A Message from the WSWHE BOCES President

As we greet a new year, WSWHE BOCES is thankful to our area school board members and component school superintendents for all you bring to the children and families we serve. The occasion of the 2020 Legislative Breakfast allows us to present our regional legislative priorities, and also recognize our outstanding regional business partners. We are privileged to have strong relationships with so many business partners and our legislative representatives. Throughout this legislative session, we urge all board members to remain engaged with your representatives to discuss your district’s priorities and educational goals.

Every year our BOCES makes progress. We engage our students. Through hands-on lessons, project based learning, real-life experiences and embedded programming, our students are living the lessons they are learning. This is thanks to you and your support of our staff and administration. They are providing students, educators and communities with the expertise they need to be successful. We wish you a happy, productive 2020 and look forward to our continued collaboration.

Bringing STEAM To The Classroom

The Northeast Advanced Technological Education Center (NEATEC) and the Enrichment Resource Center (ERC) have teamed up in the 2019-2020 school year to create a new program - STEAM Fusion! This program is designed to assist educators in bringing more STEAM activities to the classroom. NEATEC provides classroom technology kits and the ERC provides lesson plans, presentation materials, coaching and support. The main focus is the use of a Raspberry Pi, which is a credit card sized, tiny computer controller that can be coded for a variety of uses.

Library Media Specialists from Greenfield Elementary and Caroline StreetElementary School, partnering with Ellen Franklin-Furgason, the STEAM Fusion coach, have been using the program with their 5th grade Young Scholars program. They held a Raspberry Pi Fair recently to showcase the STEAM activities their students created.

“The kids have really taken to it,” said Maureen Mooney, the library media specialist at Caroline Street Elementary School. “It is versatile. They can do everything from making music, to doing stop motion animation and graphic design. It is not something that kids see every day, which is one of the reasons I wanted to bring it to them, and give them time to really work and play with it so they could experience how circuits work,” said Mooney.

At the fair students displayed Sonic Pi which they coded to play their own version of music and graphic designs which they created using Python code. Some students created a snowman using control circuits and others made videos with their own stop-motion animation rig with a button and a Raspberry Pi camera.

Fifth grade students, Katie Oak and Jo Jo Birnby (center) said they “like coding, its cool because you can make a picture and make it do whatever you want.” Anderson DeBow and Mathew Hayes (above) took a song they learned in band and coded the Sonic Pi to create music.

Andrea DeBow, who attended the fair said, “I think it is amazing.” She said that her son, Anderson, has loved everything about the Young Scholars program. “He is a kid that likes to be challenged with things that engage his mind.”

For additional info on how to bring STEAM Fusion into the classroom, please email ERC Program Manager Carrie VanTassel at cvantassel@wswheboces.org.
National Weather Service

As snow was falling outside the window recently, the Exceptional Learners Division School to Work students had a unique opportunity to listen to an informative presentation on how weather is forecasted and predicted. Christina Speciale, Meteorologist, from the National Weather Service (NWS) came in to talk about all things weather. She discussed how important weather observations are, doppler and satellite radar, thunderstorms and the mission of the NWS.

Christina discussed that due to the various terrain in New York State, the New York NWS Teams are very focused and conscious of water and how to protect the land due to any water issues that could occur due to the weather. Five offices cover NYS. Her office is located right on the SUNY Albany campus.

Weather balloons are launched twice a day from the Albany office. The data collected from these balloons all over the US is crucial to the work of the NWS. Christina engaged with the students who were interested in the alert systems and explained exactly what that means when we see them on TV or hear them on the radio. Students discussed the rain gauge and snow gauge Christina brought in.

The students not only learned about the weather, which either continued their weather unit or was an introduction to the upcoming unit they will study, but they also practiced their skills of listening, being polite, interacting and focusing on the presenter. They even took away tips on how a presentation is performed. Presentations, field trips, and special events like the NWS visit take place throughout the school year in the Exceptional Learners Division and are an integral way of making connections for students that impact their learning.

Agriculture & Technology Working Together

The Washington County Fair (WCF) is working closely with our Early College Career Academy (ECCA) New Media and IT students. Not only does it give WCF the opportunity to utilize the young minds and their skills but they can show the value of their expertise and knowledge base. New Media students are designing a new fairgrounds map and a TV commercial that will be shown leading up to the fair this summer. Students worked during the 2019 summer fair season by photographing and building up video coverage of all the events at the fair. They are now compiling that footage into a comprehensive media campaign including a commercial for the fair to use as a marketing tool. This is an exciting project to keep an eye on.

The IT student team is creating infrastructure around a project called The Big Push. Technology will be set up around the cow birthing center. People will be able to see the birth of a calf on a big screen and also through an online link. The fair will have control over the video content allowing them to change the view or turn it off as necessary.

Rebecca Breese, Marketing & Sponsorship Manager at the Washington County Fair said of the ECCA partnership, “the foundation to the Washington County Fair is to provide agriculture communication to our community. As our industry continues to evolve to include more technology, we have enjoyed our partnership with the students in the Early College Career Academy program who have taken our educational opportunities to new heights!”

We are making large strides with business partners in the area. In the past year alone, we’ve seen tremendous growth between businesses and our Early College Career Academy students. Small and large companies alike are happy and excited for partnership opportunities. In the hopes that we can keep our students local to continue economic and workforce development, companies can give a unique window into all our area does offer.

Therapy Dog Comfort and Support

Children’s smiles speak more than words. In the WSWHE BOCES Exceptional Learners Division, students come to us with different and complex needs such as social, emotional, and/or learning disabilities. We provide them with an education that truly serves them – so they can grow, learn and be successful.

Some students at our Washington Street Teaching & Learning Center (WSTLC) need an extra boost to get started with their day. Therapy dog Jake sits at the front door excitedly, patiently waiting to greet his friends. The students immediately say “Hi Jake!” pet his head and head off to their classrooms. Once everyone has arrived, Jake plans his walk around to visit all the classrooms to say good morning. He will stay for a good amount of time. Some children come right over to him, others wait for him to approach their desk.

After making his rounds at WSTLC, Jake gets one-on-one time with any students who purchase extra time with him using their BoysTown points. Jake shares this location with another therapy dog named Izzy. Several of our schools have the benefit of therapy dog visits and the message from them all is that the value these dogs bring is almost immeasurable. We are grateful to have partners like the Glens Falls Chapter of Therapy Dogs International who take the time to help support our students.

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WSWE BOCES CONNECTIONS

The Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES does not discriminate in its programs and activities, including employment and admissions as applicable, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, domestic violence status, use of a guide dog, hearing dog or service dog, disability or other classifications protected under federal or state law, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The designated district compliance officers will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, and the New York State Human Rights Law. The BOCES Compliance Officers are: Turina Parker and Ronald Black, Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES, 1153 Burgoyne Avenue, Suite 2, Fort Edward, NY 12828, phone: (518) 746-3310, email: tuparker@wswheboces.org or rblack@wswheboces.org. Complaints may also be filed with the Office for Civil Rights, New York Office, U.S. Department of Education, 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005-2500, phone (800) 428-3800, fax (800) 428-3843, email OCRNewYork@ed.gov.