

BOCES BITS

December 2008 Vol. 4 Issue 10

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

From the District Superintendent

Dear Staff,

The New York State budget has been the topic that has consumed many discussions lately. While we don't yet know if there will be mid-year cuts in school aid, we are anticipating that state aid to school districts for next year will be less than it is this year.

We have been engaged in several initiatives to help deal with the expected impact on BOCES. We will be asking everyone to think very carefully about any of the discretionary spending that is done in your programs and departments. Please consider whether or not an expenditure is absolutely necessary. Staff who are currently beginning budget development for next year are looking at all budgets to determine what the most cost effective ways are to provide services.

We are also working with our districts to identify ways to create programs that will provide collaborative programs and services to save money. During the past year our Central Business Office has grown and we expect more growth. A new service developed this year to help districts save money is our centralized food service program. These, and other similar programs, will help our districts continue to provide services to students and control costs.

As the state aid situation becomes clearer, I will share its impact on BOCES with you. In the meantime, if you have questions, please feel free to ask.



OCM BOCES Interoffice Mail

Please be sure that you address interoffice mail using a first name, last name, department and building location. We are seeing quite a bit of mail that is lacking the proper address and that will slow up the delivery time.

Please eliminate reference to Henry Buildings A, B, C and D on interoffice mail. New names for these buildings are listed.

Mail to the CNYRIC should be addressed to <First Name, Last Name>, CNYRIC, <Department Name>, Syracuse.

Proper Addresses:

Old Henry A should now be:

Career and Technical Education Building

Henry Campus
Thompson Road
Syracuse, NY

Old Henry B should now be:

Administration Building

Henry Campus
Thompson Road
Syracuse, NY

Old Henry C should now be:

Operations and Maintenance Building

Henry Campus
Thompson Road
Syracuse, NY

Old Henry D should now be:

Central Receiving

Henry Campus
Thompson Road
Syracuse, NY

If you have any questions about a staff member's location, please e-mail Deb Ayers, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, at dayers@ocmboces.org.

Weather-Related Announcements

For information about poor weather-related closings and announcements for facilities in **Onondaga County**: listen to Radio Stations: WSYR-AM 570, WYYY-FM 94.5, WBBS-FM 104.7, WNTQ-FM 93.1, WHEN-AM 620, WWHT-FM 107.9 and TV Channels: 3, 5, 9 and 10.

For information about poor weather-related closings and announcements for facilities in **Cortland County**: listen to Radio Stations: WKRT-AM 920, WIII-FM 99.9, WXHC-FM 101.5, WNBF-AM 1290, WHWK-FM 98.1, WAAL-FM 99.1, WWYL-FM 104.1, WINR-AM 680, WENE-AM 1430, WKGB-FM 92.5, WMXW-FM 103.3, WMRV-FM 105.7, WBBI-FM 107.5, WMRV-FM 105.7, WHCU-AM 870, WNYY-AM 1470, WYXL-FM 97.3, WQNY-FM 103.7 and TV Channels: 3, 5, 9 and 12.

Flexible Spending Plan Enrollment

OCM BOCES employees wishing to participate in Flexible Spending (Medical, Dependent or Premium Reimbursement) during the 2009 plan year (January 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009) must enroll or re-enroll by completing the Flex Spending form and returning it to Tammy Jones in the Personnel Office by **December 15, 2008**.

A copy of the form is available online at www.ocm-boces.org/ and clicking on "Personnel Office/OCM BOCES Staff Only/News and Notes".

In order to estimate medical and dependent care expenses, use the Benefit Resource, Inc. website at <http://www.benefitresource.com/Employees/how-flexible-spending-works.htm>

Skills USA Officers Take Part in College Career Day



Career and Technical Education students at the Irvin E. Henry Campus had an opportunity to meet with college representatives and military personnel at the school's College Career Day on Thursday November 20, 2008. Skills USA Officers greeted the college representatives, military recruiters and welcomed OCM BOCES Assistant Superintendent, Colleen Viggiano.

Pictured above left to right: front row - Catherine DeStephano, President (Pastry Arts, West Genessee); Colleen Viggiano, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Leah Estock, Secretary (Pastry Arts, Baldwinsville); Back row - Eric Wise, Treasurer (Construction Technology, Solvay); Greg Kowalski, Parliamentarian (Culinary Arts, Baldwinsville); Shane Duquette, Vice President (Auto Collision, Cicero North-Syracuse)

School Library System Hosts Fall Conference

On October 30th the School Library Systems of OCM BOCES, Oswego County BOCES and the Syracuse City School District held their 11th Annual Fall Conference.

Keynote speaker Allison Zmuda, author of *Librarians as Learning Specialists*, provided an informative and humorous session on creating a positive learning environment out of your library.

OCM BOCES District Superintendent, Jessica Cohen, welcomed the large group of participants and challenged them to make a connection with students. Several sponsors and vendors were also in attendance to demonstrate new technology and provide book sales.



Students Get Lesson in Politics and Public Service from Congressman

On Thursday November 6th, Congressman James Walsh visited the OCM BOCES New Visions Criminal Justice classroom at the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office. The class is made up of 24 seniors from Onondaga county. Charlie Wilson is the instructor and Denise Mecca is the teaching assistant.

Congressman Walsh gave an introduction about how and why he got into politics and public service and spoke about wanting to fix things in his community. After the introduction, he graciously took questions from the students on topics ranging from cleaning up Onondaga Lake, fixing the graduation rate in America, the Iraq War, 9/11 stories, educational issues, Barack Obama, and the transformation of the 174th into the Predator Drone base.

At the end of the visit, Walsh posed for group photos with the class. The students were very engaged and appreciated his time spent with them.



OCM BOCES Programs Observed by Azerbaijan Visitors



Azerbaijani Interpreter Emin Hasanov and Founder and Editor-in-Chief of "The World Disabled" newspaper, present OCM BOCES' Karen Koch with a sample of carpeting made in Azerbaijan. The gift was a token of appreciation for teaching the group about special education and students with disabilities.

Four visitors from Azerbaijan, a secular country located near the Caspian Sea, recently visited OCM BOCES to observe our educational processes, with particular interest in special education and persons with disabilities. The visitors, accompanied by interpreters, a program facilitator through the Open World Program and the Executive Director of the International Center of Syracuse, spent time observing and interacting with classes at the Career Training Center and the Henry Campus.

The visitors came to BOCES with varied personal and professional interests in persons with disabilities and consequently had different learning expectations. They are policy makers in their country and are working to reform their educational system. Their professional lives in Azerbaijan include a disability newspaper founder/editor in chief, a database officer working with inclusive education and the executive director of a disability awareness and learning center.

The visitors asked questions to students and staff and also presented gifts. They finished their visit to our schools with lunch at the Class Act Dining Hall prepared by OCM BOCES students.

State Education Department Visits Local Bilingual Education Program



Dr. Pedro Ruiz, Coordinator of the New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, recently visited Allen Road Elementary School in the North Syracuse Central School District, to speak with ESL (English as a Second Language) students and teachers. OCM BOCES BETAC (Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Center) Director, Justine Kolb, accompanied Dr. Ruiz to Allen Road School and other Central New York schools with ESL programs. Pictured left from left to right: Justine Kolb, Dr. Ruiz and David Lunden, Allen Road Elementary School Principal.

— OCM BOCES' Tobacco Policy Coordinator — Selected for National Program



OCM BOCES' Tobacco Policy Coordinator, Kari Shanahan (pictured left) is one of 29 Central New Yorker's selected to participate in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Ladder to Leadership program.

Kari Shanahan will be traveling to North Carolina in December, but it isn't to escape the Central New York weather (although the thought of warmer temperatures isn't altogether unappealing to her!) Kari will be taking part in the second large group meeting of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) Ladder to Leadership program. The 16 month program of the two organizations, in collaboration with the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, is a national fellowship designed to help train the next generation of community health leaders.

Many industries and sectors, including education, are facing an impending exodus of senior leaders who plan to retire in the coming years. Recent research has shown an essential element of improving schools has identified strong instructional leadership as a critical component. OCM BOCES set leadership development as a goal for the 2007-08 school year and continues to strive to meet this goal by encouraging this and other opportunities for learning and professional development.

Kari was notified this past summer of her selection into the program and the RWJF recently announced the names of all 29 grant recipients from Central New York nonprofit organizations. That large group met for the first time in September at a kick-off and introductory meeting. At the meeting, small groups were developed, and each group decided on a public health issue to focus their time together upon. The topics that the participants will work on in their small groups, are: end of life issues; silos (a system approach); succession planning; uninsured populations; and access to care.

Kari's group, which will work on access to care, has met since the September meeting, and will do so again before heading to North Carolina. All participants will work with a Team Coach and will be evaluated individually as well as part of both their small and larger group. Members of the groups will present their project and potential solutions to the community in December of 2009.

The RWJF Ladder to Leadership program aims to boost the skills and capabilities of early- to mid-level professionals working in health and health-related nonprofit organizations so they will be positioned to lead these organizations in the future as many current leaders retire. The 16-month leadership curriculum includes face-to-face training sessions, individualized executive coaching and team project work.

Kari is looking forward to working on her project and is grateful for the opportunity the grant provides, saying, "I have no idea where this will lead, but the journey is going to be exciting!"

Holiday Stress? Think EAP!



The holidays can be a stressful time for everyone. The cost of buying gifts, travel and entertaining can all put increased strain on an already stretched budget. These things, coupled

with family pressure, can be overwhelming at a time when the expectation is that this is "the most wonderful time of the year". The holidays are not always wonderful for everyone, so remember that the Employee Assistance Program is available to help you with family stress, financial problems, and just feeling down at the holidays or anytime.

For more information about OCM BOCES Employee Assistance Program or to make an appointment, visit them on the web at <http://eap.ocmboces.org> or call 1-800-EAP-8764, (315) 471-1361. EAP is a confidential service!

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