As I prepare to move into the District Superintendent role at MOBOCES, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to our larger community. I’m honored to have been selected for the role and excited to be able to serve the region in this new capacity beginning on March 1. Although the work and responsibilities of the DS will be new to me, I’m certainly not a stranger to this excellent and dynamic organization.

For the past eight years, I’ve served as Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, and before that, I was an attorney and the Coordinator of our Labor Relations and Policy Service. During my 18 years at MOBOCES, I’ve worked closely with all of our component districts and hope to continue to meet your needs and foster the successful partnerships we’ve developed over the years. These partnerships are as important as ever at this time year, when we are all doing the difficult work of planning and budgeting for the next school year.

During this period of administrative transitions over the next few months, I remain fully committed to supporting the work you do and the work we do to ensure our learners of all ages and abilities have the tools, resources, programs and services they need to reach their highest potential. That has always been and continues to be our goal.
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Conservation Student Earns State Maple Title

High school senior Kyle Hale has been named New York State’s first-ever Maple King!

Kyle, a MOBOCES student from Canastota, received the honor during the Mid-Winter Maple Classic annual state conference in January. The conference is hosted jointly by the New York State Maple Producers Association and the New York FFA Alumni.

For the remainder of the year, Kyle will serve as an ambassador for the state’s maple industry, appearing, speaking and presenting during fairs, parades, festivals, conferences and other events.

Several counties around the state have had maple kings before, but no males have applied or competed before for the title at the state level, said Laurie Jean Britton, coordinator of the NYS Maple King/Queen Contest. Once their written applications are accepted, candidates complete a private panel interview, a prepared speech and answer spontaneous questions during the competition.

“Maple experience helps, but enthusiasm is really the big thing. We want our ambassadors to be good representatives of the maple industry,” Britton said. “Kyle had some great ideas, so we’re eager to see what he and the queen do this year.”

Kyle said one of his passions is promoting the agriculture industry.

“I love advocating for agriculture and FFA,” he said. “I am extremely lucky to have this position and be able to do something I love.”

Kyle developed an interest in maple as a sophomore. He began digging into the industry and tapped five trees to see if he enjoyed the work. As a junior, he enrolled in the Conservation program, learning as much as he could from instructor Don Van Slyke. He grew to tapping 50 trees this year, but does not yet sell his syrup.

He plans to earn a bachelor’s degree in agriculture business and a master’s degree in agriculture education, with a goal of becoming an agriculture teacher.

He has been active with FFA for five years and has served as Canastota’s chapter president for the past four years, representing his school, county and state at the New York State Fair, at various conferences and competitions, and through a new travelling Maple Experience educational exhibit. Last year, he earned his Empire Degree from NYS FFA and is currently working on his American Degree from the National FFA; he also plans to run again for state office this spring.

Outreach Club Raises Money For Veterans Center

The Community Outreach Club completed a “Greenlight a Vet” campaign to show their appreciation for military personnel and veterans. They raised $50.50 by selling green paper lightbulbs with thank you messages for 25 cents each and displaying them in the school.

Club members will donate the money and the bulbs to the Central New York Veterans Outreach Center in Utica.

Facilities Updates

MOBOCES recently completed a generator installation project for the MORIC’s Network Operations Center (NOC). The new generator will ensure connectivity and continuity of services in the event of a power outage for the 50 school districts and four BOCES centers that MORIC serves.

The Rossetti Education Center, where CTE programs are housed, is currently undergoing a renovation project to increase building security by moving the main office out of the Courtyard area and into the R1 entryway. The work will wrap up in the spring. We appreciate your patience!
Two Teachers Receive Classroom Grants

Two MOBOCES teachers received grants from national foundations this year to help infuse new instructional materials into the curriculum.

Jack Chesebro, a music teacher in the Alternative and Special Education division, received a $150 grant from Kappa Delta Pi, the international education honor society. It is the first award the MOBOCES music program has received since it was launched in 2016.

The grant will help purchase method books for instrumental lessons, sheet music and other material to expand the music literature available to Chesebro’s students. He currently offers both general music classes and lessons on the piano, guitar, recorder and percussion instruments. This year, two of Chesebro’s students performed piano solos at a program-wide holiday breakfast before the December break.

MOBOCES began offering music in its Alternative and Special Education on-campus programs as an additional avenue for students to explore creativity and the arts, to develop valuable social-emotional and life skills, and to form relationships with others who have similar musical interests.

In CTE, the Auto Collision Repair program received a donation of two new BASF Spray Guns through the Collision Repair Education Foundation Benchmark Grant. Teacher Ryan Tabolt worked last spring with Public Relations Specialist Nicole Pitt to submit a 2-minute video about the course and how additional grant-funded equipment would enhance the curriculum to better prepare students to work in the industry.

The Benchmark Grant, nicknamed “Ultimate Collision Education Makeover,” recognizes schools that have been doing an outstanding job in educating students in collision repair, but need some financial assistance to improve their program’s teaching materials and equipment. Schools that do not win the grant itself are still eligible for updated supplies, tools and equipment to support their programs.

Students from six area high schools learned the ins and outs of making videos in a full-day Video Production workshop, led by Syracuse University adjunct professor Jason Webb.

The workshop, presented by the School Library System, included tips for students on equipment, software, editing apps, shot composition and sound. But the highlight was time for students to delve into recording video, planning a video storyboard, and practicing using editing and production tools on their laptops, ipads and phones.

SLS brought Webb back as a follow-up to a December workshop on Video Production for Educators. SLS Coordinator Sue LeBlanc said teachers and librarians asked for a similar workshop targeted at high school students.

Students from Camden, Hamilton, Morrisville-Eaton, Rome, Stockbridge Valley and Vernon-Verona-Sherrill participated.

Left: Music teacher Jack Chesebro (center) and two of his students; Right: Auto Collision Repair students with their new paint spray guns.
Grant Supports Pyramid Model Workshop Series

Madison English teacher Jessica Mortensen worked with Staff Development Specialist Maria Papa to launch a new regional Professional Learning Community (PLC) for middle level ELA teachers.

Teachers from 10 districts participated in the first meeting in December to talk about literature and curriculum for grades 6-8. The group even took some time to journal as a way to reflect on their work, practice a task they often ask students to do, and relax during a busy time of year.

Mortensen and Papa worked with the Mid-State Teacher Center to include a book giveaway featuring middle level titles highlighted by the School Library System.

The MORIC has led a number of workshops, trainings and conferences this winter focused on instructional data usage and data security risks.

In January, MORIC leaders hosted Data Protection User Group meetings for district technology leaders. MORIC shared Education Law 2-d updates, information about the recent adoption of NYSED Part 121 Regulations, and details about the “Identify” function of the NIST Cybersecurity Framework.

During the NIST deep dive, RIC staff shared content in stations focused on the six categories of “Identify” including Asset Management, Business Environment, Governance, Risk Assessment, Risk Management Strategy, and the Supply Chain. Participants completed activities and received best practices, resources and boilerplate examples to complete this work, as well as time to work with their peers from across the region.

Camden, Canastota, Madison, Morrisville-Eaton, Oneida, Rome and Vernon-Verona-Sherrill technology leaders participated.

MORIC has also been hosting a series of monthly workshops on “Taking A Deep Dive into Data for Instructional Leaders.” The sessions are geared toward instructional coaches, reading/literacy coaches, mentor coordinators, department chairpeople, professional development coordinators and other instructional leaders who routinely use data to drive their practices. Participants discuss issues related to the monthly topic and then have time to work through specific questions and challenges in their districts.

Recent sessions have included monitoring progress on data goals to keep individuals and teams on task and focusing on student success.

The MORIC has led a number of workshops, trainings and conferences this spring on behalf of the Madison County Health Department. Pyramid Model is a social-emotional framework to support early learners.

The Madison County Health Department received a grant from the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York to offer free Pyramid trainings to the community. Madison County leaders reached out to Wuest and Ellen Olson of the Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension, both of whom are certified master trainers in the Pyramid model.

Sessions will be held in March, May and June. The full schedule and registration information can be found on our website, under Quick Links/Workshops & Trainings. Anyone who works with Madison County children is encouraged to attend the workshops.
Educators Continue Work On New Standards

The Staff and Curriculum Development team led a half-day Next Generation Learning Standards workshop for 50 educators and administrators from the region in January.

The turnkey training session, part of the Building Capacity phase of the new standards rollout, was intended to provide district representatives with enough information and resources to lead trainings within their districts for colleagues.

Staff Development Specialist Jonathan Cornue kicked off the afternoon with a presentation on state assessments. Participants then broke up into ELA and Math groups to examine specific areas of the standards and discuss implementation strategies.

The session was a follow-up to a summer Building Capacity turnkey training, held collaboratively with the staff development teams and district instructional leaders from the Oneida BOCES and Herkimer BOCES regions. MOBOCES area educators also had an opportunity to work with the Staff Development team on the ELA and Math standards during a December half-day workshop.

Participants at the January training were from Canastota, Madison, MOBOCES, New York State School for the Deaf, Oneida, Rome and Vernon-Verona-Sherrill.

Save the Date

Mark you calendars for some of our major events this spring. Visit our website for a complete list.

March 11 - CTE Open House & Student Showcase (snow date March 18)

March 20 - Mental Health Symposium

March 25 - National Technical Honor Society Induction

April 1 - MOBOCES Annual Meeting

April 3 - CTE Senior Career Fair

May 13 - School Library System Administrators Breakfast

June 3 - CTE Signing Day

June 9 - CTE Senior Awards

CTE Classes Complete Industry Training Courses

Health Related Careers students completed their 8-hour American Heart Association training in Basic Life Support for the Healthcare Provider (CPR/AED) as part of their program. The training is one of the requirements needed to work in the healthcare field.

Seniors in four programs - Carpentry, Heavy Equipment Operation, Outdoor Power Equipment and Electrical/HVAC - earned their OSHA 10 Hour certificates through a special course offered on campus. OSHA 10 is an industry safety certification that many employers look for when hiring new employees.
Students Explore Government In New Program

public speaking, developing a resume, interviewing and workplace expectations.

Students who are accepted into the program are eligible for nine college credits through MVCC in addition to credits toward high school graduation.

The fall semester included an opportunity to hear oral arguments at the New York Supreme Court Appellate Division and a panel discussion on business law at LeMoyne College.

Throughout the spring semester, students intern in various county government departments, including Social Services, Historian, County Attorney, Mental Health and Public Information. Some students have also been placed with local attorneys and elected officials.

By the end of the semester, each student will design, develop and implement some type of citizenship initiative related to their internship experience and deliver a detailed presentation on their year-long experience, teacher Liz Garofalo said.

For Oneida senior Jonathan Hubbard, his interest in history helped him land an internship in the Madison County Historian’s office. He said the program provides him with a unique opportunity to get ahead in his chosen career field.

"It’s an excellent opportunity to have an almost college-level education about the inner workings of government and society," he said.

Teachers Learn New Engagement Strategies

Staff and Curriculum Development hosted its popular workshop series on "Engagement Strategies for the Classroom" and "More Engagement Strategies for the Classroom" this winter. The workshops offer strategies for K-12 general and special education teachers on increasing student achievement and improving student engagement with instructional content. Topics included infusing hands-on activities into lessons, helping students take ownership of their learning, and making math more exciting.

Adult Literacy Boosts Use Of Online Assessments

The BOCES Consortium of Continuing Education has reached a major milestone in its quest to maximize the use of technology in its programs and assessments. Through an investment in Chromebooks and increased teacher and student buy-in, more than 95 percent of required literacy program assessments are now being administered through computer-based platforms.

For students, the use of computer-based assessment improves their college and career readiness and accommodates their testing needs with tools such as screen magnification, highlighters, calculators, and line guides built into the platforms. It also helps prepare them for the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) high school equivalency exam, which is administered online.

Teachers said they appreciate the additional information gained from computer-based assessment score reports, and they find that students take the computer-based assessments more seriously. The buy-in from students, teachers and administrators – coupled with the improved technology infrastructure and increased student support – have helped the adult education division lead the way in computer-based assessment.
Health Students Excel On Certification Exams

The BOCES Consortium of Continuing Education Health Occupations adult students recently demonstrated outstanding performance on their national certification exams for practical nursing and medical assisting.

Fourteen of the 15 Practical Nursing graduates from the Verona program passed the NCLEX licensing exam on their first attempt - an exemplary 93.3 percent pass rate. Adult Practical Nursing is an 11-month program that offers extensive training, coursework and clinical experience in Anatomy & Physiology, Foundations of Nursing, Pharmacology, Growth and Development, Nutrition, Medical Surgical Nursing, Mental Health, Maternal-Newborn nursing, Nursing Care of the Child, and Leadership.

Seven Medical Assisting students completed their classroom instruction and 63 externship hours, and all of them subsequently passed their National Administrative and Clinical Medical Assistant certification exams - a 100 percent pass rate. The Medical Assisting course is a 290-hour program that prepares students to support physicians and other healthcare professionals in an office, clinic or ambulatory setting.

Partnership Brings Nutrition Lessons To Classroom

Career Exploration students made a pizza feast in class as part of an ongoing cooking unit that helps them practice key life skills.

Students had to find and make recipes for four different pizzas. The activity provided them with experience in meal planning and development, following recipes, researching, time management, budgeting, shopping and teamwork.

By the end of class, students were digging into chicken wing pizza, tortilla pizza cups, pepperoni pizza and a dessert pizza with cherry pie filling, streusel and vanilla glaze.

Career Exploration students are also working with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County this semester to explore nutrition and wellness topics. A SNAP Ed Nutritionist visits each Friday to lead an interactive session on a specific topic, such as healthy foods trivia or a cooking demonstration featuring the four food groups.

New Classes Are Starting!

Interested in learning a new skill or hobby? Know someone looking to change careers? We’ve got that! Check out our new Adult Education catalog on our website!
Teachers Explore Drones in New PLC

A dozen teachers from the MOBOCES region have been meeting this year to discuss ways to increase the use of drones in the classroom.

During its most recent meeting, the new Drone PLC discussed new FAA regulations and spent time repairing the drones they are already using with students. It was the third meeting this year, and the group has grown in size and scope with each session, said group facilitator Tim McKenna, a Vernon-Verona-Sherrill High School technology teacher.

“The more you can get together with teachers who teach the same thing, the more you can share ideas,” he said. “This is such a new thing that the more we can share right now, the faster we’ll grow. It’s not something you can just look up on the Internet how to do.”

McKenna worked with Mid-State Teacher Center Director Maria Smith to launch the drone-focused PLC in the fall, after working with her on summer drone camps.

Smith said the conversations around drones in the classroom have sparked many ideas for student projects and curriculum integration as well as training and research opportunities for teachers. It has also created a network of enthusiastic teachers who can support each other as they learn.

McKenna said using drones is one way to provide students with real-world, hands-on opportunities to solve problems, work with others, think creatively and practice math, science and coding in an engaging way.

And students are hooked.

“I’ve got kids that have been creating drones on their own and they’re bringing them into class, which is really neat. They’re training other kids how to fly them,” McKenna said. “The kids knew more about some aspects of this than I did when we first started. They’re kind of training me.”

February participants were from Camden, Hamilton, MOBOCES, Oneida, Rome, VVS, Adirondack and Rome Catholic.