

## Message from the Superintendent



As I write this message in late October, with snow falling silently outside my window, I can't help feeling that we have been catapulted past fall into winter. Still, the first semester of the 2016-17 school year has not yet ended, and students and staff are still becoming acclimated with their new roles.

We have merely begun tackling our goals for another successful year.

As is typical for me at this time of year, I think about all of the things for which I am thankful family, friends and co-workers. And this year, I am also thinking of the positive changes that have happened. As I look out my window and see past the cold, white precipitation, I notice a very different landscape than the one I saw a year ago.

Many things have changed in one short year, and those changes have snowballed (pun intended). Our move to this new location has brought about many great things for BOCES and our students. While I have discussed those changes in the past, I can't help but point them out again with consideration to the season we're entering: **Thanksgiving**.

I am so thankful for the tremendous work that YOU have done this past year. What I now see outside my window would be very different if not for all of your effort and support. Yes, BOCES is here for our students, and I know you recognize that and work with that in the forefront of your mind each day. But I also am also thankful for your dedication to this *organization* and the people who work here. I am impressed every day by what we do when we work together. I am impressed by what I see happening when one person helps another with even just a simple task ... kindness matters.

So during this season of thanks, I again thank you for what you give every day. I also challenge you to go above and beyond to help someone out with a simple task. The small things we do each day make a difference let's strive to be the reason for someone else giving thanks this year.

In the meantime, I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving and hope you enjoy your time with family and friends.

Dr. Jody Manning  
District Superintendent

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**“Go Time” Science Conference:** Anticipation is building for our ground-breaking, sold-out regional science conference called, “It’s Go Time: Seeing the Future through the NEW New York State Science Standards.” The event on Nov. 8 at Roxboro Road Middle School offers amazing keynote speakers and a series of “live” research lessons lessons in which teachers and students will be participating in a lesson while other educators observe and begin to visualize the science standards in action. Dr. Carol O’Donnell, director of the Smithsonian Science Education Center, will kick off the conference. [Click here for more.](#)



**Lead testing results:** In the spring of 2016, OCM BOCES tested the drinking water for lead at each of our instructional and non-instructional sites. Although we were not mandated by New York State at that time to test our water, OCM BOCES tested all water fountains and faucets normally used for drinking or cooking to ensure the safety of students and staff. Over 100 drinking water sources were initially tested, and only one drinking fountain was found to be above the EPA limit for lead. The fountain was immediately taken out of service and replaced.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a new law on September 6, 2016 that requires public school districts/BOCES to test for lead levels in all water outlets currently or potentially used for drinking or cooking. In September and October 2016, 136 new samples were taken from additional sinks and bathroom faucets used by students as directed by the NY State Health Department.

Test results received to-date are posted on the OCMBOCES website under Health & Safety. Additional results are expected over the next several weeks and will be posted as they are received.

**Community Service Fair at OCM BOCES Main Campus:** You are cordially invited to attend the OCM BOCES’ Adult Education Community Service Fair from 9 a.m. to noon on Monday, Dec. 5, at our Main Campus at 110 Elwood Davis Road. A variety of local community service providers will be on hand with information about programs and services available

within the community. From 9 to 9:30 a.m., tours of the Main Campus building will be provided. From 9:30 a.m. to noon, service provider representatives will be on hand to meet with attendees. Mark your calendars now!

**Cortland SkillsUSA students' hard work leaves a legacy:** For the past 25 years, Cathy Wakeman has lived in a small town near Cortland and has always appreciated the slower pace.

As a child, Cathy had opportunities right within her neighborhood to ride bikes and play ball and hang out with her friends. But there was one thing she didn't have a playground. "When you wanted to meet your friends at the playground, you had to go miles away and leave our safe little community," Cathy said.

That changed in early October as her community came together to build the Montgomery Park Playground with help from OCM BOCES SkillsUSA students from Cortland. [Click here to read more.](#)



**WCNY creates promotional videos for CTE programs:** When you visit OCM BOCES [YouTube channel](#), [Facebook page](#) or [Twitter feed](#) this November, you'll notice some innovative new marketing videos for our Career & Technical Education (CTE)

programs. BOCES recently worked with WCNY to have the agency create YouTube videos for each individual Syracuse/Cortland-area CTE program. The videos highlight students currently enrolled in the programs and are being used on Facebook and Twitter to help let prospective students and their families learn more about their successful career options through OCM BOCES. Please be sure to visit one of OCM BOCES social media outlets and check out these great videos!



### **Seven Valleys students are on the move!**

Students at Seven Valleys New Tech Academy haven't wasted any time getting out into the community. Sophomores recently had the opportunity to attend the "Jump Start 10" Youth Conference at SUNY Cortland. At the conference, students were able to learn about college opportunities and activities in the community. They also took part in workshops with local business owners, professional and leaders.



On October 20, students from Seven Valleys attended a Career Fair at the JM McDonald Center in Cortland, where they helped set up, organize and network with businesses about potential business partners. As part of a Global Lit project, students also spent time exploring how they might be able to help with the unemployment rate in Cortland and the surrounding counties.

### **School Library System hosts**

**successful conference:** The 2016 Greater Central New York School Library Systems Conference was recently held at the Syracuse OnCenter. Keynote speaker Gene Luen Yang, the first graphic novelist to be nominated for a National Book Award, helped draw a large crowd of more than 250 educators. The annual conference gathers teacher-librarians, educators and public librarians "to learn from and with each other," said Doreen Bergman, coordinator of the OCM BOCES School Library System. "Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this year's successful conference!" The event was sponsored by OCM BOCES in conjunction with the School Library Systems of CiTi BOCES (Oswego County), the Syracuse City School District, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES and Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES.



### **BOCES Literacy Student Receives**

**Statewide Honor:** In 2007, as a high school sophomore, Wilnisha Sholtz Breland became pregnant and dropped out of school. She was doing fine and making decent money until the unexpected death of her daughter in 2011 dropped her into a deep depression. Later, as she searched for a new job and a new start in life, Breland made a quick discovery.



*"Almost all the jobs I applied for required a high school diploma or GED," she said. "I began doing some research online for free literacy programs, and I came across OCM BOCES."*

Thanks to the caring and support of her BOCES literacy instructors, Breland now has her high school diploma and a new job. She is also continuing her education at Onondaga Community College. She hopes to become a social worker. In August, she shared her story with more than 500 OCM BOCES employees as part of an "opening day" conference for the new school year.

Because of her amazing perseverance, Breland was honored Oct. 25 in Albany as the "Outstanding Student Award Recipient for 2016" by the New York Association for Continuing/Community Education. She was treated to a special awards dinner with family, guests and local dignitaries. We would like to congratulate Ms. Breland and all of her outstanding OCM BOCES instructors.

**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](http://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](http://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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