says Ethan.

“I originally wanted to go into Culinary Arts,” laughs Joseph. “Computer Technology was my second choice and I knew nothing about computers at all. I ended up loving it.”

Steven says he always loved working with computers when he joined the class. “This program helped me to expand my knowledge even more and when I went to Geneseo Community College after graduation it was just natural for me to study support and operations. This class prepared me for that.”

Ethan and Joseph continued their studies at ITT focusing on multimedia. After getting their degrees the trio decided to put their talents to use to become their own bosses. “We just started this company last year,” says Joseph. We got an e-mail address crs@gmail.com and a phone number (716) 243-2667 and we can help customers with virus protection, hardware installation, software updating, repair and maintenance.”

DeMerle, who was just recognized by CISCO for teaching their networking principles for 10 years, says he is impressed, but not surprised by his students’ talents and ambitions. “I always like it when former students come back to tell me of their successes. They were great students and hard workers and I am very proud of what they have accomplished. It is very rewarding for me as a teacher to see that what I have taught them has become their life’s passion and provided them with a career.”
While making a birthday cake, an idea came to Meredith Walter, a 2009 graduate of Western Suffolk BOCES’ Culinary Arts program at Wilson Technological Center. She transformed her idea into the winning recipe for a new chocolate bar for Lindt chocolates, a business that awarded her the grand prize of a $5,000 scholarship. “I came up with this idea when we were celebrating my mom’s birthday and a belated birthday for my uncle. My mom loves coconut cake and my uncle loves mocha frosting. So put them together and you get Mocha Coconut,” recalled Meredith on her blog, the MerriBaker.

Following completion of BOCES’ two-year program and her graduation from E. Northport High School, Meredith continued her culinary education at the Culinary Institute of America and is now interning as a pastry chef at Cake Indulgence, also known as Cakes for Corporates, just outside Melbourne, Australia.

The Lindt Mocha Coconut bar was selected as the winner of The Lindt EXCELLENCE Recipe Challenge, a student scholarship contest in conjunction with the CIA, challenging CIA students to develop a dark chocolate bar recipe. Celebrity chef, restaurateur and CIA alumnus Michael Symon participated as one of the contest judges.

The new bar has a suggested retail price of $3.85 and is now available exclusively at Lindt.com and select Lindt Chocolate Shops, while supplies last. In addition, Lindt is furthering its commitment to culinary education by donating $1 to The Culinary Institute of America for every Lindt Mocha Coconut bar purchased.

“I am extremely excited that Lindt has decided to produce and sell my chocolate bar. I am thankful for such a great support group, also known as my family. They have seen it from start to finish. Thank you Lindt for an amazing experience I got to participate in,” Meredith continued in her blog.
A spark (plug) fuels a fire to achieve

By Philip Beaney, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES • www.fehb.org

Ryan Siddell had difficulty finding success in a traditional school setting but once he found Franklin-Essex-Hamilton (FEH) BOCES his pathway to success flourished. Today, he is not only a high school graduate but gainfully employed and active in his community.

In 2007, Ryan started in the FEH BOCES PASS program offered by the Alternative Education division. A few years later, Ryan took an interest in cars and became part of the first class of FEH BOCES alternative education students to combine academics with vocational training. This combination allowed Ryan to grow academically and personally, which is evident by all he has achieved.

Ryan graduated, on time, with a Regents diploma in 2011. He was named to the Career and Technical Honor Society and earned “Pro Team” status in his Automotive Technology class both his junior and senior years. Ryan also earned the New York State Career and Technical Education Endorsement.

Upon graduating, from both high school and BOCES, Ryan was offered a full-time position as an automotive technician at High Peaks Ford, the very place where he completed his field placement during his senior year in the Auto Technology program.

Today, two years later, Ryan has his own bay in High Peaks Ford’s Service Department. He is active in the community as a member of the Saranac Lake Volunteer Fire Department, where he is a member of the K-9 Search and Rescue Squad.

Most recently staff at FEH BOCES proudly gazed upon a photo of Ryan on the front cover of their local news paper, Adirondack Press Republican. That photo, of Ryan and his fire fighting team responding to a structural fire, symbolized his journey. That despite Ryan’s earlier challenges, his trust in his BOCES team coupled with his own hard work allowed him to rise like a phoenix from the ashes.
The Oswego County BOCES New Vision Law and Government class prepares students for diverse careers in law, government and public safety. As part of this immersion-based program, students experience all aspects of their chosen career pathway and participate in diverse rotations throughout Oswego County. Two former New Vision Law and Government students are at the forefront of politics in Oswego County.

Michael Backus, a 2002 graduate of Mexico Academy and Central School District and a student in the Law and Government class during his senior year, serves as the youngest county clerk in New York State. A county clerk’s office acts as a general information center, overseeing public services related to motor vehicles, records management, historical archives, and more.

The Oswego County Clerk’s position is not Backus’ first venture into the political arena. After college, at 22, Backus became the youngest field representative for the U.S. House of Representatives, serving as part of Congressman John McHugh’s staff. When asked how the Oswego County BOCES program prepared him for a career in government, Backus said, “The New Vision Law and Government program provided me with exposure to a wide variety of internships and opportunities in government in Oswego County. This program and others at Oswego County BOCES give students the tools and confidence to know they can be successful at the college level and beyond.”

Another notable New Vision Law and Government graduate also made local political history. In 2010, at just 21 years of age, Terry Wilbur became the youngest legislator ever elected in Oswego County. This gave Wilbur the opportunity to serve his local community and return to his favorite New Vision rotation site - the Oswego County Legislature.

Michael Backus, center, returned to his alma mater following his swearing in as the youngest county clerk in New York State and is pictured above with Oswego County BOCES District Superintendent Christopher Todd, left, and Career and Technical Education Director Ronald Camp, right.

When Dianna Nesbitt, the instructor of the New Vision Law and Government class first met the Hannibal High School senior in 2005, she knew immediately that this young man would go places. Nesbitt remembers Wilbur as a young man who was always mature and articulate for his age. She was not shocked to learn that he began his political career right after high school, at age 19, when he was elected to the Hannibal Village Board.

“As educators we are tasked with preparing youth for success in the 21st Century, creating curriculum that combines core academic and technical skills with employability skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, time management and responsibility,” said Oswego County BOCES District Superintendent Christopher Todd. “Michael Backus and Terry Wilbur are just two examples of how rigorous, immersion-based educational programs create a solid foundation for the demands of college and the working world.”
With a smile on his face and a genuine hello for those he meets, environmental services worker Joe Donato is a model employee at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC).

Four years ago Joe was a Project SEARCH™ student in a classroom on-site at the hospital with Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Teacher Kim Zingaro. The program provides students with developmental disabilities, ages 18 to 21, with classroom instruction, a job coach through the Arc of Monroe, and an opportunity to explore hands-on jobs leading to gainful employment. Project SEARCH™, a national program at the URMC, is a partnership of Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES, Arc of Monroe and the URMC with funding from the Golisano Foundation, ACCES-VR, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and others.

“Being in the classroom at the hospital with Ms. Zingaro was great,” said Joe. “I learned interview skills and work readiness skills. Then I would spend four hours on the job learning new skills.”

Some of those jobs included stocking linens and inventory, doing laundry, working in the gift shop, data entry, patient transport, and cleaning. In the afternoon, Zingaro would share helpful feedback from supervisors.

“Joe is engaging. He is one of the most caring employees,” said Karen Porterfield, a kidney transplant social worker.

The Arc of Monroe job coach provides on-the-job support. “I think this program is wonderful,” said Gabrielle Brandenburg, an employment specialist and Joe’s job coach. “What I love most is working with the Project SEARCH™ graduates throughout their work day and watching their growth.”

“At first Joe didn’t think he could take on the responsibility of cleaning equipment such as the NICU incubators but within months he was training other environmental service workers,” said Zingaro. “Joe is the real success story here.”
Growing local manufacturing workforce

By Sapna Kollali, Madison-Oneida BOCES • www.moboces.org

Several years ago, local manufacturing firms looking to fill specialized positions met with leaders of the county’s Employment and Training Office for assistance in finding qualified workers. The county office staff put out notices, looked over their current rolls of unemployed workers and canvassed the region, but they largely came up empty-handed. Area workers, even those with previous manufacturing experience, did not have the skills to fill the open positions.

So, the county and the region’s One-Stop Career Center approached Madison-Oneida BOCES. Through their innovative partnership, the agencies secured a New York State Department of Labor grant to develop and offer a free 15-week course to train unemployed Madison County residents in the basics of the current manufacturing industry. The course covered basic industrial math, mechanical blueprint reading, geometric dimensioning and tolerance, basic computer operation, OSHA safety regulations and several hours of job shadowing with local manufacturers.

“The face of manufacturing really is changing. A lot of people still think of old factories and low-skilled labor, but manufacturing today is very technology-driven,” said Kathleen Rinaldo, director of the BOCES Consortium of Continuing Education (BCCE), a partnership between Madison-Oneida and Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES.

The county employment office helped secure nine area manufacturing firms to participate in the job shadow experience by providing hands-on work-site experience for students in the course.

Michael Reilly, chief operating officer of Thermold Corporation in Canastota, said the course is a way to help grow the local workforce and ensure employees have the appropriate basic skills needed on Day 1.

“As our company continues to grow and expand we are continually seeking entry-level employees with good math, blueprint reading, and precision measuring abilities,” Reilly said. “Programs such as this will create a local labor force that is better prepared to meet the challenges required by local manufacturers.”
Exciting opportunities for learning and exploration were offered to students from across the GST BOCES region during the Summer of Innovation 2012. Students in grades K-12 enrolled in academies including Conservation–The Outdoor Classroom, Little Engineers In Training, Culinary Arts–The Epicurean Experience, Underwater Robotics, CISCO Academy–Networking Your House and Gaming Systems, Science of Super Heroes and Digital Media Arts–Picture Perfect. Academies typically ran for one week and more than 50 offerings were provided during June, July and August.

Academies were designed to emphasize project-based learning and incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning into the curriculum. Participants were immersed in hands-on learning that was connected to real world experiences. They were introduced to a multitude of careers that included real-life interactions with representatives from business and industry to create an educational concept that redefined “summer school” for the GST BOCES region. The intent was to offer creative, innovative, educational summer academies for local students as an extension of the traditional school year.

The Summer of Innovation initiative originated when a group of local educators representing GST BOCES, component school districts and post-secondary institutions teamed with local business and industry to create an educational concept that redefined “summer school” for the GST BOCES region. The intent was to offer creative, innovative, educational summer academies for local students as an extension of the traditional school year.

The Summer of Innovation 2012 partners included Corning Inc., GST BOCES, Wings of Eagles Discovery Center, The Regional Science and Discovery Center, Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and all 21 GST BOCES component school districts. Together, these agencies served 1,178 students in 2012. Plans are underway to include new partners and expand offerings in the Summer of Innovation 2013.
The Green Machine Mobile Laboratory is an easily portable, state-of-the-art science and technology lab, designed to support elementary school science curriculum. Designed and developed at no cost to school districts, the Mobile Laboratory helps reduce prohibitive field trip costs in these challenging economic times.

Today’s students gain maximum benefit when learning experiences are interactive, challenging, and hands-on, with team-building that reinforces the standard curriculum. The optimum time for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) development is grades 4 through 8, when students are either turned on or off to these areas of study.

A grant from Motorola funded the basic curriculum development, as well as the purchase of a wealth of science equipment and supplies. The science and research activities in the Mobile Laboratory were designed by local school educators, aligned specifically to STEM standards and focused on individual school district curricula.

Recently, local businesses have sought ways to influence STEM instruction for students to better prepare them for the future workforce, with more relevant skills and knowledge, to compete in the technology-based manufacturing sector. As school budgets have stretched ever-tighter, Monroe #1 BOCES has received generous donations, grants and sponsorship support from many local businesses, such as Ward’s Natural Sciences, Tequipment, and Tetra Tech, and others.

Many businesses have generously sponsored a school for a full day ($1,350), or partial day, to bring the Mobile Laboratory to an elementary school. As a result, the Mobile Laboratory experience has reached an additional 1,000 students in the past 12 months.

By partnering with local businesses, Monroe 1 BOCES is able to provide a unique and exciting educational opportunity for local school district students at reasonable costs.
Welding classes in high demand

By Laurie Cook, Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES • www.ocmboces.org

Kevin Auyer has been a welder in Central New York for over 20 years. In that time he has worked in various businesses. Recently, Kevin became the instructor for a new program at OCM BOCES: Welding Technology.

Through its Career and Technical Education (CTE) division, OCM BOCES began offering a two-year welding program for high school students this past September. The program has the largest number of students OCM BOCES has ever had for the first year of a starting CTE program.

Robert Leslie, OCM BOCES’ director of CTE, attributes this to a need in the community. “In Central New York, there is a high demand for welders. Students completing the program will be industry certified and ready to go to work as entry-level welders.”

Auyer is impressed with his students, saying they “exceeded [his] expectations.” Having worked in industry prior to BOCES, one of the biggest complaints Kevin heard was that it was necessary to hire somebody that didn’t have the required skills just because a person was needed. He said, “When students come out of here, if they want to go to work as an entry-level welder, they will be more than ready.”

Welding technology program instructor Kevin Auyer oversees Wyatt Apgar, a junior from the Tully Central School District, as he performs a weld using the Gas Metal Arc (also known as MIG welding) process. Wyatt is constructing a cylinder rack that will be used in the welding classroom to hold 16 containers (cylinders) of acetylene and oxygen gas, which are used for oxyfuel gas cutting (torch cutting) and welding.
Expert Tip

Identifying common New York conifers

By Keith Joslin, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES • www.oneida-boces.org

Trees that use cones to reproduce are called conifers, as opposed to trees that flower. Most conifers are called evergreen, and maintain their needles all year. Some needles fall each year, but new needles can remain on the tree for five years.

When attempting to identify common conifers, many group them into the same category of “Christmas trees” or “Pine trees.” However, not all conifers are suitable as Christmas trees and not all are pines. This article will describe the distinguishable differences between common groups of conifers, the Pines, Spruces and Firs. There are clues to help with identification; observing the needles is the easiest method.

Pines are different from Spruces and Firs, as Pine needles are bunched in either groups of two or five. Each bunch (fascicle) attaches to the twig. Easy ways to distinguish the Pines are to count the needles per bunch and/or determine needle length.

Spruce and Fir needles attach singly to the twig. But Spruce needles are attached to small stalk-like woody projections on the twig making the twig bumpy when bare. Also, these needles are prickly when handled and needles are three-to-four sided in cross section, and roll between the fingers.

Fir needles, however, attach singly and directly to the twig, but not to a woody projection. Bare Fir twigs feel smooth. Also, Fir needles are not prickly and the foliage is easily handled and soft. The needles are flat and difficult to roll between the fingers. Many holiday wreaths are made from Balsam Fir and Douglass Fir because of the soft texture and aromatic smell.

With practice, one can broaden their knowledge and appreciation of these common conifers.

Keith Joslin is a conservation instructor at the Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES Career & Technical Education Center, he has been teaching for 19 years.
For more than 60 years, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) have provided shared educational programs and services to school districts across the state. Sharing services through BOCES is an economical way for districts to provide cost effective programming that is still rich in quality. Today there are 37 BOCES, incorporating all but nine of the state’s school districts.