

BOCES BITS

February 2010 Vol. 6 Issue 2

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

From the District Superintendent

Dear Staff,

The role of the District Superintendent has lots of “ups” and “downs.” During the past month, I have been up as I watched our Deaf and Hard of Hearing program students join with Solvay students to sing and sign the National Anthem before a Syracuse Crunch Hockey game. The students’ expressions told it all as they walked onto the ice following the hockey players and performed in front of a very large and appreciative audience. Another “up” was when our Culinary and Pastry Arts students wowed the business members of the CTE Advisory Council with an incredible dinner and awesome desserts. Thanks in both of those cases go to the teachers, interpreters, therapists, and administrators from our Deaf Education Program and the faculty of the Henry CTE Culinary and Pastry Arts programs.

The “downs” occur when I think about the impact of the State budget decisions on our districts and on BOCES, and most importantly on programs for students. The financial picture this year for schools is the worst that I have seen in my career and I am worried about what it will mean.

As I have had questions about the state budget impact on BOCES, I thought that I would take part of my letter to you to explain the process that we go through to develop budgets. As you may know, we start our budget process in November and December. Because districts need to know how much BOCES services are going to cost, our budgets are done before district budgets.

The first budgets that are presented to districts are our Administrative, Capital, and Rental Budgets. These are the budgets that pay for our central administration (District Superintendent, part of the Assistant Superintendents, personnel, and business office), health insurance costs for our retirees, leases for our facilities, and money for building improvement projects. The twenty-three component school boards vote to approve this budget in late April.

The second set of budgets that are presented are the separate budgets for each of our many programs. We

have almost 100 different budgets. These budgets are all developed based on requests for our services from the local districts. Districts tell us in December what services they anticipate they will purchase in the next school year. From these initial requests, our program administrators develop budgets which are then shared with the superintendents, business officials, and local school boards. They then decide if they want to buy the service and tell us that by the middle of April. Our administrators develop final budgets for each service based on these requests.

Our budgets are similar to district budgets in that they include salaries, benefits, transportation, professional development, supplies, and other related components. They differ from district budgets, however, in that they are completely dependent on the requests from districts.

As districts’ revenues get tighter, they can either choose to use our services or they can decide that the district can do without a service or provide it less expensively in another way. All signs are that 2010-2011 will be difficult for our districts. What exactly the impact on us will be, we will learn in the next few months. In the meantime, we will all be working to develop budgets that reflect our costs and our expected revenues. We will keep you posted.

Jessica



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Adult Education Construction Students Build for Youth Soccer Association



John Sweeney's Adult Education Construction Technology class from the Lee G. Peters Career Training Center recently completed construction of a pavilion at Clay Park North on Wetzel Road. The pavilion, which will be used by the North Area Youth Soccer Association (NAYSA), was built almost entirely (with the exception of the concrete foundation poured by the Town of Clay) by OCM BOCES. The students worked periodically on the structure for more than a month.

BOCES Board Member, Catherine Cifaratta-Brayton, whose daughter-in-law, Michelle Cifaratta is on the NAYSA Board, initiated the connection between NAYSA and OCM BOCES. The soccer association had been trying to raise funds for the pavilion for more than eight years by holding picnics and other fund-raising events. With OCM BOCES contribution of student labor, the construction of the pavilion for NAYSA was able to occur sooner because the association only had to come up with the funds for the materials. Michelle pointed out that thanks to BOCES' contribution, the registration costs for the league were able to stay down, making the program accessible to more young people.

Instructor John Sweeney was pleased to be involved in the construction of the pavilion noting that it gave the students an opportunity to work on a different type of structure. The shelter will be used exclusively by the soccer association. The Adult Education Construction Technology students will graduate from the program on February 23, 2010 at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool. The ceremony begins at 6:30 PM.

EAP Spring 2010 Workshop Schedule

March 2 Tuesday	How to DeJunk Your Life	McEvoy Conference Center, Room 701 OCM BOCES 1710 Rt. 13, Cortland	4-5:30 pm
March 24 Wednesday	Prescription & OTC Drug Abuse	CRC Conference Room - Oswego BOCES, Main Bldg., Mexico Campus 179 Rt. 64, Mexico, NY	4-5:30 pm
March 30 Tuesday	Don't Sweat the Small Stuff	Liverpool Public Library - Sargent Meeting Room 310 Tulip Street Liverpool	4-5:30 pm
April 13 Tuesday	When It's Time To Act: Help For Your Aging Parent or Loved One	OCM BOCES, IEH Campus Admin. Bld. B, Conference Rm. B. Center 6820 Thompson Rd., Syracuse	4-5:30 pm
April 27 Tuesday	Cancer, Coping and Colleagues	Ithaca City School District Conference Room, Boynton Middle School - 1601 N. Cayuga St., Ithaca	4-5:30 pm
May 5 Wednesday	NYS Employee Retirement System - An Overview	OCM BOCES, IEH Campus Admin. Bld. B, Conference Rm. B. Center 6820 Thompson Rd., Syracuse	4:30-6 pm

For more information on EAP workshops or for registration forms/information, go to www.eap.ocmboces.org. All workshops are free of charge.

Students Sing and Sign National Anthem



On Friday, January 22, 2010, nearly 30 students from OCM BOCES Deaf and Hard of Hearing program and the Solvay Middle School chorus sang and signed the National Anthem at a Syracuse Crunch hockey game against the Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins. While the Crunch didn't win the game, a great time was had by all!

Students Make New Friends

On December 15, 2009 a group of students from OCM BOCES Deaf and Hard of Hearing program from Kathleen Franz, Laura Muscato and Lisa Austin's classes got together for a meet and greet at Shoppingtown Mall. The students, from several school districts within Onondaga, Cortland and Madison counties, met at the Dewitt Library for games and gingerbread cookie decorating, which was a "sweet" success. From there they went to Fun Junction to play Laser Tag. The students were excited to play against their teachers and especially with their new friends.

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Many Positive Changes to Health Insurance Plan

On January 1, 2010, OCM BOCES new health insurance plan, Classic Blue Regionwide, took effect for all BOCES employees.

While most coverages remain the same as in 2009, there are some enhancements that should be noted in order for employees to make the most of their new coverages.



The Classic Blue Regionwide plan has several benefits focusing on preventative care for our employees. Some of those preventative benefits are:

- One routine annual physical is covered for each employee and any of their dependents enrolled in their plan. There are no co-payments for these routine physical examinations and the benefit includes coverage for the physician's exam and any laboratory, pathology, x-ray or other imaging services provided in connection with the routine exam.
- Adult immunizations are now eligible for coverage. The immunizations included in the recommendations for preventative care of adults ages 19 and older include Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis, Hepatitis A and B, Human Papilloma virus (HPV), Seasonal and H1N1 Influenza, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Shingles and Pneumonia. Adult immunizations need not be obtained in a doctor's office but these will *not* be covered if administered by a pharmacist.
- Diabetic prescriptions, supplies and equipment are no longer subject to an insurance deductible, co-insurance or out-of-pocket maximum provision.
- Blue365®, which offers access to discounts and savings exclusively to Blue Cross Blue Shield members, is a part of every member's plan at no additional cost. The program offers exclusive discounts on health and wellness products and services, including fitness, exercise, nutrition and elective procedures.

For additional information regarding OCM BOCES Classic Blue Regionwide plan, visit the customized website at www.myexcellusplan.com/cnycoop or contact Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield at the customer service number on your identification card.

Internal Revenue Service Top Ten Tax Tips for 2009

While the tax filing deadline is still months away, it always seems to be here before you know it. Here are the IRS's top 10 tips to help your tax filing process run smoothly.

1. Start gathering your records – Round up any documents or forms you'll need when filing your taxes.
2. Be on the lookout – W-2s and 1099s will be coming soon from your employer.
3. Try e-file – When you file electronically, the software will handle the math calculations for you.
4. Check out Free File – If your income is \$57,000 or less you may be eligible for free tax preparation software and free electronic filing. The IRS partners with 20 tax soft-

ware companies to create this free service. Visit IRS.gov to learn more.

5. Consider other filing options – There are many options for filing your tax return. You can prepare it yourself or go to a tax preparer. You may be eligible for free face-to-face help at an IRS office or volunteer site.
6. Consider Direct Deposit – If you elect to have your refund directly deposited into your bank account, you'll receive it faster than waiting for a paper check.
7. Visit IRS.gov again and again – The official IRS Web site is a great place to find everything you'll need to file your tax return.
8. Remember this number: 17 – Check out Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax on IRS.gov. It's a compre-

hensive collection of information for taxpayers highlighting everything you'll need to know when filing your return.

9. Review! Review! Review! – Don't rush. We all make mistakes when we rush. Mistakes will slow down the processing of your return. Be sure to double-check all the Social Security Numbers and math calculations on your return as these are the most common errors made by taxpayers.
10. Don't panic! – If you run into a problem, remember the IRS is here to help. Try IRS.gov or call their customer service number at 800-829-1040.

CONGRATULATIONS! KUDOS! GREAT JOB! WELL DONE! BRAVO!

If you know of an OCM BOCES student or employee that has done a great job on a project or if you know someone that should be recognized for an achievement they've made, please let us know about it! We'd like to get the word out about the great things that are going on in our organization. Send your information to Laurie Cook at lcook@ocmboces or call at 431-8597.

Cortland Alternative High School Students Complete Firefighter Boot Camp



Congratulations to Cortland Alternative High School students Joe Malmquist and Tom Mulhern for recently completing Firefighter Boot Camp. The students trained more than 150 hours over the course of five months to graduate from the camp. Both young men are currently members of the Cincinnatus Fire Department. Congratulations on this outstanding accomplishment!

Adult Education Student Selected for Award

Congratulations to OCM BOCES Adult Education student Lasonya Thompson for having been selected as an Outstanding Adult Student Award Recipient for 2010 by the New York Association for Continuing Community Education (NYACCE). Lasonya is enrolled in OCM BOCES GED and Central Service Technician programs. Thompson's GED Instructor, Michael Stella, nominated her for the award citing her as "a shining example of what can be achieved with hard work and determination."

OCM BOCES Assistant Director Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army Reserves

Congratulations to OCM BOCES Assistant Director of Labor Relations, David Cirillo for his recent promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Reserves. Cirillo, who is currently a Civil Affairs Officer for the Executive Office of the 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, has been in the Army for more than 23 years.

OCM BOCES Board Members

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