

April 2020

BOCES BITS

Message from the Deputy Superintendent:

This April 2020 edition of BOCES Bits brings an interesting mix of highlights, many from a time when we were still working in classrooms and offices, together. So much has changed, and so much continues to change. I hope you all stay healthy as we continue to work together, united and strong, to get to the other side of this crisis.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colleen Viggiano".

Colleen Viggiano
Deputy Superintendent, OCM BOCES

Please share your good news!

If you have any interesting, positive or uplifting stories you would like to see in the next edition of BOCES Bits, please send an email to editors Jackie Wiegand at jwiegand@ocmboces.org or Katie Jensen at kjensen@ocmboces.org.

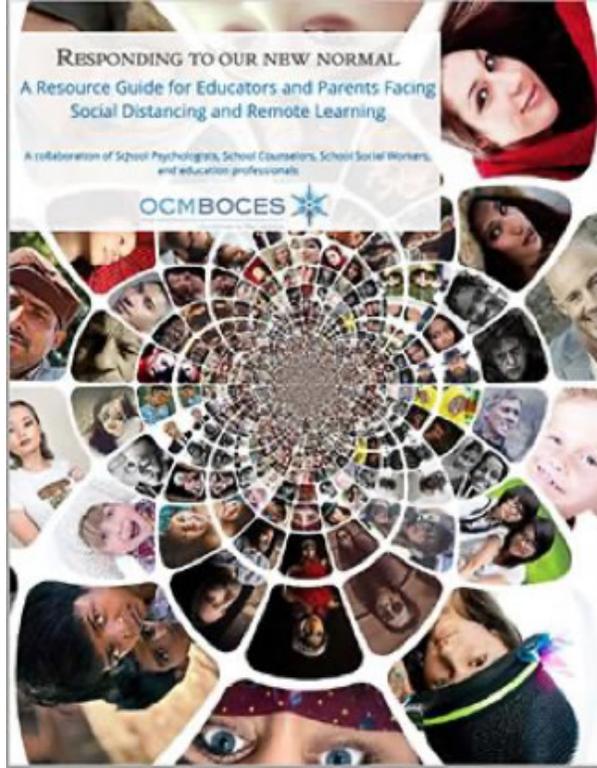
Social & emotional resources for all

Forty-six school psychologists, counselors, social workers and other education professionals from across the region collaborated recently to create a new, 14-page document to help educators and parents face the social and emotional challenges associated with COVID-19.

The document, called [Responding to Our New Normal: A Resource Guide for Educators and Parents Facing Social Distancing and Remote Learning](#), is easy to use and packed with self-care guidance and other tools for managing the unique challenges of the pandemic:

- Addressing social isolation
- Maintaining the home-school connection
- Social skills in a remote setting
- Resources to assist parents

This large collaboration was the brainchild of OCM BOCES teacher-trainer Jackie Beck in Instructional Support Services. Beck wanted to harness the collective expertise of professionals who live and work in Central New York. They were happy and eager to help. “It takes a village to support not only a child, but also a parent, a colleague, a school, and a community,” Beck wrote in the introduction. Contributors to the guide encourage everyone to take advantage of these resources and share the information with others. [Be sure to take a look!](#)



We care! We miss you! Be brave! Warm, humorous, uplifting messages support students at home

Our OCM BOCES instructors are sharing upbeat messages with students in humorous, touching and creative ways, all from the safety of their homes. It started with [this amazing video from our facilitators at Innovation Tech](#), and then it grew. Our OCM BOCES SKATE teams in Fayetteville (in photo) and East Syracuse Minoa shared colorful messages with students to commemorate Autism Awareness Month. You can check out similarly uplifting videos from the [Fremont SKATE team](#) and [Stellata program](#).

Virtual Spirit Weeks produced a flurry of videos from the Special Education staff. If you didn't get to see them, check out:

- ["Brave"](#)
- [BOCES Blue Day](#)
- [Words from an Assistant SU Basketball Coach](#)



VIRTUAL Spirit Week

Monday: Hair Like You Just Don't Care!
Grab the hair gel, hats, bandanas, wigs... you name it! Rock some crazy hair!
Hangout Question of the Day: What's your favorite HARD ROCK song?

Tuesday: Couch Potato Tuesday!
Stay in your PJs & get comfy while you work from home!
Hangout Question of the Day: What's your TV/Movie guilty pleasure (school appropriate... obvi)?

Wednesday: Wacky Camera Wednesday!
Make your at-home camera set up as CRAZY as possible! Pick a weird background or crazy camera effect!
Hangout Question of the Day: How are you keeping from going WACKY at home?

Thursday: Special Guest Day!
Grab your parents, siblings, friends or pets that are at home and bring them to class!
Hangout Question of the Day: Introduce your guest! Tell us their favorite song or song that reminds you of them.

Special Guest

Friday: PEP RALLY PUMP-UP FRIDAY!
What gets you pumped? Sports, Art, Music, Science, English, History? Show us your "pumped-up" by dressing as someone in your "field" of interest. Family Group with the most participation wins!
Hangout Question of the Day: What's your PUMP UP song?



First-year teacher & former meteorologist talks about remote learning



Innovation Tech Facilitator Molly Matott caught up with some old TV news colleagues from CNY Central on April 8 to talk about how much she misses her students in the era of remote learning. Matott was hired at OCM BOCES last summer after previously working as a meteorologist for the station. [Check out her interview on the 7 p.m. news show with Michael Benny.](#)

Latest *Culture Counts* offers self-care challenge, smoothie recipes, more

Each month, OCM BOCES produces a newsletter that focuses on creating a positive organizational culture and promoting wellness among students and staff. [In the March/April issue](#), we talk about Restorative Practices in the virtual world, present a self-care challenge and share some recipes for healthy, springtime smoothies.

Employees throughout OCM BOCES are now being invited to provide articles for *Culture Counts* that offer information on these topics or spotlight what we are doing at BOCES to support these themes. [All of the latest issues can be found on our website.](#) We want to hear from you! Please feel free to submit ideas to Special Education Director Rosanna Grund at rgrund@ocmboces.org. Articles are due by the 15th of each month.

Student Services Monthly Newsletter May 2019

Culture COUNTS

Start your day with "Check-in Circles" to build community

By Randi Downs

Over the last couple of months, we have seen Restorative Circles taking place in our classrooms! As our 9-12 grade teachers get trained throughout this year, I'm sure we will be seeing more; however, you don't need to wait for training to get started! Start class with a "Check-in Circle." Be sure that all of your students are present in the circle, and that there are no obstacles or barriers between you. Use a talking piece so that all voices can be heard. Try some of these Check-in Circle sentence starters:

- My favorite part of last week was....
- I will help others by ...
- I enjoy spending time ...
- The thing I am most excited about right now is ...
- I want to improve on ...

Commit to starting class with a circle over the next few months, and see what happens to the community when you take time to build relationships!

Restorative Practice Tip for Administrators:
Start the day with a quick standing "Check-in Circle" with your staff. Perhaps they share a celebration or a concern, or even a funny story. This only needs to take 5-10 minutes, but is such an important part of building a caring and safe community!

Remember 2019?

Check out [our OCM BOCES highlights from 2019 in this video](#) created for the OCM BOCES Annual Meeting. About 50 school superintendents, administrators and Board of Education members from our component districts joined the OCM BOCES leadership team for the virtual Annual Meeting on April 1. Deputy Superintendent Colleen Viggiano [shared the highlights video](#) and [important 2020-2021 budget information that can be found at ocmboces.org](#). In addition, you can also check out [the 2019 OCM BOCES Annual Report](#).

Instructional Support Services revs up remote professional development for districts

Our Instructional Support Services division has been providing a wide variety of remote professional development opportunities for our component districts. As of April 16, the ISS staff collectively provided 76 online workshops, sharing, and drop-in sessions, reaching 1,469 educators, averaging at least 23 per session. Our districts are very appreciative of these high-quality learning sessions designed for their staff.

New Resources for Parent/Caregivers

Don't forget the remote learning website created by ISS and the Central New York Regional Information Center that [provides one-stop shopping for a litany of free, educational online learning tools](#), including [a new, comprehensive website](#) that provides an abundance of practical and educational resources for parents and caregivers.

Students recite The Pledge on NewsChannel 9



Elementary students in the OCM BOCES Deaf and Hard of Hearing program in Solvay appeared on the NewsChannel 9 morning show on April 1 to show how they cite The Pledge of Allegiance in sign language. [If you missed it, you can still watch it here.](#) (This video was pre-recorded.)

CNYRIC Update



How has COVID-19 affected a myriad of district services offered through the Central New York Regional Information Center? [This detailed document](#) offers a summary for services such as Digital Records Management, Financial Services, Model Schools, Printing, and many other other CNYRIC offerings.

OCM BOCES employees recognized in early March

Before the school closures, several OCM BOCES employees were recognized for their exemplary service at an Employee Recognition Luncheon held March 5 at the Thompson Road Campus. Culinary students treated the honorees and guests with a variety of tasty entrées and desserts.



Standing in the photo (from left to right) are **Dan Case**, OCM BOCES Science Center; **Lou Reid**, Marketing; Deputy Superintendent **Colleen Viggiano**; **Charlene Maciak**, Career & Technical Education at Thompson Road Campus; **Julie Connors**, Seven Valleys New Tech Academy; **Renee Mitchell-Compton**, Special Education at McEvoy; and **Wendy Lloyd** and **Denise Lodor-Morris**, STARS program at Thompson Road

Ever dream of opening a coffee shop? These students made it happen!



Earlier this year, students in the OCM BOCES SKATE classroom at North Syracuse Junior High School developed the necessary skills to run a coffee business. Students brainstormed a name (Blue Star Cafe), created their own logo, counted money, greeted customers properly, took orders, and served great-tasting products such as coffee, tea and hot chocolate.

According to Special Education Administrator Ryan Oyer, all of the students' hard work paid off: The Blue Star Café officially opened for deliveries on Jan. 10. It was open to the main office, library, health office, custodians, and guidance office, with the goal of opening it up to the entire junior high staff. The cafe even included an online

ordering system in which drinks could be ordered through a QR code that takes you to a Google Forms link.

Nearly 200 students honored at Adult Education graduation

Congratulations to nearly 200 students in our full-time certification and literacy programs, who walked across the stage Feb. 26 for a graduation ceremony at Onondaga Community College. The bleachers were packed with relatives, friends and other loved ones who came to support our graduates. See dozens of photos from the event on our [OCM BOCES - Adult Education Facebook page](#). You can also watch [a short piece that aired on NewsChannel 9](#) the night of the event.



Students partner with each other - and a local business - for a sweet result

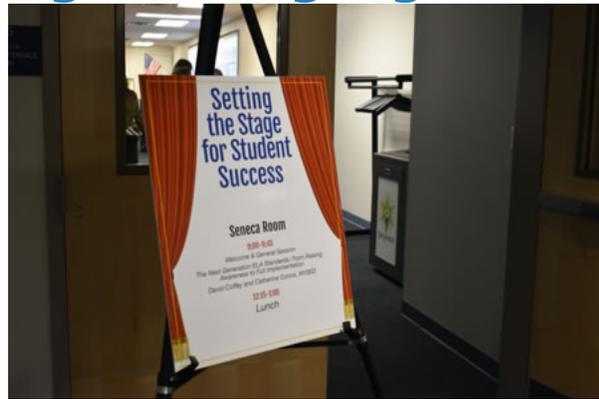
When school was still in session, students from the Cortlandville New Vision Environmental Science and Graphic Communications programs teamed up to make fresh, eye-catching bottles of maple syrup that were later put on sale in the Lime Hollow Nature Center gift shop.

The project began when the New Vision students tapped, cooked, and bottled the maple syrup at Lime Hollow Nature Center, where their classroom is based. Later, Graphic Communications students designed the labels for the maple syrup jugs, resulting in one label for a large jug, another for a small jug. Students partnered with a local business, Quadraflex Quality Labels in Cortland, to send in their designs and see the labels being printed and cut. [For more information and photos, go to ocmboces.org.](#)



Educators across the state gather at OCM BOCES to focus on English Language Arts

OCM BOCES staff in our ISS Division had the honor of hosting a statewide conference March 5 at our Main Campus that focused on new state standards for ELA, which will go into effect at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. ISS Literacy Coordinator Kathryn Daughton said the conference, titled “Setting the Stage for Student Success: A Spotlight on the Next Generation Learning Standards,” drew more than 100 educators and administrators for sessions that focused on topics ranging from aligning curriculum, supporting English Language Learners, formative assessments, and using inquiry in the classroom. “It was a great day of learning,” Daughton said, “and the OCM BOCES literacy team looks forward to turnkeying many of these sessions for our region in the future.”



Digital reading challenge shifts learning into 'OverDrive'

A digital reading challenge presented by the newly consolidated School Library Systems at OCM BOCES and CiTi, the BOCES in Oswego County, resulted in a happy winner: Liverpool High School.

School Library System Coordinator Diana Wendell said the challenge resulted in the largest year-to-year increase for the month of February in the use of OverDrive, a free digital library service offered through BOCES. The service allows students and teachers to borrow digital content, such as ebooks and audio books, at any time, anywhere. In the photo, Liverpool High School Library Media Specialist Sue Stagnitta stands with School Library System Coordinator Diana Wendell and Liverpool High School Associate Principal Michael Barody. Stagnitta accepted the prize for winning the contest, a free Samsung Galaxy Tab. Since then, OverDrive has become an invaluable resource for students and teachers who are learning remotely.



Lockheed Martin program featured on Spectrum

Before social distancing measures went into place, our new, business-embedded program at Lockheed Martin drew a large number of interested students and parents to an Open House on March 3 at the Liverpool complex. The event drew the attention of Spectrum News, [which aired this segment about the New Vision program to promote the Open House to parents.](#)

STARS students spread kindness in 'GO RED' campaign

Appropriately enough, Feb. 14 was "GO RED" day for STARS students at the Thompson Road Campus. Students in the Friends of Rachel (FOR) Club handed out red-heart lollipops to numerous OCM BOCES staff in various programs on campus. The lollipops were decorated with the American Heart Association campaign slogan, "GO RED." Hearts were also in the air as FOR Club students at STARS created Valentines to be distributed to veterans at the Syracuse VA Medical Center as part of their "Valentines for Vets" project.



Crown Road students, staff catch the beat of Adanfo Ensemble

Students and staff at Crown Road Campus enjoyed a presentation from the Adanfo Ensemble, a group made up of highly experienced and talented dancers and musicians from Africa and the United States. Adanfo, which means "friends and family," has performed at such venues as the New York State Fair, Turning Stone Resort Casino, Harborfest and at various schools and universities. This is the second year the ensemble has performed at OCM BOCES, according to Special Education Principal Julie Darmody-Latham, who coordinated the event.

Cosmetology job fair offers advice, opportunities for students

Representatives from a variety of salons across Central New York visited the OCM BOCES Adult Education Cosmetology program on March 2 to answer questions and offer insights to students about how to be successful in their careers. Students were advised to show passion, personality and professionalism when seeking out a new job, as well as a willingness to work hard, communicate, be a team player, and listen to clients. Instructor Dawn Iozzo organized the event, which was also open to previous students.

Districts to benefit from new R&D Lab at the CNYRIC

At the CNYRIC, excitement continues to grow for the new Research & Design (R&D) Lab, which offers a convenient space for districts to test out new technology without the pressure of a sales pitch.

CNYRIC Director of Technology Jim O'Connor has helped create a space where the newest trends in technology are "much more than bullet points or a sales presentation," CNYRIC Director Pam Mazzaferro said. A quick look into the room offers a glimpse at a variety of ambitious technology: Gaming equipment manufacturer Alienware has provided the R&D Lab with a variety of high-spec personal computer (PC) builds and ultrawide monitors to help promote the CNYRIC's burgeoning eSports service. Huge touch-screen monitors line the back of the room, while flexible desks and seating can be used to accommodate a number of visitors without tying the room to a particular layout or design. In the photos, guests enjoy demonstrations at a CNYRIC Tech Fair on Feb. 14.

Power of Collaboration: Examining 'digital fluency' standards

In January, a brand-new Leadership Network of local educators converged at OCM BOCES for the first time to dive into new state learning standards for "Computer Science and Digital Fluency." Those standards have been conditionally approved by the New York State Board of Regents in January, with full implementation for K-12 expected by September 2024. Our ISS division is facilitating this network in conjunction with the CNYRIC.

Innovation Tech wraps up College Career Readiness Term

Innovation Tech wrapped up its second-annual College Career Readiness (CCR) Term in early March with an "Exhibition of Excellence" that featured 10 student presentations for an audience of family, friends, Board of Education members, Innovation Tech staff and other guests. The goal of the CCR Term was to immerse students in the vast landscape of potential careers and what it takes to achieve them. At the Exhibition of Excellence, held at the OCM BOCES Main Campus, students presented their research on a variety of careers: cyber security, welding, early intervention, parole officer, zoology, entertainment, 911 operator, history and music, welding, and expressive drawing. Congratulations to all these students on their successful presentations!

Welding teacher touts OCM BOCES in video

Duane Debejian, the welding instructor at our Thompson Road Campus, [was recently featured in a video for the MaverickCNC plasma table, a state-of-the-art feature of the welding lab](#). Check out Duane's positive comments about OCM BOCES and the welding program and how this advanced equipment has been a game-changer for our students who want to gain the best possible skills for future employment.

Tapping into knowledge: Students learn about maple sugar

What does sap taste like, straight from the tree? Students from the Homer Junior High and Intermediate STAR classes visited their OCM BOCES friends recently in the New Vision Environmental Science program at Lime Hollow Nature Center. According to STAR teacher Amy Whittington, New Vision students guided STAR students through stations in the Lime Hollow Sugar Bush, learning all about the maple sugaring process. Students even tasted sap right from the tree! They also learned about the science program and the kinds of careers students in New Visions are preparing for after high school. STAR students left homemade bird treats hanging from the trees (in photo) as a way of saying "thanks" to the students.

Getting real-world experience

During the first weeks of our shift to off-campus learning, West Genesee construction student Parker Martinez joined professional contractors on a project to build a new Dunkin' Donuts near the Regional Market. His teacher, Mike Cavender, had suggested authentic learning opportunities, so Martinez stepped up to the challenge while he could. In the photo, Martinez works near a highway overpass and billboard near the Regional Market.

The OCM BOCES and CNYRIC Clothing Store is still open!

Despite the pandemic, you can still buy online from our new OCM BOCES and CNYRIC [clothing store](#). [The store offers apparel with either the OCM BOCES or CNYRIC logo embroidered on the clothes](#). The items in the store represent the top five styles BOCES employees selected in a recent survey. We hope to add more items in the future!

Have questions about the store, including information about sizing and shipping? We can answer them! Visit <http://www.ocmboces.org/clothingstore> to learn more.

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.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The OCM BOCES non-discrimination policy is on our website. Please [click here](#) to view it in full.

Need help? Don't forget about our Employee Assistance Program

Don't forget about our confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which can help you with many challenges associated with the pandemic, as well as other needs. Go to ocmboces.org/eap for more.

If you would like to contribute to the BOCES bits, which is generally distributed once each month, please contact Jackie Wiegand at jwiegand@ocmboces.org or Katie Jensen at kjensen@ocmboces.org.

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