

October 2020

BOCES BITS

Message from the Deputy Superintendent:

At the time of this writing, we have successfully completed more than three full weeks of school. I would like to thank everyone across the organization for doing a commendable job with our health and safety protocols. As the cooler weather sets in and keeps us mostly indoors, it is more important than ever to stay vigilant about our new procedures so we can all stay healthy. Until we get to the other side of this pandemic, we cannot "let up" with any of the precautions that have allowed us to reopen and stay open so far.

October is a month that recognizes many important causes, including School Board Recognition Week that runs from Oct. 19-23. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the board members on our OCM BOCES Board of Education who are so generous with volunteering their time and attention to keep us on the right track and always moving forward. Their dedication and passion is evident in everything they do to support our students, employees, school districts and community.

This is our first edition of *BOCES Bits* for the 2020-21 school year. For several years, we have used this internal newsletter to share information and shine a light on our good news, but it only scratches the surface! We are always looking for ideas, so please let us know (please see the orange box) about any stories you would like to share.

Looking ahead, October gives a chance to really gain momentum in our OCM BOCES classrooms while also offering all the delights of the new season, from the explosion of fall colors to the satisfying crunch of home-grown apples. I hope you and your loved ones get a chance to enjoy it.



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.

Sincerely,

OCM BOCES Bitmoji training video goes viral

A webinar on YouTube that offers a ["how to" for creating virtual Bitmoji classrooms](#) has generated about 40,000 views from across the country. **Todd Parks**, an instructional technology integration specialist from the Central New York Regional Information Center, and **Randi Downs**, an instructional coach in Student Services, facilitated the webinar to help educators create one of these colorful virtual environments that feature avatar versions of themselves. The virtual classroom acts as a "landing space" for materials and content so students can simply click around the classroom — on a bookshelf or whiteboard, for example — to get access to educational resources.



OCM BOCES gets special recognition for business-embedded programs

Largely because of our business-embedded Career & Technical programs, OCM BOCES was recognized recently as a "Champion of Change!" by the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA). The recognition came about after *Education Week* interviewed Deputy Superintendent **Colleen Viggiano** for an article that focused on CTE programs at businesses such as WCNY, Driver's Village, Lockheed Martin and Tracey Road Equipment (see story below).



NYSSBA recognizes programs as "Champions of Change!" if they optimize existing resources to address issues of equity; demonstrate strong student academic performance; and introduce unique learning environments that are cutting-edge and future-oriented. The recognition is presented quarterly to a few select districts. On Oct. 15, at the next OCM BOCES Board of Education meeting at our Cortlandville Campus, Sandra H. Ruffo will be presenting OCM BOCES with a banner that recognizes this honor. Ruffo is Second Vice President and Area 4 Director at NYSSBA. [You can read the *Education Week* article here.](#)

Students learn about heavy equipment, diesel technology at Tracey Road

In a groundbreaking program that started this fall at Tracey Road Equipment, 24 students from 10 component districts are working on-site to learn specialized skills in heavy equipment repair, operation, and diesel technology. Students in the two-year program are shadowing industry professionals and enjoying a large, dedicated work bay to



practice hands-on skills. Executives with Tracey Road, off Manlius Center Road in East Syracuse, say the partnership with BOCES will teach highly-sought skills to students who could eventually serve as future employees. Students from Baldwinsville, Cazenovia, Chittenango, Fabius-Pompey, Jamesville-DeWitt, Liverpool, Marcellus, North Syracuse, Solvay and West Genesee are "off to a great start," said their OCM BOCES teacher, **Brian Green**.

Innovation Tech staff sews 537 masks for students

Walking into Innovation Tech on the first day of school, students were not only greeted with waves and virtual hugs, but also a hallway filled with tables of masks in a variety of colors, sizes and patterns. Working together under the guidance of Facilitator Martha FitzPartrick, the staff at Innovation Tech sewed 537 masks for students to keep, allowing each student to take five masks to use throughout the week. [Read more about this great start to the school year here.](#)



New Vision Criminal Justice program enjoys more space, better views in new, convenient location

Students in the New Vision Criminal Justice Program started their academic year in a new, larger space on the eighth floor of the John H. Mulroy Civic Center in Syracuse. The space offers a convenient downtown location for guest speakers and classroom

trips, plenty of space for social distancing, and — as a bonus — panoramic views of downtown Syracuse and the surrounding hillsides. This year, 29 students from 10 districts are participating in the program, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary under the direction of Charlie Wilson — who has taught this program since its inception — and his teaching assistant, Denise Mecca. In its new home, the program can safely accommodate a full class of students. Previously, it was housed inside the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department.



Thank you for a great Opening Week!

After six months of being away from our students, it was great to see their smiling faces Sept. 9 when we welcomed them back to school for the first day of the 2020-2021 year. In case you missed it, [this video](#) captures the excitement of our first few days of school in numerous OCM BOCES programs, as well as images of our new health and safety protocols.

Teacher Immersion Program moves forward

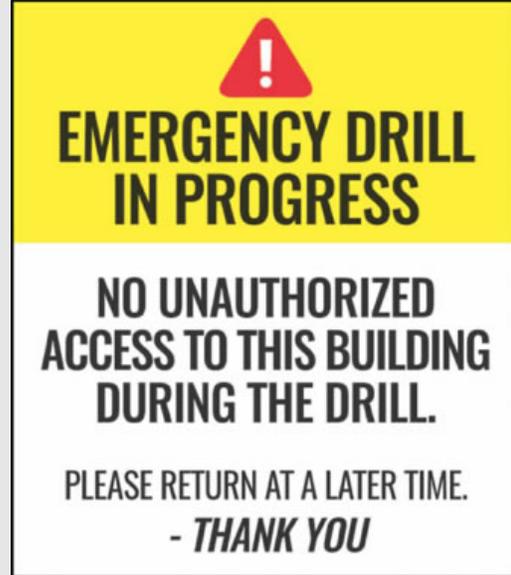
A program in Instructional Support Services (ISS) addresses two big needs: the state and national shortage of substitute teachers, and the need for college education majors to find practical teaching experience.

The OCM BOCES Teacher Immersion Program is off to a great start this fall after receiving nearly 100 applications from students at SUNY Cortland. If selected, a successful “fellow” will receive professional development from the ISS team and a spot in a participating district. So far, the program has been applauded by participating school districts, which have all asked for last year’s fellows to return. ISS is hoping to expand the program to other colleges in the spring.

Have you done your required employee trainings yet? Don't forget!

If you have not already done so, please complete these required online trainings:

- [Orientation Training for Emergency Response Procedures](#)
deadline was Sept. 15
- [Ed Law 2d](#)
by Oct. 15 (Start by creating a PIN.)
- [Right-to-Know \(RTK\)/Bloodborne Pathogens \(BBP\)](#)
by Dec. 15
- [Sexual Harassment Prevention Training](#)
by Dec. 15



Please contact your supervisor if you have any questions!

Online learning: These students chatted with a British scientist about fruit fly brains

About 95 elementary students from several component districts converged on Zoom last spring to get a live lesson from British scientist Dr. Maria O'Hanlon, who is studying the brains of fruit flies to discover more about the genetic components of Parkinson's Disease. Dr. O'Hanlon is from Teesside University in Middlesbrough England. She shared a virtual tour of her lab, research videos, and lots of colorful slides for students who filled the Zoom "chat" with dozens of questions. The session was set up by Chris Leece, STEM coordinator for the OCM BOCES ISS division.



Spread the word! OCM BOCES is hiring

OCM BOCES is hiring for a wide range of positions. Take a look at our [Employment Opportunities webpage](#) if you are interested in learning more and spreading the word.

It's time to join OCM BOCES on social media!

OCM BOCES is on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, so follow us! Tag us! 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) and [Instagram](#) (@ocm.boces). 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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