

HOT TOPICS



ONC
BOCES

A discussion of
today's education issues...

About HOT TOPICS...

People are the core of Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES. Whether it is in a classroom or in a business office, ONC BOCES is about people collaborating to provide the best possible education for learners of all ages and abilities.

ONC BOCES administrators, program managers and faculty are experts in their fields who build effective partnerships with component school districts and with staff at the two main campuses in Milford and Grand Gorge. ONC BOCES focuses on ways to both lead and support our component school staff, students and communities.

This Hot Topics publication features some of the people who make ONC BOCES a success, and they share their expertise on some of the key issues facing education today.

Inside...

Multiple Pathways to Graduation.....	3
Smart Schools Bond Act.....	4
Perkins Grants.....	5
All-day Programs.....	6
Career and Tech Programs.....	7
CDOS Diploma	8
Itinerant Services.....	9
HSE(GED) Exams	10
Common Core	11
Distance Learning	12
Inquiry-based Learning.....	13
Students with Disabilities	14
Forensic Speech and Debate	15
BOCES Funding Formula	16
Student Activity Fund Accounting.....	17
School Disaster Plans.....	18
Labor Mediation	19
Teacher Certification.....	20
Internet Safety.....	21
School Safety Plans	22
Affordable Care Act Impacts.....	23





Nicholas Savin

Many paths lead to graduation

Graduation is the goal, not only for the student, but for the school district. ONC BOCES is committed to providing the best opportunities for students to not only graduate, but to thrive after high school. The new Multiple Pathways to Graduation approach is a way to accomplish this.

What is the Multiple Pathways to Graduation approach?

This initiative by the New York State Board of Regents has broadened the manner in which students can earn a high school diploma by offering them new opportunities to demonstrate college and career ready skills. Students will now be able to pursue coursework in the arts, humanities, CTE and STEM related fields.

What is the goal of Multiple Pathways to Graduation?

The goal is to provide technical skills and work-based learning opportunities for students, who will be able to demonstrate college and career skills by taking a rigorous approved exam within a pathway to fulfill part of the Regents examination graduations requirement. Students who take an industry-based assessment can substitute that test for one of two required Regents exams in social studies. Students will still need to take and pass their social studies courses.

Why is it important?

Currently, far too many students are required to take remedial classes when they enter college. The more remedial classes they need to take, the less likely they are to finish college. A combination of high academic expectations and equally rigorous high expectations in one of several pathway options will lead to greater student success. This flexible approach acknowledges the value of technical and work-based skills. Too many students are dropping out of school or not seeing the connection between their school work and careers. This initiative seeks to increase student engagement with their education. Student achievement, leading to increased college and career ready skills and citizen readiness will follow.

How does ONC BOCES ensure the success of the Multiple Pathways to Graduation approach?

ONC BOCES is committed to working with our component schools to fully maximize this opportunity for students. Much of our work over the years has been to increase the rigor and relevance of the CTE courses. Our staff works with and engages local business and industry leaders to refine our programs each year to ensure rigorous high quality and standards. In fact, many of our students earn college credits in the CTE classes with cooperative agreements with colleges.

Nicholas Savin is the superintendent of ONC BOCES. Savin is a former superintendent of Cherry Valley-Springfield Central School District.
NSavin@oncboces.org.



State voters favor Smart Schools

The Smart Schools Bond Act was approved by 62 percent of the voters on Election Day 2014. It authorizes the state to issue \$2 billion in bonds to fund certain enhancements at school districts, including increased access to classroom technology, high-speed Internet connectivity, constructing classrooms for pre-kindergarten programs, replacing temporary, trailer classrooms with permanent space and the installation of high-tech security systems.

How does a school district access the Smart Schools funding?

School districts may take advantage of the Smart Schools funding opportunities through the development of a Smart Schools Investment Plan that shows how the district will use the funds. Public input is required in development of the plan, which needs to be approved by the Smart Schools Review Board before any funds are distributed. The state education commission, budget director and SUNY chancellor sit on the review board. More details are expected this spring.

How much will my local district get and how is the amount determined?

The Smart Schools aid amount is based on the district's percentage of formula school aid in 2013-14, with the exclusion

of building aid, universal pre-kindergarten and the Gap Elimination Adjustment in 2013-14.



Jennifer Bolton Carls

Is there a local match required to receive Smart Schools funding?

No. There is no local share required to receive the Smart Schools funding.

Do schools that receive Smart Schools funding have to share the benefits with private schools within their districts?

Yes. There is a requirement under the act that stipulates school districts loan instructional classroom technology such as laptops, tablets, computers, servers and projects which expand broadband access and wireless internet connectivity at no cost to private schools. This requirement operates under similar conditions as existing programs. The value of the loan may be no greater than \$250 per student in the private school.

How much will local districts be eligible to receive?

The allocation in our BOCES region totals \$8.4 Million, with the smallest amount of \$87,858 for Andes Central School and largest amount of \$1,276,085 for Oneonta City School District.



Dr. Jennifer Bolton Carls is the deputy superintendent of ONC BOCES and also serves as a director with the Association of School Business Officials International. JBolton@oncboces.org



Joe Booan

Perkins Grants boost ONC BOCES programs

The Federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act funds

secondary and post-secondary institutions and preps students to be more competitive in the world economy. Perkins funds are used to improve career and technical education programs designed to prepare students to work in high-skill, high-wage and high-demand careers.

Why are Perkins Grants important for ONC BOCES?

Over the past decade, ONC BOCES has used these funds to hire core academic instructors who assisted in mapping core curriculum contained within each CTE program. This initiative was critical to the successful approval of CTE programs by NYSED and the infusion of integrated core academic credit. It also allowed flexibility for students in meeting Regents diploma requirements and supported access to CTE training.

Are Perkins Grants able to benefit students with disabilities?

Perkins Grants are instrumental for providing funds to start new programs, expand and improve existing programs and for supporting all students. They supplemented the development of the consultant teacher model at ONC BOCES, which supported students with disabilities

and provided access to the general curriculum.

What types of programs have Perkins grants been used to fund?

ONC BOCES has been able to develop industry licensure attached to specific programs, expand/improve curriculum within programs, and develop new programs. The class D water operator certification, alternative energy curriculum and the welding program at the Northern Catskills Occupational Center were all the result of Perkins initiatives.

How much has ONC BOCES taken in from the Perkins grant program?

Over the past 14 years, nearly \$1.3 million was awarded to ONC BOCES in support of Career and Technical Education. Perkins grants are instrumental for providing funds to start new programs, expand and improve existing programs and for supporting all students, including special populations. ONC BOCES is able to develop industry licensure attached to specific programs, expand/improve curriculum within programs, and develop new programs. Without Perkins Grants, ONC BOCES would find it much more difficult to provide quality programming to students. There are many alumni of ONC BOCES who are in the workforce who have benefited from this program, which was first authorized by the federal government in 1984.

Joe Booan is the director of student programs at ONC BOCES. Student programs include Career and Technical Education, Alternative Education and Special Education. JBooan@oncboces.org



All-day programs are popular at NCOC

All-day programs at the ONC BOCES Northern Catskills Occupational Center are attended by about 40 students who participate for a variety of reasons. ONC BOCES formerly offered only half-day career and technical education programs, with two sets of CTE students. But the expansion to all-day CTE programs has cut down on the costs of transportation and has provided an immersive, complete day of education for students.

What are the New Visions programs offered at NCOC?

The New Visions accelerated programs for grade 12 students include pre-engineering and health care professions. New Visions allows students to earn college credit in the health or engineering fields. The programs are great for college-bound students interested in the medical or engineering professions.

What are the traditional Career and Technical Education programs?

Students may attend CTE programs in automotive technology, building trades, cosmetology, culinary arts, equipment operation and repair, visual arts communications and technology and welding and metal fabrication. While attending, they also take core

subjects such as math, ELA, science or social studies for a full-day of education. These courses help them meet graduation requirements.



Christopher Fatta

Why do students choose to attend an all-day CTE program?

Some students may come to NCOC for a fresh start at success while receiving specialized instruction, which may include attending a CTE program for grades 9 and 10 and then attending another CTE program for grades 11 and 12. There are also students in jeopardy of dropping out of school and are disenfranchised with their educational experience, so NCOC is a great place for students to experience a different type of learning environment designed specifically to meet their needs.

What more is there to know about the all-day programs?

The all-day programs feature learning experiences and course work that are customized to meet the needs of each individual student. They provide a wider range of options for students and are an example of the many ways ONC BOCES strives to tailor its programming to meet the individual needs of students. For some, all-day programs are the best way to ensure their success and put them on the path to graduation.



Christopher A. Fatta is the principal at the ONC BOCES Northern Catskills Occupational Center in Grand Gorge. CFatta@oncboces.org



Deb McMullen

CTE programs build futures

There are many benefits for high school students in Career and Technical Education. Students earn a solid education and real-life experiences that prepare them for college and careers. Students gain the knowledge to pass industry-recognized certification exams, which can give them credentials others don't receive until after an associate's degree or until they have worked in an industry.

What are the state-approved CTE programs at ONC BOCES?

The state approved programs at ONC BOCES include automotive technology, building trades, cosmetology, culinary arts, health occupations, information technology, natural resource occupations, visual arts communications and technology and welding and metal fabrication.

How are the ONC BOCES CTE programs approved by the state?

All CTE programs go through a rigorous approval process every five years. Programs can receive New York State Education Department approval in the academic areas of fourth-year English and social studies and third-year math or science. The academic subject areas are integrated within the CTE curriculum.

What is an articulation agreement?

Articulation agreements make it possible

for students to accelerate their post-secondary goals and reduce the cost of college tuition. Agreements are created with post-secondary institutions that offer majors related to the career field for each CTE program. Students completing a CTE program and attending a partner college can earn from three to 18 college credits at no cost. Each college has its own set of criteria regarding the awarding of articulated credit.

What colleges have articulation agreements with ONC BOCES?

All CTE programs have articulation agreements in place. Agreements exist for SUNY Delhi, Fulton-Montgomery Community College, Lincoln Tech, SUNY Morrisville, SUNY Alfred, Herkimer County Community College, Paul Smith's College, Art Institute of Pittsburgh, the Culinary Institute of America, Johnson and Wales, Schenectady County Community College, SUNY Cobleskill, Penn College of Technology, Utica School of Commerce, Syracuse University and SUNY Oneonta.

Are there work-based learning and work-study components to CTE?

Yes. Every CTE program offers students the opportunity for in-program, work-based learning experiences that model industry requirements, prepare students for industry certifications and help students connect what they are learning to real-life career scenarios.

*Deb McMullen is the principal at the ONC BOCES Otsego Area Occupational Center. She was a CTE student and teacher, as well as OAOC assistant principal.
DMcMullen@oncboces.org*



New credential created for students with disabilities



Pam Barber

The IEP Diploma that was available to students with disabilities is no longer offered. But there is a new option for students who are working toward graduation from high school. The Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential is only available to students classified as having disabilities.

Is the CDOS Commencement Credential a diploma?

The credential is not a diploma, but it is an exiting credential for a student leaving high school. The CDOS credential can be earned as a supplement to a regular diploma or if the student is unable to meet diploma standards, the credential may be awarded as the student's exiting credential provided the student has attended school for at least 12 years, excluding kindergarten.

What does it take to earn the CDOS Commencement Credential?

In order for students to earn a CDOS Credential, they must:

- Complete a career plan that generally starts in ninth grade.
- Demonstrate they have met the CDOS learning standards in the area of career exploration and development, integrated learning and universal foundation skills.

- Complete the equivalent of 2 units of study (216 hours) in CTE coursework and at least 54 hours of work-based learning; and at least one completed employability profile.
- Students can also achieve the CDOS credential if they meet the criteria for a national work-readiness credential.

Are all students with disabilities eligible for the CDOS Commencement Credential?

No. Students being assessed by the New York State Alternative Assessment are not eligible for the CDOS Commencement Credential. Students being assessed in this manner are eligible for the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential.

How has the new CDOS credential been received so far by students and parents?

Parents and students are excited to have another opportunity to show they have developed career ready skills for the future. As this is a newly created credential, there is explanation and education required to assist families and industries in understanding what the credential means and shows. This is a positive opportunity for our students and will give them an edge.



*Pam Barber is an assistant principal and CSE liaison with ONC BOCES component districts to provide and support students with disabilities.
PBarber@oncboces.org*



Anne Rode

Itinerant services help many

Options for itinerant services have changed over the years as instructional practices, therapies and technology have evolved. Itinerant teachers and therapists from ONC BOCES are incorporating more technology, joining school-based intervention teams and providing more push-in services to enhance classroom instruction and overall school district support.

What are some of the ways that service delivery options have changed for itinerant and related services?

Some providers now push into classrooms to teach skill building, skill maintenance or other strategies useful for students' developing needs. Itinerant teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to support the diverse needs of students and enhance cross-curricular options. School psychologists serve an integral role by providing research-based assistance to enhance progress-monitoring strategies.

What are some examples of push-in services that itinerant therapists and teachers provide?

Occupational therapists provide handwriting instruction and help students with pencil grip, body positioning and other skills needed for proper handwriting. Speech providers model functional communication strategies in classrooms

where students have limited verbal capabilities. Physical therapists consult with classroom staff to support whole-group gross motor development.

What is the primary way itinerants use technology to support learning?

Most itinerant therapists and teachers use iPads for interactive games, skills-based practice and as a communication device, particularly for non-verbal students.

Are there other ways that itinerant teachers and service providers enhance programs in schools?

Teachers in art, business, ESL, foreign language, health, physical education, school library and science enrichment support Common Core instruction by collaborating with classroom teachers. Many therapists and counselors work directly with students, agencies and district personnel to assist with transitions from school to work, or school to college.

How can school districts assist with maintaining the ability to provide these exciting service delivery options?

Regular and efficient communication with districts and itinerant staff is the key to establishing, enhancing, or maintaining itinerant and related services program options and staffing. Knowing what districts need enables us to create supportive structures, including pricing and scheduling.

*Anne Rode, director of Itinerant Services and Administrative Programs at ONC BOCES, supervises and evaluates all itinerant and related services staff.
ARode@oncboces.org*



Adult education is evolving

In January 2014, a new exam was adopted by the New York State Education Department that is now being used for people to obtain their High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma, or what most people refer to as their GED.

How is the HSE different from the GED?

Although many people will tell you they have received their “GED,” what they have really received is their HSE diploma. The simplest way to explain this is by example: When a person sneezes and somebody offers them a Kleenex, they are actually offering them a tissue. Kleenex just happens to be a brand name that most people associate with tissues. When somebody was looking to obtain an HSE diploma, the test that they used to take to get it was called the GED, but that was not actually the name of what they received.

What is the new exam being given for people to earn their HSE?

The new exam is called the Test Assessing Secondary Completion and it follows a similar format to the GED. Both have five sections which include math, science, social studies, reading and writing. A student must pass all five sections in order to receive their high school credential. If a person took the GED and passed any part of it, they will receive credit for that section. When they then take the TASC,

they will take the full test but only need to pass those sections where they do not currently have

a passing grade. Once all five parts are successfully passed, an HSE will be issued. Common Core Learning Standards will be incorporated into the TASC over a period of several years.



Rob Lishansky

How and why did the ONC BOCES Adult Education Program merge with the Oneonta City School District program?

The merging of these two programs provides a much larger network of resources and options for the community. With the exception of one employee who retired, ONC BOCES was able to hire the rest of OCSD's adult education staff. There are thousands of Otsego and Delaware County residents who do not have a high school diploma. Both programs offered a means for people to obtain their diploma but were competing with each other for the same clients. The merger has allowed for a much more efficient use of resources and personnel. ONC now offers HSE and English as a second language classes at its occupational centers in Milford and Grand Gorge, as well as at sites in Oneonta and Delhi. Students enrolled in an HSE program can also enroll in one of the many career and technical education programs at BOCES.



Rob Lishansky is the adult education coordinator at ONC BOCES. He is an active member of the Central Southern Tier Adult Education Network and NYACCE. RLishansky@oncboces.org



Looking behind Common Core

Teresa Glavin The New York State Education Department adopted the Common Core State Standards, which are designed to ensure high school graduates are prepared to enter either college or a career, and ultimately be inquiring, analytical and critical-thinking citizens. These high standards are now being implemented in at least 45 states, with the goal of equipping our children with the knowledge and skills to compete globally.

What are the benefits of Common Core for students?

The expected benefits of implementing Common Core are students getting a much deeper and thorough understanding of both content and functional skills, as well as increased problem-solving skills and logical reasoning. In ELA, the rigor of the CCSS includes reading more non-fiction, increasing vocabulary and placing a greater emphasis on researching and defending claims with evidence in reading and writing. In math, students are spending more time on real-world applications of classroom material, developing speed and accuracy and solving problems quickly with the use of appropriate tools and strategies.

How is Common Core being measured for effectiveness?

In spring 2013, the first CCSS assessments in grades three through eight in English Language Arts and mathematics were given. This school year, students will continue to be expected to take these CCSS assessments. As of the last school year, high school students were able to take the CCSS-aligned grade 11 English and grade 9 algebra Regents exams administered in June, assessing the CCSS in those subjects. This year, the CCSS-aligned geometry Regents exam will be given, and in 2018, a CCSS-aligned global history Regents exam is expected.

What resources does ONC BOCES have available to assist districts with Common Core?

ONC BOCES has a strong focus on staff development for our component districts. We offer regional Inquiry Team Workshops throughout the year turn-keying NYSED Network Team Institute presentations and resources, as well as in-district staff development. We encourage the use of on-line resources like <https://www.engageny.org/> and <http://achievethecore.org/>.

Teresa Glavin is coordinator of Instructional Support Services and leads a team of specialists assisting component school districts in understanding Common Core standards. TGlavin@oncboces.org



Distance learning reaches new heights

Distance Learning continues to grow as a resource for districts for synchronous (videoconferencing) or asynchronous (online) and blended courses. The videoconference network is used by students in kindergarten through grade 12, faculty, administration, staff and community members. Enrollment has increased from 429 students in 2008-09 to 794 students in 2013-14.

How many school districts in the area are participating in the distance learning service?

The number of school districts participating in the service has consistently risen and distance learning is occurring at 20 sites, including NCOC and OAOC. Outreach has expanded to include Sullivan County BOCES, Madison-Oneida BOCES and DCMO BOCES regions. Several districts are adding a second and third dedicated videoconferencing classroom.

How many courses are offered through distance learning?

In working with the Distance Learning Scheduling Committee, the network has never been as efficient as it is today, with the districts currently sharing 42 courses, of which 32 include the ability to earn college credit.

What are the benefits of video conferencing?

Students in grades K-12 benefit from videoconferencing through virtual field trips and collaborations, many of which are free and align with national and state standards. Instructors receive a lesson which includes pre and post-activities developed by experts. Videoconferencing enables our rural students to interact with experts from around the world and with students from diverse populations.

How do community members benefit from distance learning programs?

Community members are taking advantage of the network for coaching classes in the evenings. The courses run from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and they are able to attend the courses at their local high schools.

On what other areas of technology should students focus?

An area that should continue to show growth is online learning. Students entering their freshmen year of college are faced with online management systems that will house information for a majority of their courses. Every student should have familiarity with some form of online management system prior to graduation. It is important to educate students on time management when using online learning programs.



Tami Fancher



Tami Fancher is the distance learning coordinator for ONC BOCES. She is a 16-year member of the New York State Distance Learning Consortium.
TFancher@oncboces.org



Eileen Coryat

Inquiry-based learning aligns with Common Core

The inquiry-based learning process starts with a student's current knowledge and the student then develops questions and makes predictions or hypothesis. Research leads them to investigation and discovery to construct new understanding and conclusions.

How does Common Core relate to inquiry-based learning?

Common Core has inquiry and inquiry-based learning embedded in the standards. School librarians are positioned to collaborate with teachers to design and re-design projects that will lead to problem solving and investigation to create new knowledge. "Cut and Paste" research projects are not an aspect of the Common Core standards.

What is an important tool librarians can use to assist students?

School librarians have a wonderful resource in the Empire State Information Fluency Continuum. The ESIFC was developed by the New York City School Library System. This document is endorsed by the School Library System Association, the New York Library

Association and the New York State Library. The ESIFC benchmarks skills for information and inquiry and is aligned with Common Core Reading and Writing Standards for kindergarten through grade 12. The ESIFC benchmarks and CCSS alignment transfer to all subject areas

How else can librarians help with the learning process?

School librarians develop a balanced and a diverse collection of literary and informational texts including databases, magazine and newspaper articles, books, primary documents and Internet resources that expose children to multiple perspectives. They develop texts sets with multiple perspectives to meet the demands of text complexity.

How can ONC BOCES help a component school library with inquiry-based learning?

The ONC BOCES School Library System has been providing school librarians with professional development on inquiry-based learning and research and Common Core. Our school librarians are using the Empire State Information Fluency Continuum. The ESIFC is an important educational tool that includes the information literacy and inquiry skills that are important for all students to learn.

*Eileen Coryat is the coordinator of the ONC BOCES school library system and coordinates support for component school librarians.
ECoryat@oncboces.org*



Options abound for students with disabilities



Lynn Gould

The New York State Board of Regents has approved new graduation options that provide students with disabilities alternate ways to graduate from high school and demonstrate college and career readiness. While Regents, Regents with Honors and Regents with Advanced Designation are open to all students, these three options are also available to students with disabilities.

What is the Local Diploma via the Safety Net?

The Local Diploma via the Safety Net is available only for students with disabilities. All students with disabilities are provided a 55 to 64 pass option on the five required Regents exams. These include ELA, math, science, U.S. history and global history. Two years ago, the compensatory option became available. This means a student with a disability must earn 55 or above on the ELA and the math Regents exam. They can earn 45 to 54 on one or more of the required Regents exams in science, global or U.S. history as long as the student scores higher than 65 on another Regents exam to compensate for the lower score.

What is the Career Development and Occupational Studies Credential?

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, students with disabilities can earn a Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential. It can be

awarded to a student with a disability as a supplement to a regular high school diploma or for a student with a disability who is unable to earn a regular diploma because of the disability. It's not a diploma, but a student with the CDOS credential would be eligible to continue high school until age 21 to earn a regular diploma.

What requirements must be completed to award a student the CDOS Credential?

In addition to the standard requirements for earning the CDOS credential, a student who meets a nationally-recognized work-readiness credentials may also qualify for a CDOS credential. These national credentials include: Skills USA, National Work Readiness Credential, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems and Workforce Skills Certificate System.

What is the Skills and Achievement Credential?

It is a credential for students with severe disabilities who are eligible to take the New York State Alternate Assessment. It's an alternative to the IEP diploma, which, beginning in 2013-14, is no longer available.



Lynn Gould is a special education school improvement specialist at ONC BOCES and works with school districts, teachers and CSE chairs to provide technical assistance with special education. LGould@oncboces.org



Jo Boring

As schools are subject to increasing pressure to cut programs and do without, the Catskill Area School Study Council seeks to provide enriching student programs and staff development opportunities to enhance options. One such program is forensic speech and debate. Forensics is the art or study of argumentative discourse.

What is the CASSC Forensic Speech and Debate Program?

The CASSC Forensics Speech and Debate Program is an opportunity for students in grades 7 through 12 to be a part of the time-honored traditions of public speaking and the art of argument.

What types of activities does the CASSC Forensic Speech and Debate Program conduct?

There are a variety of events a student can compete in, ranging from Lincoln-Douglas-style debates to impromptu speeches or dramatic interpretations. Last fall, local students debated on the following resolution: A just society ought to presume consent for organ procurement from the deceased. Other students will be using research and publications to answer questions posed about current events in the United States. Still others will be interpreting works of poetry and prose.

Public speaking and debate enriches students

Why is speech and debate relevant to today's educational landscape?

Few things help prepare students to be successful with Common Core standards and career and college readiness like forensics. Consider an article written by Lauren Davis titled, "Five Things Every Teacher Should be doing to meet the CCSS." Davis suggests the five high points are: Lead high level text based discussions, focus on the process as well as content, create assignments for real audiences and with real purpose, teach argument and not just persuasion and increase text complexity. Forensics hits these points and more. A thorough case for forensics meeting Common Core needs is available on the National Forensics League website: www.speechanddebate.org.

What else do I need to know about forensic speech and debate?

Few people realize there are scholarship opportunities related to forensics. From the Women's Debate Institute to prestigious colleges such as George Mason University and Seton Hall, enthusiasm for forensics is alive and well. Forensic speech and debate is a fun way to help students prepare for college and careers and aligns with the Common Core standards.

Jo Boring is the executive coordinator of the Catskill Area School Study Council, a partnership between SUNY Oneonta and ONC and DCMO BOCES component schools. JBoring@oncboces.org



State BOCES aid helps important programs



Lynn Chase

When school districts contract with Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES, they are eligible to receive state BOCES aid to help pay for the services provided by ONC BOCES.

services, CTE, instructional support, some itinerant services, media and library services and alternative education.

What are the aid ratios and how are they chosen?

BOCES aid is calculated using the highest of two aid ratios – the resident weighted average daily attendance (RWADA) aid ratio or the millage aid ratio.

What is the RWADA aid ratio?

The RWADA aid ratio is determined by using the income wealth of a community per a weighted student attendance in a particular district from year-to-year compared to the state average.

What is the millage aid ratio?

The millage aid ratio is a determination of the wealth of a school district based on real property values.

What is the next calculation to determine state BOCES aid?

The next calculation is obtained by multiplying aidable expenses for each program. Examples of aidable programs include administration, distance learning, management

What is a non-aidable expense?

Non-aidable expenses include unshared materials, pre-kindergarten, transportation, adult education, special education, salaries over \$30,000, and more than 60 percent of the cost of a full-time employee.

What is the next step in the process to determine BOCES aid?

Total approved aidable expenses are allocated to each district according to their participation in each service. The district's percentage of expenses is then multiplied by their respective aid ratio and that figure, with a subtraction for miscellaneous revenues, represents the total amount of BOCES aid a district is eligible to receive.

What if I have further questions about how BOCES aid is administered and what my school district may need to know?

Component district officials and others interested in learning more about how BOCES aid is administered may contact me at ONC BOCES.



Lynn Chase is director of management services for ONC BOCES. She oversees the business office, budget development, policies, procedures and compliance with state and federal laws. LChase@oncboces.org



Greg Beall

Student activity fund oversight prevents audit trouble

External and internal auditors often flag student activity fund accounting for improper or poor accounting practices more than any other school funds. ONC BOCES purchased software to assist schools in the service with student activity fund accounting and had the CBO perform monthly treasurer reports. This eliminated all auditors' comments except the profit and loss statement reconciliation and the model has been adopted by several area schools.

What is the student activity fund online accounting system?

It is designed to provide students and staff complete control over their student activities financial and accounting practices. The software easily guides students and school staff through the tasks of check writing, receipt and deposit posting, general journal entries, bank reconciliation, encumbrance, purchase order printing and period-end procedures.

Who should be involved in the student activity fund accounting activities?

The district treasurer, student activity treasurer, class and activity advisors and activity treasurers and the ONC BOCES CBO should be included.

Others that should be included are the bank representatives, software company support personnel and supply vendors.

Where can the student activity accounting be conducted?

All personnel involved will be given access through the rights and privileges parts of the software. The students and school staff have access by being able to sign in from any computer in school, at home or other off-site location.

What functions will be run from the any location?

Student activity online software allows students and school staff to perform check writing, receipt and deposit posting, general journal entries, bank reconciliation, encumbrance, purchasing order printing and period-end procedures from any place there is a computer with Internet access. For additional security, all checks must be printed by authorized personnel and at a school printer.

When can the student activity accounting be monitored?

This software allows all those with rights and privileges to monitor what is happening to their accounts anytime and from any place. This provides multiple layers of accountability.

*Greg Beall is the director of Central Business Office Services at ONC BOCES.
GBeall@oncboces.org*



Disaster plans are necessities

Over the last several years, various disasters have occurred at school districts in our region, including floods, tornadoes and ice storms. These occurrences are good reminders districts should have a disaster recovery plan in place. ONC BOCES has a disaster recovery plan that utilizes the OAOC campus as backup for many of the business office functions that take place at the NCOC campus.

What is a disaster recovery plan?

A disaster recovery plan is a set of procedures designed to help an organization work toward 'business as usual' as quickly as possible, in the event of a disaster. The disaster could be a man-made event, such as a hazardous materials spill, civil unrest, power failure or fire. Or, it could be a natural occurrence like a flood, lighting strike, blizzard or tornado.

Who should be involved in the development of the plan?

The district should form a planning committee, consisting of management and employees from various departments, such as technology, business and buildings and grounds. Others that should be included as part of the planning are the bank representatives, software company support personnel, insurance companies and supply vendors.

Where should alternate work areas/locations be established?

Districts should assess its buildings and determine which ones might make alternate locations. Other options could include another school district, a local business or a church.

How will the alternate location be set up?

The district needs to be sure the alternate location can support the information technology infrastructure and be sizable enough to have room for required information technology equipment, including adequate heating and cooling capability. Because information technology has in recent years become more integral to educational and administrative operations at schools, it is vital that continuation of information technology capability be accounted for in a school's disaster recovery plan.

When should the plan be tested?

The plan should be tested at least annually and be subject to review and updates by a dedicated committee of school officials. The ONC BOCES region in recent years has seen several major flooding events and storms, some of which have had direct impacts on ONC BOCES and its component school districts.



Patricia Loker



Patricia Loker is the assistant business manager for the ONC BOCES Central Business Office, which provides various levels of business office support for a number of school districts. PLoker@oncboces.org



Doug Favaloro

Mediators save districts money

Due to scarce funds and very tight budgets over the last few years, more and more contract negotiations end up deadlocked and at impasse. Utilizing mediation, which is designed to break impasse, could save districts money and time.

What happens when opposing sides of the bargaining table cannot work out a labor agreement?

During difficult negotiations, when a deal cannot be reached, one or both parties may request mediation services from the New York State Public Employment Relations Board. A Declaration of Impasse must be filed with the director of conciliation.

How does a mediation session work?

At the beginning of the mediation session, the mediator will often call both parties together, face to face, to hear respective positions on the major divisive issues, as well as to address some of the logistics of the mediation process. Be prepared to concisely articulate the positions of the district. However, during the mediation session, most of the work is usually done with the parties in separate meetings and locations. Often, neither party will actually talk directly to one another, as the mediator will physically shuttle between the parties in an attempt to find common ground to

resolve the areas of dispute.

What are some strategies to make the most of mediation?

Make sure to use the periods of time when your negotiating team is alone with the mediator as opportunities to build a solid working relationship with the district negotiating team. It is critical that the district's positions and boundaries be made clear to the mediator. It is also very important to let the mediator know their services are valued.

What makes for a good mediator?

The best mediators know how to clearly and fully articulate the perspectives and concerns of each bargaining team to the other. The truly gifted mediators and the district negotiators who understand the mediation process take this knowledge and help to create bridges between the sides that, ultimately, lead to cost-effective and mutually beneficial labor agreements.

Who does the mediator work for?

The mediator works for the state Public Employees Relations Board and does not charge the parties for his or her time. Typically, the mediator has an in-depth labor relations background and strong interpersonal skills. Due to budgetary constraints, the mediator is usually limited by PERB for a maximum of three days per assignment.

Douglas Favaloro is the director of employee relations and provides solutions to component school districts in the areas of personnel, labor relations and contract management. DFavaloro@oncboces.org



ONC BOCES provides teacher, staff certification

Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES is the Regional Certification Office for the state Office of Teaching Initiatives, which oversees certification of teachers and other staff who work in public schools. New York state requires that teachers, administrators, pupil personnel service providers and non-teacher coaches hold certification in order to be employed in a public school.

What is a Regional Certification Office?

A Regional Certification Office evaluates transcripts and processes applications for certification. The office can evaluate and recommend certification for all areas with the exception of the following certificates: school district leader, school building leader, school district business leader, occupational education services, bilingual education, English as a second language, educational technology specialist, time extensions and applications for certification for reciprocity from other states.

What is the application process at the Regional Certification Office at ONC BOCES?

All applications for certification must be submitted electronically using the New York State TEACH Online Services website at www.nysed.gov/tcert. When a candidate is completing his or her application for certificate online via the TEACH Online system, he or she would

select the ONC BOCES Regional Certification Office to review the application.

Our Regional Certification Office works with candidates to ensure his or her application for certification is appropriately completed with all the necessary documents. Applications and transcripts cannot be reviewed until a paid application for certification is on file in TEACH. The Regional Certification Office will process the application and forward the documentation to the Office of Teaching for final determination. NYSED and Regional Certification Officers are not able to “pre-approve” coursework.

How long does the process take?

It varies. If a candidate applies through our Regional Certification Office, the application review process is usually much quicker than if he or she applies directly through the Office of Teaching. Once a certificate is issued in TEACH, it will be mailed from the Office of Teaching in Albany. The printing of time-limited certificates has been discontinued. Certificates that do not expire, such as professional, permanent and teaching assistant III, will continue to be printed and mailed to applicants. Our Regional Certification Office has no control of the actual length of time between the time of evaluation of an application and the receipt of an actual certification. The TEACH system should serve as the official record for all issued, expired, or revoked certificates.



Diane Matteson



Diane Matteson is the human resources coordinator at ONC BOCES. She oversees the Regional Certification Office. DMatteson@oncboces.org



Balancing Internet safety and educational opportunities

In the last few years, many schools have shifted from the “digital age” to the “connected age” by providing each child a computer or mobile device to use at school and at home. Instruction in the classroom has evolved from the desktop computers in the corner, to mobile devices used in and out of the classroom to nurture learning and collaboration.

What is the Children’s Internet Protection Act?

In 2000, Congress passed CIPA and, aside from an update in 2011, much of the law has not been revised, despite changes in technology and its use. Many school districts are unclear of what the responsibilities are under CIPA.

What does CIPA actually require from schools and libraries regarding student internet access?

Schools and libraries must certify they have an Internet safety policy that includes technology protection measures that block Internet access to content that is obscene, pornographic or harmful to minors. It also requires online activities of minors be monitored and that education be provided to them about appropriate online behavior. This includes how to interact with other people on social networking websites and cyberbullying awareness.

What can schools do to be compliant with CIPA, while ensuring all students have equal access to learning opportunities on the Internet?

Schools need to encourage digital citizenship rather than restrict Internet access. Students should be instructed on how to use technology appropriately and responsibly, while also protecting themselves from the darker corners of the Internet. Digital citizenship can be defined as “the ability to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in the digital world.”

What about school-owned mobile devices and computers that go home with students? Are school districts responsible for Internet use off the district network?

While CIPA does make it clear about the requirements to filter the Internet at the school district level, it’s not clear if this applies to the computers and devices themselves. If schools are paying for connectivity on these devices, then yes, CIPA applies. It seems schools are not liable for Internet content on school-purchased devices off-campus as of now. The Federal Communications Commission is working on clarifying the rules for computers and devices that leave school campuses in the near future. As more information becomes available, it will be shared with our educational partners.

Genevieve Ballard, network administrator at ONC BOCES, leads the Technology Services Department and coordinates the Technology Directors Group within the ONC BOCES region. GBallard@oncboces.org



New guidelines loom for school safety plans

New York State implemented SAVE legislation in 2000 requiring schools to create a district-wide safety plan and to submit an updated copy of the plan to the New York State Police each year. When the Sandy Hook tragedy happened in December 2012, the federal government responded with a nationwide initiative to create a standardized multi-hazard emergency plan for schools.

Who will this impact?

A new template was developed for New York state schools to utilize when updating their building-level safety plans. The new format applies to all school districts with a population of less than 125,000 that do not have an emergency plan in place or that have not updated their plan recently.

What if a school district already has a state compliant SAVE plan?

If a school district has a good plan and it is current, nothing else needs to be done – for now.

What are the new guidelines?

Safe Schools NY has developed this new template based on National Incident Management Systems and Federal Emergency Management Agency principles. The template has not been released, but information will be coming soon.



Josh Reiss

Is this new format mandatory?

Not yet, but be prepared. With the federal government pushing for standardization, this new template will likely be mandatory in the near future.

What should be done now?

For now, district officials should check their district plan to ensure it is current, but don't make any major changes yet. If a district does not have an existing plan, administrators should wait until the new template is released in early 2015. Plans can then be updated or created using the new format.

How can ONC BOCES assist with developing or revising a district-wide safety plan?

Districts were notified about upcoming regional instructional meetings. These will be hosted by Safe Schools NY and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help bring districts up to speed on the new template. ONC BOCES will make sure each component district receives the template and will also assist, if needed, with filling in the blanks and reviewing the completed document. More information can be found at <http://safeschools.ny.gov/>.



*Josh Reiss is the safety/risk management coordinator at ONC BOCES.
JReiss@oncboces.org*



Kevin Kreis

ACA impacts benefit planning

A requirement under the Affordable Care Act mandates that administrators of the

Catskill Area Schools Employee Benefit plan determine which variable-hour employees are of full-time status and therefore eligible for coverage. Full-time status under ACA is 30 or more hours a week or 130 hours per month. Guidelines call for the establishment of three measuring periods done through a board of education resolution to determine full-time status.

What is the Standard Measurement Period?

This is the period to begin and end the tabulation of the amount of time a variable-hour employee has worked. This is also known as the “look-back period.” This period must begin in 2014 - generally July 1 based on the plan year - to meet the reporting requirements effective in 2015. This period must be a minimum of three months but no more than 12 months. The dates of the period must be specified in the board resolution. For a newly hired, variable-hour employee, the initial measurement period must also be established. We recommend a 12-month look-back period to allow greater flexibility to manage variable-hour employees.

What is the Administrative Period?

This is the optional period beginning immediately following the end of a

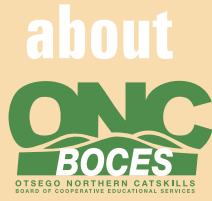
Standard Measurement Period and ending immediately before the start of the associated stability period (typically beginning July 1 and ending August 31, when school is not in session). The purpose of the administrative period is to allow an employer time to count employees’ hours and determine health coverage eligibility. The administrative period cannot be longer than 90 days and it may neither lengthen nor reduce the standard measurement period or stability period. For a newly hired, variable-hour employee, the administrative period would be the period up to 90 days following the anniversary date.

What is the Stability Period?

This period follows directly after the first administrative period and must be at least 6 months in duration but no more than 12 months. It cannot be less than the duration of the standard measurement period. Any employee who is deemed to be full-time during the standard measurement period must be treated as a full-time employee during the stability period, regardless of the number of hours the employee works during the stability period. For example, if the employee’s hours fall below 30 hours per week during the subsequent stability period, the offer of insurance must nevertheless be ongoing during the stability period. If the administrative period is July 1 through Aug. 31, the stability period would begin on Sept. 1 and end on Aug. 31 to match up with the recommended 12 month look-back period.

Kevin Kreis is the health benefits and claims coordinator for CASEBP at ONC BOCES. He provides guidance to the component school districts in CASEBP. KKreis@oncboces.org





Otsego Northern Catskills Board of Cooperative Educational Services is based in the upper Susquehanna River valley and the northern Catskill Mountains. In addition to providing adult and continuing education, ONC BOCES assists its 19 component school districts with a wide range of educational and administrative services.

ONC BOCES is anchored by campuses in Milford and Grand Gorge, which provide parallel programming to the 1660-square-mile area, as well as unique offerings to component districts and beyond.

Our partnerships with school districts and our communities help us provide the best possible education for learners of all ages and abilities.

We encourage all district leaders, administrators and professionals to read and redistribute this Hot Topics publication and contact our staff members, who are more than happy to share their expertise on a wide range of education issues.

Otsego Area Occupational Center

PO Box 57 (mailing)

1914 County Route 35 (street)

Milford, NY 13807

(607)-286-7715

WWW.ONCBOCES.ORG

Northern Catskills Occupational Center

PO Box 382 (mailing)

2020 Jump Brook Road (street)

Grand Gorge, NY 12434

(607)-588-6291

WWW.ONCBOCES.ORG

Our Partners

Andes Central School District

Charlotte Valley Central School District

Cherry Valley-Springfield Central School District

Cooperstown Central School District

Edmeston Central School District

Gilboa-Conesville Central School District

Hunter-Tannersville Central School District

Jefferson Central School District

Laurens Central School District

Margaretville Central School District

Milford Central School District

Morris Central School District

Oneonta City School District

Roxbury Central School District

Schenevus Central School District

South Kortright Central School District

Stamford Central School District

Windham-Ashland-Jewett Central School District

Worcester Central School District