

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

# ADMINISTRATION

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Champlain Valley Educational Services*

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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:

### **Civil Rights Compliance Officers**

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## Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As we reflect on another impactful year at CVES, I am filled with appreciation and pride for what we have achieved together. Our Annual Report is a reflection of the dedication and hard work of our staff, students and supporters.



At CVES, we believe in the transformative power of education, particularly in trades education. Trades education equips our students with practical skills that are essential for their future careers and for the vitality of our communities. Whether it's learning carpentry, automotive technology, culinary arts or any other trade, these skills not only open doors to employment but also foster creativity, problem-solving and a strong work ethic. Our commitment to trades education is unwavering because we understand its profound impact on individuals and society as a whole.

This past year, our staff have gone above and beyond to ensure our students receive the highest quality education and support. From instructors who bring real-world experience into the classroom to counselors who guide students toward their goals, each member of our CVES Team plays a crucial role in our students' success. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our staff for their dedication, passion and unwavering commitment to our mission. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and it is the cornerstone of our organization's achievements.

Looking ahead, CVES remains steadfast in its mission to provide innovative educational opportunities that prepare students for the ever-evolving demands of the workforce. We are committed to expanding our programs, enhancing our facilities and forging partnerships that benefit our students and the communities we serve. Together, we will continue to adapt and grow, ensuring that every student who walks through our doors has the tools they need to succeed in their chosen path.

In closing, I want to thank our students and their families for entrusting us with their education, our partners and supporters for their invaluable collaboration, and our entire CVES community for their unwavering support. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of our students and the future of our communities.

Mark C. Davey, Ed.D.  
District Superintendent/CEO

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## Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable strides made across our Divisions and throughout CVES. Each year brings new challenges and opportunities, and this year has been no exception. Our commitment to enriching the lives of our students and staff has never been stronger.

The collective efforts of our administrators, faculty and staff have truly made a difference. Every decision, every initiative and every hour of work has been driven by our shared commitment to our students' success. It is this dedication that fuels our progress and inspires us to aim higher each year. On behalf of the CVES BOCES Board, I cannot express the pride we feel toward the achievements of students and staff. The stories in this publication share just a glimpse of the incredible things happening at CVES. I hope you can take a moment to read and appreciate the hard work and passion that comes from working with this Family of Professionals.

As we look forward to the coming year, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead, as well as celebrating 75 years of CVES. The continued growth of our organization and the ongoing innovation within our programs are a testament to the past 75 years of excellence CVES strives for. I am confident that, together, we will continue to create an environment where every student can excel and every educator can shine.

Thank you, as always, for your unwavering support and dedication. Let us move forward with the same passion and commitment that has brought us this far.



*Michael St. Pierre*

**Michael St. Pierre**  
CVES Board President

# CV-TEC Offers Career & Employment Opportunities

*CV-TEC Division*

*How do I find a job? What are the best ways to answer tough interview questions? What employment opportunities are available in Upstate New York? How do I make connections with professionals?*

These are all questions that run through the minds of high school students as they prepare for their life after graduation. It can be a nerve-wracking and confusing experience.

The CV-TEC team heard these concerns from students and created opportunities for them to connect with professionals and organizations in the region.

This year, CV-TEC hosted its second Annual





ADK Career Connect at the SUNY Plattsburgh Field House. CV-TEC also created a second opportunity for students to connect with professionals by hosting a second ADK Career Connect at the Essex County Fairgrounds in Westport.

“We are targeting 9th through 12th graders, and many students have gotten jobs from the connections they have made through these events,” Student Services Coordinator Sherry Snow said. “We added the Essex County event this year to meet the needs of employers’ who are farther away because it was hard for them to make it all the way to Plattsburgh.”

From the two events, 105 employers and organizations attended, such as BETA Technologies, Miner Institute, NYS Department of Labor, Plattsburgh Rehabilitation and Nursing, Mountain Lake PBS, NYS Police and Atlantic Testing Laboratories. Ten local school districts participated in the events and roughly 1,500 students attended.

ADK Career Connect hosted organizations from the following 16 Career Clusters. These are Agriculture; Food and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications; Business; Management and Administration;

Education and Training; Finance, Government and Public Administration; Health Science; Hospitality and Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; Manufacturing; Marketing, Sales and Service; Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

“These events are all about exposure for the younger students,” Snow said. “It’s about identifying career paths and companies that are aligned with their interest areas. It’s about securing opportunities like job placement, filling positions and post-secondary opportunities.”

With anticipation of these events, CV-TEC students were prepared to speak with potential employers. Students participated in two full weeks of a job-seeking workshop. Students created and updated their resumes with tips and feedback provided to them, and CV-TEC brought in Coryer Staffing to help assist with mock interviews.

“They had to create their elevator pitch, and we role played walking up to a table and introducing themselves, asking questions about what opportunities there are or about the company,” Snow explained. “Employers want to see that students are engaged and interested, and I think we did a great job at preparing our students for success with this event.”

To keep students engaged throughout





the event, students were given a scavenger hunt card. They needed to go to three different companies in three different career clusters to put their name into a drawing.

“Something that simple makes a difference with engagement,” Snow said. “Also, on the back of each card, we provided specific questions they could ask, and this helped prepare them to speak confidently and comfortably with employers.”

According to Snow, employers gave great feedback about the event, saying students were engaged and positive.

Employers and organizations were also asked to provide an engaging activity at their station. Students experienced hands-on learning about a certain product or service the company provides through these activities. Some great hands-on opportunities for students were learning how to handcuff, using virtual reality goggles, seeing the stages of engineering and practicing electrical wiring.

“Our big goal is to help students secure employment, but it’s also about exploration,” Snow explained. “They need the knowledge of what they can do now that they have these skills and where they can go, and these events answer those questions.”

It’s part of CVES and CV-TEC’s mission to support students and communities to excel through high-quality education, training and shared services. The ADK Career Connect fairs provide a bridge between students and future



employers. It gives individuals in our region an opportunity to come together for a common purpose and help each other achieve their goals: students needing jobs, and employers needing quality employees.

“I’m very proud of the events this year, and our sponsors were phenomenal,” Snow said.

Snow credited the following sponsors in helping make the two events possible: CFES Brilliant Pathways, Essex County, SUNY Plattsburgh, Adirondack Foundation, TDC, Brennan, TrailNorth Federal Credit Union, Della Auto Group, NYS of Opportunity Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, AES Northeast, Alstom, Fuller, Stewart’s Shops and Upstone Materials.

Looking to the future, Snow wants to create opportunities for community members to participate in ADK Career Connect fairs to provide further pathways of success for individuals in the North Country.

“We’re thrilled to turn the excitement of future possibilities into tangible opportunities for our students. Through events like the ADK Career Connect, we’re not just linking students with potential careers; we’re sparking their passion and connecting them with local organizations that are eager to invest in their success,” CV-TEC Director Michele Friedman said. “Together with our amazing community partners, we’re turning dreams into reality and setting the stage for students to step confidently into their futures.”





# Three Students Honored as OWS Students of the Year

CV-TEC Division

Every person has their own story to share and their own journey to travel. This year, three incredible students were nominated and won Student of the Year honors from the New York Association for Continuing and Community Education (NYACCE).

Reyna Guerra Almendarez, Geneva Mongulla and Jason Seymour were the three CV-TEC OneWorkSource students awarded this accolade.

The award recognizes adult students who have overcome adversity to further their education. Their achievements are recognized at an annual awards dinner in Albany.

They each have their own story and journey to share.

Almendarez, a Nicaraguan native, was encouraged by her daughter to get her GED certification and take lessons to learn English. Mongulla wanted to get her GED so she could go to college. Seymour had downtime while working as an auto mechanic and wanted to complete his GED.

They all have led unique, individual journeys until they all crossed paths through OneWorkSource.

The following is a Q&A with Almendarez, Mongulla and Seymour about their time and



From left to right: Geneva Mongulla, Jason Seymour and Reyna Guerra Almendarez were recipients of this year's Student of the Year award.

experience that led them to receiving their GED certification through OneWorkSource.

## **(Q) What has your time at OWS meant to you?**

*Almendarez:* "It has meant a lot. It has been open doors. Also, that I can be capable of success in everything I am going through."

*Mongulla:* "I'm really grateful for everyone at OneWorkSource. Everyone has been super sweet, super nice and super helpful there. The people are really nice, and I don't want to downplay it, but I felt like it made getting my GED really easy."

*Seymour:* "For me, it's been an opportunity to redo what I didn't do back when I was younger. It was a new opportunity to advance my education, utilize resources and get the help I needed to further my education."

## **(Q) What was it like to find out you were Student of the Year?**

*Almendarez:* "Oh my gosh, it was incredible — incredible for me. It was something I didn't



Geneva Mongulla receiving her GED certificate at graduation. She hopes to go onto college now.

expect because I was thinking, 'I'm so old and my English is not the perfect thing.' But yes, I got it, and it was because all my co-students helped me to reach my goal. Everybody — my teachers, my co-students, my daughter — who encouraged me to study."

*Mongulla:* "I felt like I didn't deserve it at all. It felt like getting my GED was really easy, to be honest, because a lot of the knowledge that was on it, I already knew from high school. I was also told the reason I was nominated and won. I needed something to busy my brain, and I missed school so much, so I would assign myself homework. I'm a bit of a perfectionist when it comes to academics."

*Seymour:* "It was a huge honor, and I wasn't expecting it. I passed my exam on the first try with just a bit of tutoring, and I haven't been to school in roughly 24 years. I was nervous, and it was challenging. I didn't think I passed the exam, but I did. So between that and battling a life of addiction, I turned my life around, and I was

acknowledged for it. It was a big honor."

**(Q) How has OWS helped you overcome barriers and challenges presented to you?**

*Almendarez:* "All the staff have been so nice with me, because at the beginning, I just told them I want to study for my GED classes and get my GED certificate. But I have some issues with my English, and they say, 'It is not a problem.' Every single person there were so nice with me, and they just encouraged me and helped me to reach my goals."

*Mongulla:* "For the first 18 years of my life, I lived in a really abusive, horrible household where I was judged constantly. I couldn't really exist or emote in my house without being ridiculed, shamed or made fun of. So through my experiences with OneWorkSource, they showed me I had options and that I wasn't trapped in this never-ending cycle. They allowed me to really start progressing and making things happen for myself."

*Seymour:* "I've always thought about trying to get my GED, but never really had the courage. Alexis [Dirolf, OWS Case



**Reyna Guerra Almendarez receiving her GED certificate at the OWS graduation.**

Worker] convinced me to give it a try. They gave me resources and helped me through the process and accomplish what I wanted to accomplish."

**(Q) What advice can you provide to future OWS students?**

*Almendarez:* "The main thing is to never give up. Never give up. It doesn't matter the age, where you are from, who you are or whatever else; it doesn't matter. Just keep going and never give up."

*Mongulla:* "It's going to be good for you, in the long run. It's super easy, honestly. I would also say to be patient because everything takes time. I hate saying that because it's super cliché, but it's true. Be patient, but everyone at OWS should be super sweet and super nice to you."

*Seymour:* "Don't be afraid to go for it. There's an amazing staff that will help you with any questions you may have and any difficulties you come across. You can achieve anything, especially with the help of the people at OneWorkSource."



**Jason Seymour getting his GED certificate with District Superintendent Dr. Mark Davey.**



**(Q) What's next for you? What does your future look like?**

*Almendarez:* "The GED certificate was, for me, like an open door. I just want to keep going to open more doors because this is not just for my future. It's also the future for my family, and I also want to be useful for my community."

*Mongulla:* "I'm really ambitious. It's probably not the most realistic. I want to go to college. I grew up in Chicago, so my dream school is Northwestern, but my plan is to go to SUNY Plattsburgh to start accruing credits, then transfer. I want to learn about filmmaking, music, acting and investigative journalism. But I'm going into travel nursing, so I have enough money to do everything I want to do. I just want to be able to reward people for being good people. I want to be successful enough that I can afford to do a lot of philanthropy."

*Seymour:* "I did think about going back to school, but I have a career of 20 years being an auto mechanic. Right now, I'm full time again, so I'm going to stay with this. But I have kept the possibility open of going back to school."

# CV-TEC Top 5

## **MICHELIN TECHNICAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

For the first time, CV-TEC connected with the Michelin Technical Scholars Program. The program allows students to co-op with Michelin in its facilities so they can experience real-world application of their studies. The program's scholar manager, Jacob Bouchillon, presented to CV-TEC students in Automotive Technology, Auto Collision, Electrical, Heavy Equipment/Diesel Mechanics and Welding. Eleven seniors took an assessment test following the presentation resulting in one of the highest passing rates the program has seen. Four students submitted an application for enrollment into the program that pays for their books and tuition to complete their Associate's Degree.

## **BETA TECHNOLOGIES PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES**

CV-TEC's partnership with BETA Technologies continues to thrive as seven more of its students this year successfully obtained their FAA Approved Aerospace Coating Applicator Specialist (ACAS) Certification. History was made as the first female from CV-TEC received a Certificate. Five of the seven recipients are now working in Florida and using their educational experience in the real world. Congratulations to Payton McIntyre (Chazy), Dominick Barnaby (NAC), Ethan Crowningshield (AVCS), Justin Senecal (AVCS), David LaVarnway (Beekmantown), Ryan Cross (AVCS) and Ethan Taylor (AVCS).

## **CV-TEC STUDENTS EXCEL AT SKILLSUSA**

Fifty-five CV-TEC students showcased their talents and competed at the Annual NYS SkillsUSA competition this April. This year's competition featured more than 3,500 participants, and five CV-TEC students medaled and qualified for national competition. Congratulations to Madison Klotzko (Keene, Medical Terminology, Gold), Kloiee Frenyea (Peru, Early Childhood Education, Silver), Gabrielle Braun (Chazy, Animal Science, Bronze), Maria Cutting (Moriah, Action Skills, Bronze) and Christopher Trombley (Northern Adirondack, Diesel Technology, Bronze).

## **PATHWAYS FUND SUPPORTS GRADUATING STUDENTS**

The CV-TEC Career and Technical Education Pathways Fund sent graduating students out into their futures with some fresh new gear. This fund is dedicated to addressing the diverse needs of students, ensuring they have access to the resources and training necessary to excel in their chosen career paths. This year, the fund supported 12 graduating CTE students going into the field. Each student received tools of their trade, totaling over \$10,000.

## **CNA STUDENTS' SUCCESSFULLY PASS NYS EXAM**

The CNA program at CV-TEC achieved an impressive 99 percent passing rate on its exam this year. The dedicated work of the program's students and instructors made this possible. Students who completed the program not only gained comprehensive knowledge but also demonstrated exceptional skills in their field. CV-TEC's commitment to excellence in healthcare training continues to provide employers with a fresh and talented workforce.



# Benefits Coordination Office Prioritizes Employee Wellness

*Management Services Division*

After world-renowned motivational speaker Inky Johnson spoke at an event in April, set up by the CVES Benefit Coordination Office, several teachers told Vicki Demarse-Giroux how valuable the talk had been and inspired them to keep making a difference in students' lives.

Demarse-Giroux is the Benefits Director at CVES, and she works closely with Benefits Specialist Emilee Quantock on employee wellness initiatives. The two look at employees as a whole person, not just a staff member with specific job duties. Everyone has been through a lot in the last handful of years, and they want to make sure their office is doing what it can to support staff through physical and mental wellness initiatives.

Employee wellness has never been more important, especially in education. Maybe it's because of that impact that employee wellness initiatives are Demarse-Giroux's favorite part of her job.

"The mental health and wellness of educators in the North Country and individuals in education is critical, and we feel it is our responsibility as a BOCES and a consortium to address these challenges and needs our educators have," CVES Assistant Superintendent of Management Services Dr. Eric Bell said. "We are going non-traditional routes to meet those needs and

support the educators of the North Country."

The Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington Health Insurance Consortium oversees health insurance for its members: CVES and each of the 16 school districts in the BOCES region.

Keene Central School District Superintendent Dan Mayberry chairs the consortium's Board of Directors and said the consortium believes that a focus on wellness will be a key to sustainability.

"As a consortium, we want to make sure we're taking care of the health and wellness of our members, both with physical and mental health," Mayberry said. "We want to give members the tools to take care of themselves, so they are happier and healthier, and that means they will be in a better place to care for others."

Demarse-Giroux and Quantock put together a wellness program that is funded through a mix of wellness dollars from Anthem Blue Cross, the consortium's insurance provider, and money directly from the consortium's budget.

In 2023-24, they used wellness funds to bring two speakers to the area, Johnson and Mike Veny. Johnson's impactful talk focused on overcoming adversity and making the best out of your circumstances.

"I was fortunate to spend time with Inky Jonson, and he lives what he preaches," Bell said. "It was



motivating to see that he truly is the person he speaks about. He lives life in the same way he motivates others to live in a truly inspiring way. He made a trip from Atlanta, Georgia, to rural New York and into the backwoods of Moriah and through the Adirondacks. He wanted to make an impact on education.”

Veny, who has worked with CVES in the past, spoke at small group sessions at four different school districts throughout the region. He has a program called “Fill Your Cup: The Exhausted Educators’ Guide to Emotional Wellness,” and he helped teachers and other staff develop strategies for managing stress and preventing burnout.

The Benefits Office also ran a popular wellness challenge throughout the 2023-24 school year. Each month featured a different wellness task, and anyone who did the task could submit their results and be entered to win prizes that included everything from an electric toothbrush to a paddleboard. The tasks were designed to be simple enough that anyone can do them, and some of the physical ones included a modifier for those who have less of a mobility range. Besides exercises like planking and jump roping, there were also months that focused on mindfulness and healthy recipes.

The challenge and other wellness programs were open to all current staff, regardless of whether they are insurance customers or not, as well as all retirees. Demarse-Giroux remembers one particular retiree submitting for the challenge from Spain.

Demarse-Giroux and Quantock are so passionate about this work, and they get especially excited when you ask about their future plans for



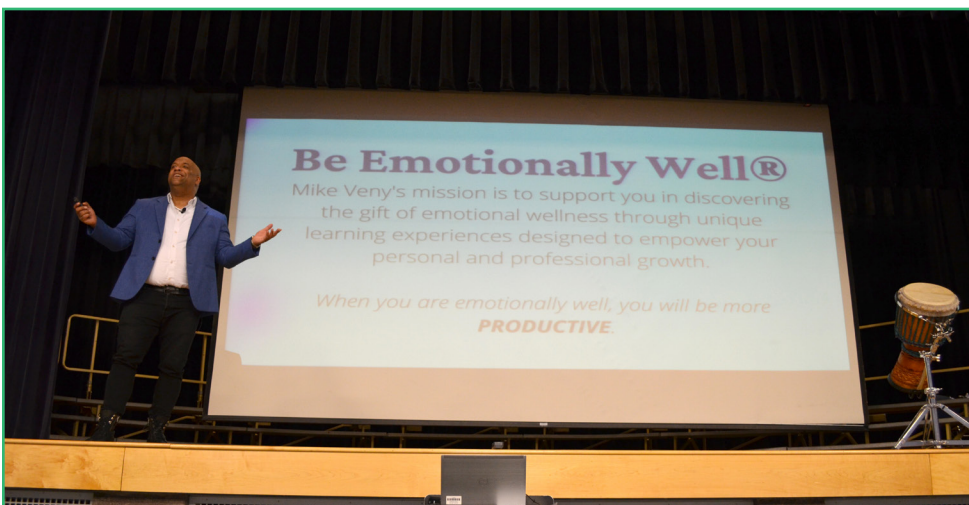
employee wellness. They have tons of ideas, and several of them will likely come to fruition in the upcoming year including some cool new workshops and classes. They’ll continue popular initiatives from last year like the Wellness Challenge.

Another exciting new opportunity is called Credible Mind. This new platform is an employee assistance program (EAP) that personalizes resources to help you learn about mental and emotional health issues you may be dealing with. It tells you about evidence-based ways to address the issue, and it provides a variety of resources from articles and podcasts to videos and apps to help with the journey.

To hear our insurance provider tell it, Demarse-Giroux and Quantock are doing an amazing job with their wellness plan.

“Anthem provides flexible resources, funding and support for employer groups to implement holistic wellbeing initiatives,” said Brian Gilligan, the

strategic account executive that they work with at Anthem Blue Cross. “Our goal is to support our client partners in creating workplace wellness programs that fit their particular culture and focus on physical, mental, financial and social well-being. CEWW’s comprehensive and thoughtful approach to their wellness program is truly an example of best practices for success in workplace wellbeing.”



# Management Services Now Offers Teaching Certification

*Management Services Division*

CVES is now offering teacher certification services to prospective candidates and its 16 component school districts.

The CVES Regional Certification Office functions as an extension of the New York State Education Department Office of Teaching Initiatives. The State Education Department has authorized this office to evaluate the credentials of applicants and recommend certification for most New York State certificate titles.

When there are certification-related inquiries, CVES and its talented staff helps ensure individuals know the proper action steps needed for certification.

CVES once had a Regional Certification Office, but it dissolved after some staffing changes. Since then, CVES had cross-contracted with Capital Region BOCES out of Albany to provide certification services.

Now, the helping hand of CVES has returned.

Thanks to the coordination support of CVES District Superintendent Dr. Mark Davey, the Regional Certification Office became a reality. His discussions with State Education led to SED supporting

needs.

Coakley worked with Assistant Superintendent of Management Services Dr. Eric Bell to figure out what was possible and, along with his team, the group developed a plan for creating a Regional

Certification Office at CVES.

Coakley has been training for the last year-and-a-half to learn the ins and outs of certifications. The CVES certification portal launched in April, and he officially announced to Chief School Officers of the 16 school districts in



the CVES region that the Regional Certification Office is open for business.

Though Coakley now has the title of Regional Certification Officer, he said it's truly a team effort. "For any Co-Ser to be successful, it truly takes a village," Coakley said. "Without the help of Personnel Specialist Laura Sterling and Labor Specialist Chrysa Rabideau, it would be nearly impossible to have gotten this up and running."

Sterling and Rabideau are working with Coakley to field CVES starting an RCO and providing training for the service to start. When Joe Coakley took over as Director of Labor Relations for CVES, he quickly realized that there was a need for the service to be provided by someone local who has a deep familiarity with our rural school districts. Coakley said Cap Region BOCES' team did a phenomenal job serving our region, but CVES had the capacity to offer a more local resource that lends already-existing knowledge of the component districts and their

the CVES region that the Regional Certification Office is open for business.

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Sterling and Rabideau are working with Coakley to field



inquiries, and help people find and navigate the website for the Office of Teaching Initiatives, as well as assisting in the processing of some applications.

Summer is an incredibly busy time for application processing, with college students completing school programs and school districts trying to place new hires in all their open positions. The crew hit the ground running, and they've been staying busy with this new Co-Ser.

Coakley acknowledges that it was a lot to take on, but he says it just made sense for CVES to take on this work.

As someone who started teaching in the classroom and has held a variety of positions since then, including coach, dean of students, assistant principal, and principal, Coakley said this is a full-circle experience that lets him work with individuals just getting into the profession.

He knows the certification process can be stressful, and he appreciates being able to help guide people on the right pathways.

Bell agrees that this development is an important step for CVES and its component districts.

"Given the challenges and shortages in certified staff in our region, throughout the state and nation, having local support for the certification process to help our future educators move through the challenging process of certification is critical to meeting our goals and mission to serving the students of the North Country," Bell said.

# Management Services Top 5

## **CAPITAL PROJECT PHASE II CONSTRUCTION**

Following a thoughtful planning process, Phase II of the CVES Capital Project kicked off this spring with work continuing into the summer. Renovations to the Plattsburgh and Mineville Campuses as well as Learning Hub Campus are slated to be completed by the beginning of September. In Mineville, unit ventilators are being replaced, and central cooling is being installed. Central cooling is also being installed at the Plattsburgh Campus in addition to exterior window replacement and entrance/exit door replacement. At the Learning Hub, hangar doors are being removed. The PA system is being replaced at all campuses, and security cameras are receiving upgrades.

## **NEW STAFF MEMBERS & CONTINUED SUPPORT**

Approximately 160 new staff members were onboarded during the 2023-2024 school year as CVES and its Family of Professionals continues to grow. Additionally, CVES generated 596 W-2's. Recruitment efforts to provide support to expanding Co-Sers has been paramount, and the Human Resources team is happy to welcome new hires through our doors to get their new roles with CVES started on the right foot.

## **EXPONENTIAL GROWTH IN CENTRAL BUSINESS OFFICE**

Component Districts continue to see value in our Central Business Office. The CBO has successfully onboarded Boquet Valley, Schroon Lake and Willsboro to be in full control of their business offices. The bustling CVES Co-Ser has already established working partnerships with Chazy, Northeastern Clinton and Plattsburgh CSD. Through its growth and new staff members added, the CBO has maintained its high professional standards to aid schools with all aspects of their business offices.

## **PURCHASING HANDLES HEAVY LIFTS**

The CVES Business Office issued 2,399 purchase orders during the 23-24 school year and paid 16,148 invoices. As CVES continues to grow, the need for new equipment and materials elevates across all divisions. The Business Office remains steadfast in its behind-the-scenes support of students and staff at CVES as well as component districts.

## **CVES EXPANSION PLAN & IAM RECOMMENDATION EXCITES**

Plans are officially in place for the opening of a new CTE Building for CV-TEC as well as expanded Rise Center for Success Programming at CVES Plattsburgh Campus estimated to be completed by September 2026. A lease agreement for the new CTE Building was fully executed on July 2, 2024. Additionally, Clinton Community College's Institute for Advanced Manufacturing (IAM) Taskforce recommended CVES assume full operation of the site, allowing CVES to continue its outstanding support of education in the region.





# CVES Celebrates Another Year of Success ...and Smiles





# Start Spreading the News: Morning Announcements Revamped at Rise

*Rise Center for Success*

The Morning Announcements at the Rise Center for Success in Plattsburgh are can't-miss TV.

Rather than your traditional morning announcements over the loudspeaker each day, Rise students are recording the announcements on their own with some high-tech equipment that professionals use in the real world.

"The original style of morning announcements was not working for us," Rise Center for Success Principal Michelle Lawrence said. "As they came over the loudspeaker, there were a lot of disruptions for our students, and we were looking for something different."

That's when a different announcement style came to the forefront and the idea of a new Morning Announcements model developed.

## COORDINATION BETWEEN CVES DIVISIONS

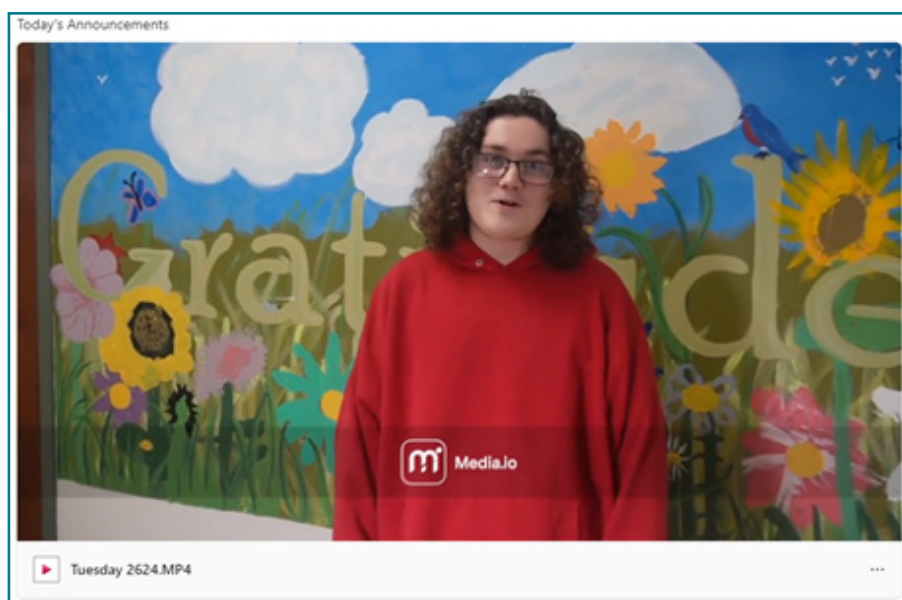
Lawrence coordinated with Communications and Publications Manager Joey LaFranca in the School Support Services Division to make sure students had the proper equipment.

"When Principal Lawrence told me about her idea, I was excited that our Communications Team could provide assistance and make their plan for announcements come to life," LaFranca said.

"We ordered professional camera, audio and lighting equipment, which is typically used for livestreaming. We helped get things set up, and the incredible team from Rise took over

from there. Our Communications Team is always ready to support our students and work some magic behind the scenes."

With the proper



equipment made available to them, the students were ready to go and truly shined in front of the camera.

"The students making the announcements are taking ownership of them and learning to use the equipment," Lawrence said. "They are learning the value of the equipment and taking amazing care of everything."

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Teaching Assistant Jim Lavoie worked with Rise students to make the new announcement format truly come to life.

The structure of announcements included the Pledge of Allegiance, the date, the Joke of the Day, and features about the Rise Motto (Resect-Integrity-Safety-Excellence).

Lavoie worked with various students, coordinated the announcements and then edited the announcement videos to be shared with teachers who could play them for their students when it was best suited for each classroom.

"The kids loved to perform on camera," Lavoie said. "Everyone is affected by the camera, but in a lot of cases with this, the students seemed to be locked in more and remained focused rather



*Continued on Page 19*



# ‘We Want to be Proactive’: BCBAs Make A Positive Impact

*Rise Center for Success*

The Rise Center for Success welcomed three new Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) to the CVES Family of Professionals this past year. BCBAs utilize Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), the scientific and systematic processes to help influence an individual’s behavior, to create strategic intervention plans for students.

With BCBAs in high demand in the local area, the Rise team was thrilled to bring aboard Audrey Crucetti, Kayla Laughlin and Jeffrey Parker. Their expertise has brought significant day-to-day success and support to Rise students.

## **MEET THE BCBAs: CRUCETTI**

Crucetti, whose been a

BCBA for 17 years, started her journey by studying psychology at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. During her schooling, she started working with a little boy who had autism, and her enjoyment and passion to work with students one-on-one began.

“I worked with him 20 hours a week on top of the caseload I was managing, and I fell in love with autism and ABA,” Crucetti said.

She went on to get her master’s degree at the New England Center for Children in Boston. She moved from the hub of ABA to Plattsburgh in 2007 with her husband, when ABA wasn’t well known.

“I really had to pave my own way in this area of the country,”

Crucetti said.

She has worked for a handful of different local companies and school districts. She is also the president of Autism Alliance of Northeastern New York. With Rise, Crucetti works with the Life Skills program and Mineville program.

## **MEET THE BCBAs: LAUGHLIN**

Laughlin, who had always wanted to work with children, obtained her teaching degree for children birth to six, regular education. While getting her master’s degree, she started tutoring a girl with down syndrome and realized she needed to change her course of study to include children with disabilities.



She then went back to school to get her master's in teaching birth to six, special education.

"While I was going through that process, I realized that it wasn't enough one-to-one support with kids," Laughlin said. "I needed to impact the students more than I could as a classroom teacher."

She moved to Montana in 2016, where she worked in early intervention, servicing children birth through five.

"Our agency had a separate learning center, which was insurance-based ABA services for children with autism, and they asked me if I wanted to go back to school to become a BCBA," Laughlin said.

She took that opportunity and then ran the learning center for two years before moving back to the region. With Rise, Laughlin works with the Academic, Behavioral and ITSP classrooms.

### **MEET THE BCBAs: PARKER**

Parker didn't have a traditional path to becoming a BCBA. He started his academic journey by studying French at SUNY New Paltz but dropped out after three years. He then worked an array of jobs until 2010.

"I realized that my life was taking no direction, and I was working a job I didn't like," Parker said. "So, that's when I decided to go back to school."

He received his bachelor's degree in psychology.

"I wanted to be a clinical psychologist, but somewhere along the way, I started studying behaviorism and fell in love with it," he said.

His first job as a BCBA was

working with people in Texas who had traumatic brain injuries. Then he ran his own business in Dallas, working with teenagers and adults with autism and other comorbidities, like depression and anxiety.

He moved back to Plattsburgh to be closer to family and found a team of support through Rise. With Rise, Parker works with the Autism program.

### **CREATING A PLAN OF SUPPORT**

The main, overarching goal of a BCBA is to create a plan that reduces or eliminates a challenging behavior.

BCBAs create behavior plans and do functional behavior assessments, which is where they look at why certain behaviors are happening. Through their behavior plans, they help decrease challenging behaviors and increase replacement behaviors.

But that's far from the only thing they do.

"Crisis intervention takes up most of our time," Laughlin said. "If there's a crisis with a student, we are there helping to deescalate the situation."

Laughlin and Crucetti are both trainers for therapy crisis intervention, which means they know how to engage in a safe hold to reduce the risk of harm to students and staff. They are also the first BCBAs to be hired to work with programs outside of autism.

A large portion of time is spent on updating and writing plans for students and doing assessments.

"Historically, autism programs have been on its own island, but we're trying to streamline

everything, so it's more connected," Parker said. "We have enough BCBAs to allow for cross-training and learning how some ideas might work with their students, but not with my students who have autism."

Crucetti, Laughlin and Parker have roughly 40 to 50 students on their caseload. Collaboration and teamwork are great assets for them to utilize.

"Typically, in this area, there's only one BCBA at a district, so it's been very nice to be able to collaborate with other behavioral analysts," Crucetti explained. "Behavior analysis is very individualized, so we need small caseloads in order to look over all the patterns and data, so that we are getting great outcomes."

### **BRINGING NEW IDEAS**

The three individuals have implemented new systems that proactively check-in with students throughout the day.

"We're implementing the Zones of Regulation program schoolwide. It's a color-coded emotional regulation system, where we're going to proactively check-in throughout the day with how they're feeling," Crucetti said. "Those feelings will be associated with different coping strategies. The hope is that we want to be as proactive as possible, so students don't end up in crisis."

The BCBAs are coming in with skills and knowledge to further elevate learning and achieving success in the classrooms.

They are also spearheading class-wide behavior management plans, so the same language is being used from program to program or

classroom to classroom. A Calming Corner was also created by the BCBAs.

“It’s a spot for students who aren’t at peak crisis, but still need to get out of the classroom,” Laughlin said. “It’s to help us get to them before they get to an unsafe place. We are, again, just trying to be a proactive as possible.”

The BCBAs aren’t only focusing on student success, but also staff success. They rely heavily on staff members to help implement a student’s plan. Staff training is a big part of optimizing plans.

“I think there’s two types of training — the one that’s scheduled ahead of time, and the one that happens in the moment,” Parker said.

When scheduled, Parker likes to go over a behavior plan for a student, and he likes to role play the behavior to demonstrate while in a controlled environment. He finds it to be “very effective” to teaching staff this way.

When in the moment, Parker approaches training in one of two ways. The first would be to help quickly, by running a plan by the staff and then modeling it for them. The second would be to observe the staff during the situation and give feedback later.

“We also work with students who are able after a crisis or behavioral event to process what happened or what made them feel that way,” Laughlin said. “We come up with ideas of what might go better next time. We practice these things, and we take their input for when we write their plans.”

### **‘EVERY BEHAVIOR HAS A REASON’**

BCBAs work closely with students to provide them with plans and support that will yield the greatest results. They noted that sometimes things get worse before they get better.

“It’s human behavior to get upset when something changes, but we help coach our staff and students through these changes,” Crucetti said. “We monitor very closely during that time and make sure safety protocols are in place.”

With new plans, students learn and adjust to correct their behaviors. However, sometimes students don’t respond to the new plan, and the BCBAs come up with a different approach. All



of these strategies lead to their goal of being proactive over reactive.

Strategies are implemented into students’ daily routines. Some examples are cards on their desks with different cues, like asking for a break, pictures of instruction and coping strategies. There are also incentives to reinforce positive behaviors, like token boards, prizes and a school store.

“Every behavior has a reason,” Laughlin said. “These aren’t bad kids. These are kids who have experienced extreme trauma, who have learned a behavior that was reinforced their whole lives, who aren’t living in the best situations. We have to teach them another way to get their needs met, and sometimes it takes a long time.”

Crucetti, Laughlin and Parker brought incredible ideas to further improve the environment at Rise within the past year. In the upcoming school year, they will continue to elevate services provided to students and aid staff.

“At the Rise Center for Success, we are inspired daily by the incredible impact of our new BCBAs. Their expertise and innovative approaches are not only transforming individual lives but also enriching our entire community,” Rise Director Dr. Matthew Slattery said. “Through their dedication, they bring new hope and success to our students, proving that with the right support and collaboration, every challenge can be turned into an opportunity for growth and achievement. Their work exemplifies that when we come together with passion and purpose, we elevate the potential of every student and foster a brighter future for all.”



## *Continued from Page 15*

than nervous. And of course, they are always in for some bloopers.”

### **MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS COMING UP**

As the new school year approaches, the Morning Announcements are here to stay.

Students are encouraging each other to participate and be a part of something new and exciting.

“I love getting the kids to learn new things,” Lavoie said. “It was so cool how the students could encourage each other to participate. They are the ones really cheering each other on and pushing each other.”

Lavoie added he enjoyed hearing the plethora of ideas the students developed based off his initial input and instructions about the announcements.

Whether there were moments filled with learning, laughter and anything in between, the announcements are a win-win situation for the Rise Center for Success.

“The announcements can be put on at a time when the teachers feel it is best and most fitting for their class,” Lawrence said. “A lot of our kids are not auditory learners. Having something they can see on a screen is much better and easier for them, and at the same time, is more interactive and engaging for everyone in our school.”

# Rise Center for Success Top 5

### **SAM RAISES FUNDS FOR TEAM FOR KIDS**

Rise Center for Success student, Sam, participated in the NYC 15K in March. His determination and dedication was truly inspiring as he ran to raise funds for Team for Kids, an organization that supports programs aimed at building students’ motivation, confidence, and desire to lead physically active lives in New York City’s five boroughs and nationwide. Sam finished the race in an impressive 2 hours and 3 minutes.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL ITSP CLASSROOM ENJOYS NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

In January, students from the Middle School ITSP (MS-ITSP) class embarked on a cultural journey to the Indian Grill restaurant, culminating weeks of learning about Ancient India in the classroom. This outing and many others during the year provided valuable opportunities for students to practice important social skills. These powerful interactions brought lesson plans to life, helping build appreciation for the cultural diversity in their local community. By connecting academic concepts to real-world exploration, MS-ITSP is equipping students with appreciation for diversity and empowering them to be culturally competent citizens.

### **PLANNING COMPLETED FOR TEMPORARY ESY HOSTS**

During the school year, Rise Center for Success leadership worked closely to ensure Extended School Year programming could continue amid Capital Project work that closed both the Plattsburgh and Mineville campuses for the summer. Plattsburgh CSD and Moriah CSD agreed to be gracious hosts for Rise summer school, and the collaboration between both component districts and Rise was outstanding.

### **PROGRAMS EXPAND TO MEET REGIONAL NEEDS**

The Rise Center for Success experienced plenty of success regarding student support this school year. To name a few things, enrollment increased thanks to proper support being available, a Rise High School classroom housed in the Plattsburgh City School District opened to allow students to have a great atmosphere for learning and a successful virtual speech service was introduced.

### **SWEETHEARTS & HEROES WORKS WITH RISE**

Sweethearts and Heroes continued to leave a lasting impact on the Rise Center for Success. This valuable collaboration and partnership enabled the Rise Center to offer enhanced support to its staff, fostering a more positive and productive work environment. The improved staff support translated into even greater resources and encouragement for the students, which goes along with the top Core Belief of CVES — Students are our first priority.

# Teachers Learn to Integrate Technology into Classrooms

## School Support Services

As a teacher, it can be a challenge to incorporate new technology into your classroom. While you know students should learn about this kind of thing, you're already too busy with a million other things to learn the tech yourself.

That's where Model Schools comes in. This service, Co-Ser 546, aims to help teachers effectively integrate technology into classrooms by providing technological devices, along with the support and professional development teachers need to understand how to best use them as teaching tools.

Susanne Ford-Croghan took the helm of the Model Schools Co-Ser in the 2023-24 school year, and she has been excited to see it grow. Between creating a lending library of devices and developing training opportunities, she is helping to make technology easier to integrate into classrooms.

"All of this technology is here. It's only going to grow. People are already using it across a wide range of industries, and that use will continue to increase as the tech advances," Ford-Croghan said. "It can be complicated

and time consuming to learn and implement. But it can also enhance the classroom, and it can really enhance the experience for students if it's used in the right way. That's our whole goal."

The lending library currently has 11 options for different devices that teachers can use to teach a variety of different skills. Some of the devices work together, and

device to do a specific action, and see how it reacts and follows the instructions they give it.

Other devices help students learn about circuitry, building and engineering skills, photography and videography, and critical thinking. Some are targeted for a specific age group, like Lego WeDo, which is made specifically for students in kindergarten

through grade 2.

Others, like the Ozobot, has functionality that increases in sophistication based on the age of children using it. Ozobot programming starts with colored markers for the youngest users, and then grows more complex as older students build on their skills.

This lending library has driven districts to sign on to the service. Word is spreading about these

cool, hands-on learning tools, and when one class uses them, others hear about it and want to try it too.

The other arm of the Model Schools service is the training teachers need to effectively implement technology. Ford-Croghan, along with Melissa Dudyak, Danielle Janisewski and Becca Banker, trained teachers to use Canva last year in a two-session workshop that was so popular, she had to schedule a second one. Ford-Croghan and Banker are also doing trainings



some stand well on their own.

ClassVR are virtual reality goggles that open up a whole world of opportunities for teachers and their classes. They can give students a chance to visit anywhere in the world, use augmented reality to explore 3-D models, or complete interactive tasks in an immersive environment.

Several options, like Dash Robots, Lego Mindstorms and Ozobo Evo, help students understand programming. They can program a



to make sure teachers know and understand the state's new Computer Science and Digital Fluency standards.

This fall, Ford-Croghan is planning some training sessions that will focus on artificial intelligence. She expects these to be popular, as there's a lot of anticipation and curiosity around AI in the classrooms. There's also concern about students using AI, and Ford-Croghan said that's why it's so important for teachers to be helping students understand how to use it correctly.

Another component of the Co-Ser is the Model Schools Liaison meetings. This allows schools participating in the Co-Ser to have a say in what is being offered. This Co-Ser is also possible because of our collaboration with our colleagues at WSWHE BOCES.

Ford-Croghan is looking for ways to build on the service and help it better serve the needs of teachers and IT teams. She plans to experiment with different meeting schedules and setups so she can make sure she's sharing the information that needs to be shared.

She has ideas about how to grow the lending library in the future, but for now her goal is to make sure the current one is being utilized to its fullest.

# School Support Services Top 5

## **S3 ADDS ASSESSMENT & PLANNING COORDINATOR**

School Support Services regained an important role as Stephanie Sorgule was hired to be Assessment & Planning Coordinator. In this roll, she brings her data skillsets to the forefront to support schools. A notable success pertained to her work with the Every Student Succeeds Act and accountability measures being fully implemented. As various data points were identified throughout the school year, Sorgule has supported component districts in creating plans to help meet benchmarks where students receive support and achieve proficiency.

## **PRINT SHOP TEAM TRANSITIONS SEAMLESSLY**

Following the retirement of longtime Digital Press Operator Kim Wimett, the CVES Print Shop team experienced staffing changes for the first time in nearly 8 years and only the second staffing change in its 40-year history. Kathy Tufo was hired in February and has teamed up with Becky Gates to create a successful printing tandem that supports CVES and Component District job orders. Workloads have remained steady and been on the rise as more school districts are printing quarterly newsletters and valuing the high-quality product the CVES Print Shop produces.

## **TECHNOLOGY CO-SER'S OUTLOOK BRINGS CONFIDENCE**

The CVES Technology Co-Ser is fully staffed and possesses a strong vision for the future. Matt Palkovic was promoted to Network Administrator, while Haley Blaise is now a Network and Systems Coordinator. Under their leadership, the Technology team has established conformity across the region so any school enrolled in its service will receive high-quality support through state-of-the-art technology. A total of 13 component school districts utilize the talents of the CVES Technology Co-Ser.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS CONTINUE**

For the second year in a row, CVES offered a four-part series to help new teachers develop their crafts and use evidence-based methods to support student learning and growth. The new teacher cohort was a successful highlight of professional development opportunities School Support Services offered to component districts. Plans for new workshops and professional development have continued and will roll out as the CVES Conference Center welcomes educators to bolster their support skills for students.

## **COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE IMPACTS COMPONENT SCHOOLS**

As the trend of bolstered communication support across New York State schools continues to rise, the CVES Communications team has responded. Planning during the 2023-2024 school year has set an exciting future the School Public Relations Co-Ser that will feature one-day-per-week in-district work taking place in Beekmantown, Boquet Valley, Chazy, Peru and Willsboro. Additionally, CV-TEC and the Rise Center for Success will be utilizing the model. Two schools will be fortunate enough to have their own alumna representation as Publications Specialist Olivia Bousquet will be working at Peru and Communications/Publications Assistant Amelia Stevens will be stationed at Chazy.



# Section VII Hosts Engaging Inaugural Student-Athlete Leadership Summit

*School Support Services*

When you see Section VII student-athletes on the field, the court, the ice, or wherever else it may be, they are always competing and supporting their teammates.

No matter their school affiliation and who they play for, all have one thing in common — being a student-athlete.

This June, the Section's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) organized its inaugural Student-Athlete Leadership Summit. SAAC is comprised of student-athletes from Section VII who serve as an advocating voice for the betterment of athletics in the region.

This first-of-its-kind event was held at The Lodge at Schroom Lake and welcomed over 100 student-athletes from around the Section to participate in conversations and exercises that focused on mental health, leadership, and so many other qualities that help student-athletes succeed.

## **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

Students were separated into three groups and attended three 40-minute breakout sessions with three different themes.

Longtime educator and coach Chris Mazzella led one session that focused on what it takes to be a leader.

Gena Trombley, a former Section VII standout athlete and now Mental Performance Consultant, presented on how to take care of yourself as a student-athlete.

SAAC leaders Aiden Pearl (Seton Catholic) and Callie Racine (Northeastern Clinton) led icebreaker and team-building exercises, where the student-athletes let loose a bit and had plenty of laughs.





“We had been working to put on the leadership summit for a while, and all our planning certainly paid off,” Pearl said. “The day brought together student-leaders from across our Section to learn and grow from talented speakers and each other. Student-athletes had a great time at the event and left the summit with new skills and knowledge to take back to their teams and schools.”

### PLANNING MAKES PERFECT

SAAC met multiple times throughout the school year, and right from the start, the group knew it wanted to hold a leadership summit.

The biggest hurdle was finding a time for student-athletes to convene together with their busy schedules.

Plans started to come together once Section VII student representatives attended the New York State Public High School Association Leadership Conference in March.

“We really took in a lot from the state event, and that’s when we started to make our own event plan come to life,” Section VII Executive Director Matthew Walentuk said.

“The students all went into this with an open mind. You could see as they went from session to session, they were understanding more and



more what this was about. The best part was the students were the ones who planned this, and they got to see their hard work pay off.”

### BRINGING STUDENTS TOGETHER

SAAC intends to have more athlete summits in the future and knows its first year was a great success.

“I think the Student Leadership Conference helped student-athletes realize their competitors are a lot like them,” Racine said. “There really are no other events in our area like this where so many student-athletes can meet in an uncompetitive setting where they can work together to become better leaders and better people.”

At the end of the day, Mazzella served as the keynote speaker and shared more thoughts on what it takes to be a leader and showed an inspirational video featuring NBA on TNT host Ernie Johnson addressing Alabama’s football team and how to be a better human.

Students left feeling inspired and more prepared to be advocates for themselves and Section VII.

Not even an hour after the session, multiple student-athletes reached out to Section VII representatives to find out how they could join SAAC.

“I really believe this was a great experience to expand their boundaries of athletics and see how much of an impact they can make for each other,” Walentuk said. “We will definitely be planning more events like this and finding ways to continue to support our student-athletes.”







CHAMPLAIN VALLEY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24