

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

# *SUCCESS STORIES*

ISSUE: XVI - 2023-2024



**Champlain Valley Educational Services**

Clinton Essex Warren Washington BOCES



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Clinton Essex Warren Washington BOCES

## OUR MISSION

Champlain Valley Educational Services is committed to being a valued and trusted partner by supporting students, schools, and communities to excel through high-quality education, training, and shared services.

## OUR VISION

We aspire to be the premier provider of dynamic and innovative educational programs and shared services, serving as a catalyst for personal and regional growth and development towards a brighter global future.

## OUR CORE BELIEFS

- Students are our first priority.
- Staff are essential to the health and well-being of our organization.
- We value open and honest communication.
- We embrace collaboration and shared decision-making.
- We promote creativity and innovation.
- ALL students can learn and be successful.
- We lead and act with integrity, fostering respect for all by ensuring the acceptance, inclusion, and celebration of our community members.
- Students, family and community are valued partners for success.
- We ensure a safe, supportive learning and work environment.
- We all impact the educational process and are dedicated to perform at the highest possible levels.

### **Public Non-Discrimination Notice:**

Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington BOCES a/k/a/ Champlain Valley Educational Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or any other legally protected status in its programs, activities, employment and admissions; and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding this nondiscrimination policy may be directed to:

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We are delighted to share this year's edition of CVES' Success Stories with you. CVES strives each year to attain our goals of providing high-quality educational programs and services through our exceptional staff and state-of-the-art resources for all our students and districts.



CV-TEC continues to open doors and welcome all students to pursue their future careers and aspirations. CV-TEC's administration was incredibly proud to celebrate their young women in non-traditional programs by providing supportive training, mentoring, and career advisement to demonstrate that each student, with hard work and a strong desire to achieve success, can reach their goals. Also, CV-TEC successfully obtained and now operates a \$600,000 grant that will go toward programming for dislocated workers and out-of-school youth.

Our Rise Center for Success gives students great hands-on learning opportunities and expanded academic programming across all programs. A special thank you to acknowledge our strong partnership with Plattsburgh City School District; Rise students can attend classes there throughout the day and collaborate with other high schoolers. In addition, over the summer, students spent time at Camp Huntington to develop essential soft skills tailored to prepare our students to meet the modern employment landscape.

Management Services pushes to provide new, efficient resources and program support for school districts in an exceptional manner. The Central Business Office has expanded its efforts to aid districts by providing skilled employees in HR, payroll, and accounting through a shared business model. The upkeep of buildings and grounds at CVES is not an easy task. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our O&M employees, who support our staff and students, CVES remains a beautiful facility that provides a high-quality learning environment and is welcoming to all.

School Support Services strives to maintain and create essential resources for students, staff, and school districts. For new teachers in the area, a year-long teaching series has provided fresh teachers with materials and connections to help them excel. Also, the Technology Department continues to expand its employees and support local school districts and CVES.

In closing, I want to thank all our school community colleagues, supporters, and stakeholders for your unwavering support and dedication to our ongoing academic and programmatic success and enhanced educational opportunities in the North Country. The achievements and progress we see from our students could not have been possible without the commitment of our outstanding staff, a supportive BOCES Board, and fantastic local partnerships. We look forward to another exciting year and continued success.



Dr. Mark C. Davey  
District Superintendent/CEO

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# CV-TEC Celebrates Women in Trades

## CV-TEC Division

Male-dominated fields like welding, auto mechanics and policing have seen an increase in women joining the ranks. While women are gaining momentum in these positions, they are still significantly outnumbered by their male counterparts. CV-TEC wants the young women in its male-dominated programs to feel seen and supported.

To provide this support, CV-TEC Director Michele Friedman created a Women in Trades group last year. It started with about 15 young women in non-traditional programs coming together for a luncheon to discuss any challenges they might be facing.

“For the women in non-traditional programs, are they being treated equally? Are they being welcomed? Do we have safety equipment and uniforms that fit them? We need to start having these conversations,” Friedman said. “So we decided to invite all the women enrolled in non-traditional programs to have these sorts of discussions.”

### ‘SUPPORTED AND EMPOWERED’

The first luncheon received such positive feedback, that the young women in these programs wanted to continue meeting. The group turned into a



space where the students could feel supported and empowered by their peers.

This year's luncheon was even bigger with 43 guests, including 28 students and five professional women panelists. These experts were CFO Northeast Group vice President Betsy Vicencio, Vermont Air National Guard SrA Emily Sorrell, Welding Alumnae Samantha Parker, New Product Introduction Engineer Jamie LaPierre and Vermont Air National Guard SSgt Kasey Bellerive. Tables were given prompts, and women were asked to share their own experiences with the group.

One prompt was to share challenges they had encountered in their training field or current job. Groups then shared out their experiences with the

whole room. Many challenges regarded uniforms only being in men's sizes, being overlooked in the classroom, not getting hands-on time with a project or feeling excluded. Tessa from New Visions Applied Engineering struggled with the fact that she and another student were the only women in the class. She said it felt as though she couldn't make connections with her other classmates or mentors because of the disconnect between them.

Tessa's experience isn't unique. Most of the young women in the room had one or two other women in their program with them. This is another



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reason the Women in Trades luncheon was created. While they may be alone in their program, they are not alone in general.

"There are so many young women in these programs, and by bringing them into a shared space, they can create connections and bonds with other women, so they can get support from another woman in a classroom nearby," Friedman said.



## GUIDANCE &amp; ADVICE

This year's luncheon included women who worked in male-dominated fields. This was a great opportunity for the young women of the room to hear about how to overcome challenges and excel in a non-traditional field. To maximize conversation, one field expert was assigned to each table to give their insights and advice on how to navigate working in a non-traditional profession.

"One thing my grandfather always told me was to be confident in your choices," Parker said to the young women in the room. "Just

think about that anytime you must make a big decision, whether men are involved or not. Just think about the choices and consequence and how confident you're going to be in the end."

CV-TEC Food Services Teacher Chef Deborah Misik has overcome adversity and sexism in the world of cooking. She brought her wisdom and experiences to her table, and she shared the challenges she had to overcome.

"I hope what these young women take away from this experience is that these challenges have been going on for a long time, and this

is nothing new," Misik said. "But because we know this, we have a support group for them. So, now there's a place for them to go with other women who have their back."

Advice came from peers as well. In March, CV-TEC highlighted the young women in their non-traditional programs on social media. These young women were given a platform to share why they joined their program, the most valuable thing they had learned and give advice for young girls potentially joining a trade.

Senior Danika was a part of this social media campaign and an attendee at this year's Women in Trades luncheon. Her advice was to "speak up and say what's on your mind."

As conversations continue throughout the school year, CV-TEC will continue to provide platforms and safe spaces for these young women to connect with one another.

"I hope they see value in who they are and their choices," Friedman said. "They are talented, and they should never settle – I hope that's what they take away from this event."





# Central Business Office Expands to Aid Schools

## Management Services Division

Champlain Valley Educational Services prides itself on providing high-quality services and support for local school districts. When schools' needs arise that CVES doesn't currently help, then CVES works quickly and effectively to provide support and fill that gap.

This happened within 2023 when schools needed extra support with their Business Offices. CVES' Central Business Office created a shared-business model, where CVES employees can aid schools with all aspects of their business office. This shared-business model can eliminate stress for school districts. There are multiple employees in BOCES who are trained in business office functions. They can become a backup for critical parts of each school's operations while reaping the benefits of BOCES aid on the service.

### HELPING SCHOOLS

"When you look at the various sizes of districts within the North Country, some schools need to have a larger business office while others are much smaller," CVES Business Manager Hayden Reidy said. "This service can help districts when they need someone for AP functions, but they don't need a full-time person."

Currently, Plattsburgh City School District and Northeastern Clinton Central School District utilize this service for payroll and human resources support. The CBO can also support schools with budgeting, accounting, purchasing and HR functions, such as Civil Service reporting, workers compensation and attendance.

Chazy Central Rural School District utilizes the service through a mentorship and training program. Reidy frequently meets with Chazy's business manager and treasurer to guide them through different processes.

"We are moving outside of Clinton County and into Essex County soon, so it's full scale," Reidy said. "We are essentially just absorbing schools' business offices and doing those functions for them."

### CREATION OF CBO

As of April 2023, the first CBO employee, School Personnel Specialist Kelsey Monette, was brought on to aid



NCCS. As the need for the service has grown, so has the number of employees within the CBO. Since then, Reidy joined CVES and has helped expand the services to other school districts.

Reidy wants to make sure the integration of CBO services is done well and right. He corresponds regularly with other BOCES business managers around the state for advice.

"BOCES and local districts needs' are different, so it's nice to have CBO staff strictly dedicated to helping schools," Reidy said.

With CBO, there is greater piece of mind for school districts and employees.

"Everyone's trained on all different needs, and we can help each other," Reidy said. "If something were to happen in payroll or there's an issue, we have staff to help fill in. This way schools aren't behind on payroll for employees, and payroll workers can take vacations without putting in two weeks of work into one. It alleviates stress all around."

### CBO IN ACTION

Monette works in NCCS helping with their payroll and HR.

**CBO: Continued on Page 13**





# A Powerful Partnership

## Rise, Plattsburgh CSD Unite for Students

### Rise Center for Success Division

A vibrant new partnership between the Rise Center for Success and the Plattsburgh City School District is unlocking opportunities and igniting excitement for students.

This trailblazing collaboration has welcomed 16 Rise high school students into an innovative integrated learning environment at Plattsburgh High School (PHS).

These eager learners now have two dedicated Rise classrooms embedded within PHS.

Here, specialized Rise teachers and teacher assistants deliver robust support tailored to each student's needs. At the same time, the partnership provides access to traditional academic, extracurricular and social experiences at PHS. This best-of-both-world approach fosters inclusion, confidence, and individual growth.

Rise student Jayden raved about taking an astronomy class alongside PHS peers, remarking how science has always been a passion.

"I like being at Plattsburgh the most because I get to work with students my age," Jayden said. "Science has just always been something I've been interested in, and I really like space. That was probably one of my favorite classes."

He also plans to take forensics next semester and is considering clubs.

Every Rise student participates in integrated gym,

allowing them to forge friendships and explore shared interests like weights or walking. These electives and activities, unavailable before, further validate that all students contribute to the Hornet family.

"The goal is to continue to build these programs throughout other districts," School Psychologist Brigitte Phillips said. "There are students who can do well with support in district, and now we are building the road for it to be more accessible for other districts."

The benefits flow both ways. PHS students act as role models, while gaining exposure to diverse learning needs. Plattsburgh content specialty teachers welcome collaboration, finding new techniques to reach and challenge every learner. Administrators have opened mapping and facilities to Rise staff, enabling coordinated support.

"This partnership beautifully blends the expertise of the Rise Center and PHS educators into an encouraging community where every student belongs," Director of Special Education at the Rise Center for Success Dr. Matthew Slattery said.

"We are deeply grateful for Plattsburgh's partnership to come together to nurture students' strengths, their sense of belonging, and exposure to a thriving high school ecosystem – the essential ingredients for nurturing their confidence and unlocking transformational outcomes."





# 'It's Magic': Camp Huntington Summit Brings Students Together

## Rise Center for Success Division

Camp Huntington on Raquette Lake is the place to be.

Just ask the Rise Center for Success staff facilitators and students who took part in the Partners in Transition Summit this summer.

Partners in Transition joined with SUNY Cortland this past June for the fourth time to create a transformative learning experience for students from Clinton, Essex, Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties.

Through two four-day, three-night camps, students with disabilities are given the opportunity to develop essential soft skills tailored to meet the demands of the modern employment landscape.

When all is said and done, students with disabilities are empowered for employment success.

### WORKING TOGETHER

Students, ages 14-21, are immersed in a multitude of activities that emphasize communication, teamwork and collaboration, problem solving and critical thinking, time management and organization, professionalism and work ethic, networking and relationship building, and emotional intelligence.

Through interactive workshops, group exercises and real-world simulations, campers grow together and form a support system around each other.

"They are forced out of their comfort zone and into a situation they have no familiarity with by attending the camp, so that's where we actually see the most growth from the students," Rise Center for Success Coordinator

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## CAMP: Continued from Page 8

of Transition Programs Tonya Robinson-Mayer said.

“The kids’ ability to advocate with themselves and be comfortable in unfamiliar scenarios improves exponentially.”

Camp Facilitators are educators from component districts as well as Rise Center for Success staff.

“We are educators, and that’s how we approach our time with the students,” Robinson-Mayer said. “It’s a chance to learn, and we are there to supervise but also promote those learning opportunities.”

### UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

At the core of trips to Camp Huntington lay three key elements — personal growth, resilience and overall well-being.

Hidden away at a location accessible by boat, Camp Huntington offers a secluded environment where campers can focus on themselves while forming lifelong connections with fellow campers.

Circle-up conversations are a great starting point for students to express themselves while also allowing fellow campers to hear how each other handles their disabilities and personal challenges.

These conversations combined with recreational activities and casual interactions during meals throughout the day as well as evening campfires only bolster the summit opportunities.

“When the kids have each other as sounding boards and the chance to talk with each other, they can hear those stories and empathize with each other,” Robinson-Mayer said. “There’s a new trust level they establish. The compassion and empathy they feel for each other when they realize they are not alone is remarkable.”

### THE MAGIC

There are so many ways staff members managed to describe camp successes, but one word is constantly used by all attendees — magic.

“I heard about the stories and how it’s magical before my first trip,” Rise Center for Success staff member Suzie Chrisman said. “I figured I would go because of how great things sounded, and once I was there, it all clicked. I understood. The kids are all making friendships. They want to stay by the time we need to leave.”

When camp concludes, students leave feeling more confident with a positive outlook on life. Doors open to new opportunities and self-advocation. The challenges of the real world seem more manageable, and career options in the modern workplace blossom.

“Simply said, it’s magic,” Robinson-Mayer said. “That’s the word to use.”





# WIOA Grant Opens Doors to Success

## CV-TEC Division

CV-TEC always looks for new ways to boost educational opportunities in the region.

The Career & Technical Education Division of CVES identified the Workers Innovation and Opportunity Act grant as a new pipeline for prosperity.

So CV-TEC placed a bid and eventually received the WIOA grant, which goes toward programming for adult learners, dislocated workers and out of school youth. Clinton County previously held the grant.

“CV-TEC saw this grant as an opportunity to support more residents in Clinton County,” Adult Services Administrator Maria Huntington said. “The more we can do for our region and local residents, the more our economy grows.

Additionally, we knew we could help keep qualified employees stay here in the North County if we gave them the opportunity to skill up, change careers or try something new.”

The WIOA completely funds the CDL, phlebotomy and welding programs. It will also fund up to \$7,000 of someone’s tuition if they wish to go into the LPN program.

This grant comes in addition to WIOA Title 2 funding CV-TEC receives for HSE/GED programming.

Through this grant, eligible candidates can also receive funding to attend college. Because this is a federal grant, it does not need to be paid back, and there is no requirement to work in New York State for a specific amount of time.

Needless to say when CV-TEC received the grant, there was plenty of excitement.

“I think I did a happy dance when we received the grant,” Huntington said. “We were all excited, but I wasn’t surprised because CVES and CV-TEC have an outstanding record when it comes programming and support services. Thankfully, the Clinton County staff decided to come with the grant, and we can’t say enough great things about them, their dedication, and commitment to serving participants.”

There are two groups of people who CV-TEC can help with this grant. Katrina Guynup works with youths, people ages 16 to 24. Caroline Goodrow works with adults and dislocated workers. Both Guynup and Goodrow coordinate the use of grant funds to help people succeed.

“I think this work is really important because the majority of my caseload are CV-TEC programs,” Goodrow said.

“We’re funding hundreds of thousands of dollars for people to be able to be a part of these programs. It’s not only important for CV-TEC to hold this grant, but this work we do can be life-changing for people.”

Damien “Jeremiah” Martinez is someone who benefited from the support that the WIOA Grant offered. Martinez received financial support to attend nursing school and expressed his gratitude toward Goodrow for providing advice and encouragement.

CVPH hired Martinez in the Cardiovascular Short Stay Unit.

“The nursing profession has always been my passion, and the support has reaffirmed my commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of others,” Martinez said. “Through this scholarship, they have not only invested in my future but also in the well-being and health of the communities I will serve.”

Martinez is just one example of what CV-TEC hopes become many WIOA beneficiaries.

“When I first meet with the youth, I start by providing them with leadership development, financial literacy and labor

market information,” Guynup said. “I can also provide them with a variety of other support services that can help them overcome obstacles that may inhibit them from being able to attend their work experience, GED class or any other experience they may choose. So, the supportive services are really good with giving the youth the help they need to obtain the goals they create with us.”

A great majority of the funding for CV-TEC programs came from this grant even before it was held by CV-TEC. Now that they have the grant it is even easier for CV-TEC and OneWorkSource to offer all the programs and services they do.

“Now more than ever it’s vital that we diversify our funding, and this grant allows just that,” Huntington said. “With additional funding, we can support more residents and also co-enroll them in programming that will allow them to better themselves and become self-sufficient.”



# Technology Co-Ser Continues to Grow

## School Support Services Division

Access to high-quality technology and services is an important resource CVES strives to provide school districts. Teachers need high-quality technology to provide resources and lessons in the classroom. Administrators need to connect quickly and effectively with parents, guardians and the community at large. Most students have school-issued laptops that require motoring, updates and repairs.

The Instructional Technology department in School Support Services ensures high-quality assistance is provided through state-of-the-art technology and support for CVES' divisions and local school districts.

The department has grown to onboard more school districts and bring in more employees. Network & Systems Coordinator Matt Palkovic has overseen this growth since taking over the Technology Department in August 2022.

He joined CVES in 2020 with an expansive tech background after working for NERIC, Chazy Central School and the Department of Social Services. Prior to his hire, the tech department only supported CVES, but Co-Ser 564 was created to "provide direct support to districts, so they could buy hardware, software and services through CVES and receive state aid."

As of this year, 13 component school districts utilize some aspect of the Technology Department. After paying a base fee, districts have access to purchase hardware, software and services through the department. They can also request having a technician on-site.

"I was excited by the idea of being able to provide a service for schools the right way," Palkovic said about the implementation of Co-Ser 564. "We are able to actually



offer people a service that not only benefited them financially, but also had the forethought and anticipation of their needs."

Part of this forethought is having districts be more cohesive in their strategy as far as what hardware and software to buy because it's "a lot easier for a technician to switch and fill in, if everyone is using the same equipment."

When Palkovic joined, there were three other employees. Now, the department has more than a dozen employees, with the hope to continue expanding. Some of the work he and his team provide include, but are not limited to, creating modifying network settings, cloud integration, account and service administration, identifying network issues, implementing cyber security best practices, network cost and efficiency optimization.

Their on-site services also provide school districts with great support. Some of these services include account maintenance, security, device repair and software and asset management.

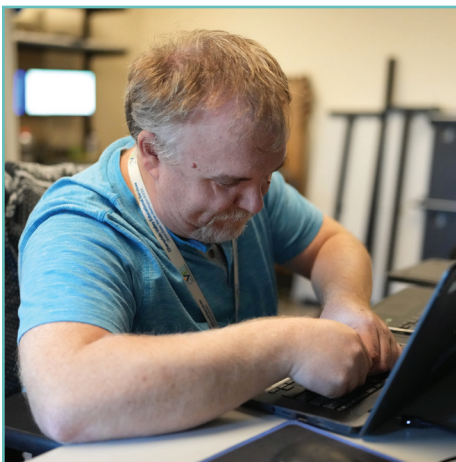
As coordinator, Palkovic provides assistance and expertise to his team when questions or crisis arise. He meets with districts about technology updates or fixes. Palkovic provides a hands-on approach to working with his team. He wants to keep learning new things, as well as teaching his team.

"We are a team, and we try to work on things together and figure them out," Palkovic said. "I don't ever want people to feel like they should be afraid to ask questions because they will be talked down to. Our team will work through it together and help find a solution."

This team mentality, along with excitement for the job, is something Palkovic looks for in future employees. He finds that the most successful and happiest districts are the ones with technicians who have that positive attitude.

Part of the tech department's mission is to help any technician who needs it because that is what they are here for.

"I take that mission to heart. I genuinely want to help people, and I hope that's what my team wants to do – genuinely help people," Palkovic said.





# O&M Team Grows Stronger Through Quality Leadership

## Management Services Division

There is a team of hard-working employees at CVES that is the unseen hand of the organization.

When they do their jobs, they think nothing of it. But if they did not complete their tasks, CVES operations would come to a screeching halt.

The Operations & Maintenance team at CVES is essential.

Led by Director of Facilities Jerry Brooks, O&M has made countless improvements and maintained the organization's three facilities.

Since his arrival in 2007, Brooks has formed an outstanding team of professionals committed to daily and long-term assignments.

Now slated to retire in 2025, Brooks has his sights on a strong finish.

### PRIDE IN THEIR WORK

Reflecting on his career with CVES, Brooks tipped his cap to his crew.

"We have become more of a family," Brooks said. "I don't think there's anything we would not do for each other. The crew I have now loves to learn, and we support each other very well."

O&M played an instrumental part in Phase 1 of CVES' \$29.85 million Capital Project that was completed during the 2021-2022 school year.

With a project like this along with replacing roofs and boilers and updating classrooms, plenty of planning takes place.

"It's not just one project that we are proud of because there are so many things we are doing from day to day," Brooks said. "The Capital Project certainly stands out,



though. That took planning two years in advance."

No matter the job, O&M knows work needs to get done. While working around the clock is just what they consider part of the job, their dedication makes them unsung heroes.

"We have fun," Building and Maintenance Mechanic Jeff Coon said. "There are days where you are working 15 or 16 hours a day, so you have to make the most of it. What I keep in mind is we are doing this work for the students at CVES. We are always maintaining a safe school."

### LONG-TERM TIES TO CVES

Brooks' roots at CVES

stem all the way back to when he was a student.

From 1973 to 1975, he attended BOCES and participated in the refrigeration program, which led to his background in electric, plumbing and carpentry work.

Brooks operated his own construction business prior to arriving at CVES, and now back at CVES all these years later, one could say this is where it all began for him.

"I have been fortunate enough to build up a good crew where we can rely on each other here," Brooks said. "You have to have the attitude that when our students arrive to school, they have to have heat, they have to have lights, and they have to have water. The school has to be ready. It's a lot of responsibility when you have three campuses and one is an hour away in Mineville from the other two in Plattsburgh. You are depending a lot on your crew."

### COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS

As the first core belief of CVES states, "Students are our first priority."

This core belief echoes through O&M.

**LEADERSHIP: Continued on Page 13**

**LEADERSHIP: Continued from Page 12**

“Our O&M team has worked tirelessly on countless projects and initiatives for the CV-TEC Division,” Director of Career and Technical Education Michele Friedman said. “Team CV-TEC is extraordinarily appreciative and grateful for all the upgrades, installations, repairs, and moves both inside and outside of our campuses. Our O&M Team is truly top notch.”

There are even times when CV-TEC students work with the O&M team and provide a helping hand during the school year, especially students participating in electrical and construction programs.

Last summer, Brooks noticed the talents of two first-year electrical students and ended up having them help O&M for part of the summer. They installed LED lights throughout the CVES Plattsburgh Campus.

“That was the first time I ever did that,” Brooks said. “I was a little skeptical about it, but it was fantastic.”

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Brooks originally planned to retire at the end of the 2023-2024 school year, but with Phase II of the CVES Capital Project coming up, he decided staying one more year would be best.

“Our O&M team is innovative and does anything to make a positive impact on students,” Assistant Superintendent of Management Services Eric Bell said. “They have pride in their work and endless commitment to the organization. With the leadership Jerry has provided, our team goes above and beyond working around the clock at a highly professional level.”

Some tasks completed by the CVES O&M team in Brooks’ tenure would have required Capital Projects, but through collaboration with his team and budgetary work, daunting tasks were simplified with innovative thinking.

While Brooks will eventually retire, he leaves a lasting legacy that O&M will certainly continue for years to come.

“Jerry is the best boss anyone could ask for,” Coon said. “He leads by example, and he is respected. When we show up to work, we know we have him supporting us in our efforts from day to day. We are definitely going to miss him when he retires.”

**CBO: Continued from Page 6**

“It was nerve-racking, but exciting,” Monette said about being the first employee to work for CBO. “I was able to sculpt my position to best fit the needs for the district and CVES.”

Monette helped streamline a couple different processes, which expedited the process overall. One example was collaborating with NCCS’ district clerk to create an onboarding process, and now their system runs smoothly for new hires.

“It’ll be great for schools to see that when you hire a personnel specialist, a treasurer or a business manager, they have not only the employee doing the work, but they have an entire staff behind them,” Monette said.

She also started a printed training manual that contains information about payroll and HR functions. If she comes across a new issue, she puts it into the manual as a future reference. This manual has been passed onto other new employees, and Reidy has brought it to other schools to show examples of efficient processes.

“Kelsey Monette is the perfect example of seeing growth in employees. She started as a personnel specialist, and she got very good at her job very quickly,” Reidy said. “She’s taken the next step, and she’s going to be a school district treasurer, so that’s awesome. It’s nice to see that we can grow within our own department.”





# New Teachers Cohort Receives Support and Resources Together

## School Support Services Division

After completing their degree and beginning a job, new teachers can feel overwhelmed by the fast-paced and ever-changing landscape of education.

For the second year in a row, CVES has offered a four-part series to help new teachers develop their craft and use evidence-based methods to support student learning and growth. With 47 teachers in this year's cohort, they meet every few months throughout the school year to collaborate with other new teachers and gain valuable resources for their classrooms.

"We are so pleased to be able to offer this new teacher experience in a cohort setting. Our goal is to provide teachers with an opportunity to explore best practices in teaching while building relationships with other teachers from around the region," Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services Amy Campbell said.

CVES partnered with Jen Hesseltine Education Consulting to provide this service to local school districts.

"Jen Hesseltine and the guests she brings are some of the most innovative and experienced educators in the field," Campbell said. "We are fortunate to have them sharing their experiences with this amazing group."

Hesseltine, a veteran teacher, now runs a business around supporting teachers. She works with over 1,000 teachers a year through various settings, such as one-on-one meetings and in-person or virtual workshops.

"This workshop provides, more than anything, access to each other and each other's ideas," Hesseltine said. "While I'll bring some effective strategies and resources to the table for new teachers to use in their classrooms, I think what's really powerful about a cohort like this is the ideas that come from the people in the room."

Through her four-part series at CVES, Hesseltine brings in other educational experts, like Literacy Teacher Educator Dr. Stephanie Affinito, Educational Consultant Dr. Amy Brambos, and the work and ideas from

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Educator and Author Dr. Gholdy Muhammad, for new teachers to learn from.

## COHORT SESSIONS

The cohort has attended two sessions so far this year. A variety of topics are covered in each session to provide participants with as many resources as possible.

The first session, hosted by Hesselstine and Brambos, was introductory and a refresher of ideas learned in school, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Bloom's Taxonomy. They also discussed classroom management, challenging behaviors, communication, engagement and NYSED learning standards.

The morning consisted of mostly Hesselstine introducing topics, but in the afternoon, Brambos led the teachers through fun, hands-on activities about communication styles and how those styles can be used differently.

"These teachers are problem solving every day, and some things are working and some things aren't, so for them to be able to have the time here to share what's working with each other gives another teacher real-life examples to pull from for their classrooms," Hesselstine said.

While it's great for the new teachers to share general strategies, the group has a diverse range of needs. According to Hesselstine, there are a variety of teachers from grades K through 12 across all disciplines, such as special education, literacy teachers, math and science.

Hesselstine saw the need to provide relevant information and strategies for the teachers' specific educational responsibilities. So, she and Affinito broke the cohort into elementary and secondary school focuses.

"Despite being in my third year of teaching, the new

teacher series has offered some great insight and tips. Getting to discuss and share ideas with my education peers across districts has been especially useful," Third-Grade Teacher from Morrisonville Elementary Alyssa Neverett said. "I've implemented several new procedures and strategies in my classroom that were ideas I received from my fellow educators."

Part of Session 2 was to discuss authentic learning strategies, school-day enrichment, breaking down lessons, and go-to resources for inspiration and ideas. Hesselstine gave teachers the time to engage with educational blogs and vlogs and read articles.

"Time is a big concern that comes with teachers," Hesselstine said. "They need time to create lessons, evaluate and dig into new resources. So, for them to be able to come through these sessions and say with confidence, 'Here's something I tried that really saves me time,' and offer it to everyone else in the room as a new teacher is really powerful."

Sessions 3 and 4 will start in 2024 with ways to help the cohort collaborate with professionals, cross-disciplinary learning, reflecting on what's currently working or not, tips for ending the school year strong and digging into Muhammad's Five Pursuits from her book *Unearthing Joy*.

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE &amp; CONNECTIONS

"The big aha from last year's cohort was seeing the confidence that was built with the teachers in the room from the beginning to the end of the year," Hesselstine said. "It wasn't coming from what I told them, but really coming from the facilitation of them being together as a group of new teachers."

This is the second year Hesselstine has led a group of new teachers through this workshop. She watched the previous cohort grow over the four-sessions immensely.

"I've greatly enjoyed the educational connections I've made and the extra support that's been offered," Neverett added. "I look forward to the remaining training days."

Hesselstine sees this opportunity for new teachers as a great way to develop skills, but even more so, as a space for these new teachers to build a network of support across the region.

"These teachers are the ones working with kids every single day, so we really want to make sure they have the support they need and that we are delivering what they need," Hesselstine said.





# MEMORABLE MOMENTS

“When the kids have each other as sounding boards and the chance to talk with each other, they can hear those stories and empathize with each other.” — Rise Center for Success Coordinator of Transition Programs Tonya Robinson-Mayer

[Read more on page 8.](#)

“CV-TEC saw this grant as an opportunity to support more residents in Clinton County. The more we can do for our region and local residents, the more our economy grows.” — Adult Services Administrator Maria Huntington

[Read more on page 10.](#)

“While I’ll bring some effective strategies and resources to the table for new teachers to use in their classrooms and routines, I think what’s really powerful about a cohort like this is the ideas that come from the people in the room.” — Educational Consultant Jen Hesseltine

[Read more on page 14.](#)

“We have become more of a family. I don’t think there’s anything we would not do for each other. The crew I have now loves to learn, and we support each other very well.” — Director of Facilities Jerry Brooks

[Read more on page 12.](#)

“There are so many young women in these programs, and by bringing them into a shared space, they can create connections and bonds with other women, so they can get support from another woman in a classroom nearby.” — Director of Career and Technical Education Michele Friedman

[Read more on page 4.](#)

“The goal is to continue to build these programs throughout other districts. There are students who can do well with support in district, and now we are building the road for it to be more accessible for other districts.” — School Psychologist Brigitte Phillips

[Read more on page 7.](#)

“It’ll be great for schools to see that when you hire a personnel specialist, a treasurer or a business manager, they have not only the employee doing the work, but they have an entire staff behind them.” — CVES School Personnel Specialist Kelsey Monette

[Read more on page 6.](#)

“We are a team, and we try to work on things together and figure them out. I don’t ever want people to feel like they should be afraid to ask questions because they will be talked down to. Our team will work through it together and help find a solution.” — Network & Systems Coordinator Matt Palkovic

[Read more on page 11.](#)